

Discussion Question 3

Federal government role: How can the federal government be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors?

Table of Contents

Albuquerque, NM.....	1
Annapolis, MD.....	6
Asheville, NC.....	20
Bangor, ME.....	41
Berkeley, CA.....	46
Bozeman, MT.....	50
Charleston, SC.....	65
Chicago, IL.....	74
Concord, NH.....	98
Fort Pierre, SD.....	112
Godfrey, IL.....	120
Golden, CO.....	127
Grand Island, NE.....	143
Grand Junction, CO.....	150
Helena, MT.....	157
Hyde Park, NY.....	162
Kissimmee, FL.....	163
Lawrence, KS.....	175
Los Angeles, CA.....	176

Minneapolis, MN	186
Missoula, MT	187
Nashville, TN	206
Philadelphia, PA	215
Poughkeepsie, NY	222
Prior Lake, MN	256
Seattle, WA	261
Spokane, WA	279
Written & Online Comments	282

Discussion Question 3

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Albuquerque, NM

Who is going to pay for this? Federal Government should go back to the state and they should start getting money from the states. They have the money from oil and gas, gambling, military etc. Organizations should legislate through the state.

Political issue and how do we support the political environment. Federal Government role is to work locally to create these coalitions. He feels that what is needed is a partnership at the state level.

Collaborative effort help to keep them moving. Teach them young and recruit locally. If you plant the seeds in youth there is ownership. Give the youth jobs and training so they can go to college and get educated in the environment and have the opportunities. Federal Government is not marketing these tools.

His group is trying to get together with the youth conservation groups and bring grants into the Las Cruces Communities and get kids out into the dessert in Dona Ana County. It helps to reconnect the rest of the community. The Federal Government should pass the Omnibus Bill. The Land Bill will be helpful for the West. BLM should look for more wilderness or NCA lands. He would like to see Otero Mesa become a national monument. NLSC is now helping him put together a friends group to get grants. He would like to see the Federal Government provide more funds to organizations that support what the group does.

One of the biggest challenges they face is that there is not enough funding for trails to fix those in existence or to create new trails. Just over the 4th of July weekend 14 members from his group cleared 80 miles of backcountry trails in the Pecos Wilderness. The Forest Service is under continuous pressure and without these kinds of groups they have no choice but to close the trails.

As an alternative, I support the R.O.A.M. Act, which would open up public lands to wild horses - The National Parks and some wilderness areas for example.

(This individual was very aggressive and uncooperative.) The government is just trying to take and control land. They don't want us to mine anymore. Miners are conservationists. With this effort the government is pretending they want to protect the environment but they are trying to take and control your land and keep you off of it.

A lot of federal agencies already have restoration programs in place. We need to use these existing programs instead of always creating new programs initiatives. Farmers/ranchers need to be supported because they care for land and provide wildlife habitat. Simplify regulations that they have to follow. Conservation/restoration programs already in place can be used to support farmers/ranchers. Give programs time to get established and work.

Discussion Question 3

Albuquerque, NM

(cont.)

Bills/laws are tools. Federal government needs to pass omnibus wilderness bill to protect wilderness. Encourage president to make Otero Mesa a ntnl monument.

Communication problems exist between conservationists and resource consumers. We can bridge the gap. Not all uses are appropriate for all places. The government needs to make regulation simpler, get rid of the layers of government. Don't make regulations weaker but make them simpler and easier to understand. One size doesn't fit all, tailor regulations to the place. Need consistency, can't keep changing regulations/processes all the time.

He does Open Space education. Government considers Open Space education/recreation. Government should quit cutting budgets for these programs (education/recreation). If we kept or increased budget, we could do more education and marketing. Need stringent rules to list out what can't/can be done with funding. Having clear idea of what we should/could do makes programs more effective

Implement changes within parks and recreation. There should be community gardens in every city park. We water city parks, why can't we grow food there? This would do more than cure hunger; it would teach people how to grow food. Need to have programs that encourage farm/ranch lifestyle, not everyone wants to/can go to college. Food grown in parks could supplement government WIC/welfare programs. Federal public lands could be provided for these types of programs too. Stop exporting food grown here, stop importing food grown elsewhere.

Need to find a way to support sustainable local economy. Need to make conservation work economically viable. Government needs to implement policies that do this. Community supported agriculture works. Tax incentives work.

Resilient ecosystems are beneficial. Federal government could streamline federal grant proposal process. It takes enormous amounts of energy to balance/match funding and administer federal grants. EPA money should be able to match NRCS money etc. There are so many restrictions on interagency money even though they all support the same programs. Sometimes federal funding is available but the state can't provide funding needed for match. Having resources to manage federal grant is difficult because of reporting requirements etc.

Thanks to federal government for opening arms to traditional communities and cultures. Working harder to bring traditional communities to the table. More of this needs to happen, especially for grass-roots efforts. Many traditional communities are reluctant to work with federal government based on their perception that we are closed. Government can be better partners in local efforts.

This ranch brings in thousands of campers from across the country. Now the federal government is making them do their own NEPA studies for projects on federal lands. Government could let public do some of the work on public lands. Federal government should help with liability issues for recreation opportunities on private land.

Discussion Question 3

Albuquerque, NM

(cont.)

Use money from tax dollars to create jobs. Educate people on green techniques. Banks need to give money to people.

We need to recognize that animals are part of the ecosystem. Prairie dogs are part of the ecosystem. Prairie dogs need to go on endangered species list.

Worked on Navajo Reservation. She saw firsthand that nuclear energy isn't clean energy because uranium can't be cleanly mined. The government shouldn't allow uranium mining.

Fed government should model cooperative behavior. Infighting been going on for years. Would help a LOT if you'd stop.

Protect private property rights. Better communication – we don't know about projects, stuff has to be done online, we don't have that. We don't know about the records that have to be kept. We face a lot of barriers and lack of knowledge.

Education initiatives need to not be limited to school system. Educate people – all the people, not just school systems. US Forest Service adopted a school. Have Government agencies partner with school district. Land and Conservation funds diverted. Congress needs to get full funding for it. Can Federal government create a central clearing house for small group funding. National Endowment for Conservation. We have got to look at the bigger picture – put it as a priority to protect water, air, land so we can get out and enjoy the outdoors in a sustainable way. We cannot afford to wait – Bingaman's supported legislation needs to be passed now.

Otero Mesa. Vast amount of water under it. We are threatened all the time with drilling...if it is made a national monument, will protect the water. We can't count on Gov. Richardson, we need the Feds.

What is the process of getting Sec Salazar's ear to get Otero Mesa declared as a national monument? Make it easier for people to figure out what to do. Don't forget communities that don't have websites, can't host webinars. Fed needs to remember and find ways to connect with people who don't have access to those tools, capture their input

Fed needs to be facilitator to make things happen. We bring groups along as collaborators, we decide as community. Fed and state agencies help make that happen. We couldn't do what we do without them

The Federal government seems to be primarily partnered with powerful private industry. Corporate interests – oil and gas industry – get away with things that destroy our environment. We need more followup on meetings like this. Meeting happens, nothing happens after that. Update website, keep people posted on what's actually happening

Fed government provides huge support to corporate agriculture, there is no support for smaller farm efforts. Completion of the travel management program for the Manzanos that Forest Service worked on with us.

Discussion Question 3

Albuquerque, NM

(cont.)

During mandatory testing, students who were not testing could have environmental and conservation education and curriculum. Get environmental curriculum built. Service/learning program. Love to see Fed government support this – funding is wonderful, but a school that aims towards environmental focus would be eligible for federal monies. Will build a body of committed students and educators. BLM's "Restore NM" program is great, but limited. Get them to where they can ID new projects. Get a clear vision on the top – five to ten years out

Involve Dept of Education. Have online national conference.

Take the President, Arnie Dunkin, First Lady, and the kids out in to the National lands. Get the high level officials out into the lands they've impacting with their actions.

Outreach in Spanish, at least in NM. Problematic that there isn't a true recognition that if we don't protect the land, the air, the water, we won't survive. Where tax money goes to destroy an ecosystem that will never recover. We do it over and over and over. As far as communication, most of it we don't really hear. If you don't have water in New Mexico, you don't have anything else

We want President Obama to start a 21st century Civilian Conservation Corps.

Create opportunities on Federal land for groups to help out. Have Fed gov take a page out of Bingaman's book, and come back to the table with patience and diligence, until we move close to commonly held value. Bingaman and Udall are great. We can no longer afford black/white point of view.

Grass roots very important. We're used to having clear vision from top, people find strength and empowerment in grass roots.

"Our area encompasses Santa Fe, Taos, and Rio Arriba counties. Much of the enchantment that the state markets, that is found in northern New Mexico, are the remnants of things that went along before and during the Spanish Colonial period. Our goals is to help communities in Northern New Mexico so that they will not have to open its doors to a Wal-Mart or whatever in order to find jobs for their youth. This part of the state is primarily agricultural with deep historic ties that go back for centuries. Part of your initiative is focused on trying to get people meaningfully engaged in the outdoors. Speaking from that point of view, we are one of 49 National Heritage Areas in the country, one of only 5 west of the Mississippi. They range widely in orientation and function. The entire state of Tennessee is one, for example, because of Civil War Battlefields. My recommendation is for this commission to look at increased funding for National Heritage Areas."

Discussion Question 3

Albuquerque, NM

(cont.)

"I would love to see permanent protection for Otero Mesa by whatever method is available. What works? Wilderness works. If you look out at the Sandia wilderness or the Pecos wilderness around Santa Fe, then you realize that lays the groundwork for everything we are talking about, giving people of all ages the chance to get out and interact with nature. Lasting change. Of course I realize that some of this is due to the legislative process. We'd like to see some of the places talked about get protected by the agencies, and we'd like to see existing laws be enforced. For example, off road use. The Forest Service needs to be aware that there are a lot of illegally created roads and they need to be closed. Defragment land ownership, preferably between the State and Federal ownership. Rationally manage."

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

One effective tool is EPA Smart Growth office which provides education for local governments and empowers them. Need to do more peer to peer work. Key partners would be National Association of Counties, Municipal League, AASHTO.

We need to encourage parents and teachers since kids listen to their teachers a lot and they need to emphasize environmentalism. That's how I got into the movement.

Yeah, how do you attract people

Also you can compost stuff from your own house for the garden

It's not just bringing people into the parks, it's also raising awareness. Need to know why it should be protected

Farms, DC environmental education consortium. Forest communities, people only concerned w/ survival. Childhood obesity is real problem. Growing own food- impress on young people how important. Low cost, low carbon imprint food. Expose kids to natural world, draw kids in, meet kids where they are and teach them. Teach teamwork, teach about parks. Edible gardens, people sitting around not doing work, put them to work in gardens. Agricultural runoff is #1 source of pollution. Wants DOI and EPA to work on this. Agreed that community gardens for disadvantaged youth good, radishes grow the easiest, growing stuff has to be fun

Federal teeth are lacking to guide county actions. Supports Senator Cardin legislation to give EPA more authority to enforce Clean Water Act. Need to have DOI help develop ecosystem services markets to develop parameters and to engage people.

Get out and experience areas. Limited accessibility

we have set aside many places for the public – in the 1970s in a recreation in urban areas initiative we created these areas but there is no access for an urban population – exception is Golden Gate where the Muni bus came out to the beach every Sunday – paid for by the city as a deal for making it a park – we don't have a lot of access via buses, public transport and school groups don't always have buses to get places – a dedicated item in the transportation budget to get people to parks and schools could compete for that

Connected open space network and what values can be portrayed.

Farming looks similar everywhere, but isn't. Farm Bill should be administered differently on different landscapes.

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

We need to find a way to teach the parents too because they don't really know either. Need to bring them in more to a school structure where you have to learn this stuff. We know these things but we don't understand them and it would be helpful to really learn about them

It always seems to be like a one time thing and then the garden falls apart. It would be helpful to have a weekly program... the garden needs to be kept going

We have to get to where the kids are... they see all this stuff, it's not just in their schools. Every kid has an iPod, we have to let them pull us in to pull them back in. All these iPhones and apps and cell phones. We have to get cool for them to like us.

And those tests or quizzes.... People love those. I've taken thousands of those.

It depends on the event and the person

Event planning too

And adapt to the kid's interests

Government and mismanagement of funds

Need to embrace technology

I know that Obama has already increased funding, but expanding organizations like SCA which engage youth would be good, since it starts at a young age and builds from there. We need to get youth involved in these programs and internships. But it doesn't just have to be SCA, it can be other conservation associations. If we could have 10,000 interns per year it would allow more youth to work on public lands.

Go recruiting - talk to people

need funding for wildlife mgmt and conservation to insure that future generations have access to National Wildlife Refuges, which is severely underfunded. Need funding for State wildlife grants pgm and Teaming with wildlife pgm. Clean Water Act needs to be expanded to cover isolated wetlands and intermittent streams. Need national invasive species mgmt pgm (a lot more needs to be done on invasive species – good efforts underway in Florida).

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

We need to have the Administration do something huge – “put every kid in a park.” Ken Salazar said many good things today; at one point he said “I want a meeting between me, Bill Saxton and Lisa Jackson and Education.” One thing we can do is get rid of the Standards of Learning. The Obama Administration should champion a re-alignment around education and the outdoors - it is unacceptable to perpetuate this broken system. Such a re-alignment would support Michelle Obama’s “Kids Outdoors Program.”

Community gardens: like that idea at the Department of Agriculture. It is a great way to bring a community together and learn about environment. Think about how you can work with Dept of AG, and non-profits, ...excited to work with it. Know your farm, know your food. Farms hooking up with urban areas to provide local crops, local communities visit the farms.

Jobs...there are opportunities to get involved. USDA FS and NRCS have tremendous opportunities for young people...examples. So many exciting jobs...job corps (6000 young people learning about green jobs – green related skills).

Look to the states –they already have information and programs in place. Give them the support they need; increase their capacity.

Would also like to see Historic Preservation Fund fully funded. Provides funding to State Historic Preservation Offices. Would like to see more funding made available to develop local ordinances (ie Anne Arundel County has county ordinances requiring that cultural resources be considered when development is proposed).

The Federal government can help to nurture small organizations through the technical assistance they provide. Beyond the know how they bring, the personal assistance that Federal staff provide can be critical to the growth and development of organizations such ours. The staff of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network has been enormously helpful to the development of the Annapolis Maritime Museum. The individuals in the federal government have been helpful.

More funding for organic and green agriculture. Incentives too for local food systems, supporting green, organic, and local foods.

And it's important to keep that up throughout middle school and high school, because it becomes uncool in a few years. Need to keep that message with th

A community garden initiative using eminent domain instead of just letting extra land go to waste

More community gardens allows more kids to garden and give them more understanding of the process that goes into growing food.

That's why elementary school gardens are so important... because it lets the kids know where their food came from

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Along the same lines with the gardens, having people at a young age go out to see how to preserve a park... show what is done to help erosion, removal of invasive species, things like that. Anything to help people get down and dirty and understand the work that goes into preserving land

Social networking sites are a great example. You can post conservation events and opportunities to get involved with the NPS and create sites so you can become friends of a national park

Or you can post events on there

Community gardens are great ways of increasing the access to superlocal food. It helps establish a better food system and give people a better understanding

Promote wider involvement in public and community gardens and make community gardens more abundant and more available

Supports full funding for LWCF. Likes Go Colorado program as a model. Need to bring private capital to initiative. Need to activate Chesapeake Treasured Landscape Initiative federal leadership committee.

There need to be programs in public schools to encourage them to go outside. Educate the kids when they're small.

Grassroots organizations in addition to government are important and need funding

Q #4 – land conservation – where has federal government made a big difference? From federal government need scale and plan component, really took state wildlife agencies forward. That was a federal requirement. States took money and invested in plan know that there will be little money to focus on their mission. Stateside land water conservation fund, has been consistent for states to do outdoor plan and that got states in open space planning business. How about we take that to local government level? How do we get local communities to do local open space planning?

Has encountered many local successful projects. Each time there have been a couple of people that are catalytic, a primary reason community has connected with project. Need new army of conservationists. Could be helped along by investing in future leadership – are many programs like this now (ie. National Conservation Leadership Institute) that could be supported nationally. This is not mainstream program – it gets corporate support, is attended by federal and state agencies. Could be a national model.

I think we depend too much on schools. Schools have lots of priorities, but very limited time. This is recreation, not just school stuff

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

citizen conservation. He provides pro bono legal help to protect National Parks. He has found that the best strategy is to tap into the love that the American people have for National Parks. He has worked on protecting Valley Forge NP, is now working on trying to protect Wilderness Battlefield in VA. He sees that historic parks also provide recreation for local residents. He feels that we should use National Parks as a core for landscape preservation. Economics are offsetting factor. He sees that communities don't understand economic value of having parks. County granting authorities take short term view on supporting land uses that offer jobs. NPS could do better job on selling itself to local communities on the economic value they bring to local communities. NPS could be more assertive in protecting its lands. During the Bush Admin, the "cooperative conservation" initiative was taken by NPS to "roll-over" and had an adverse effect. Need to provide guidance to National Parks on how to be more assertive without being combative.

Congratulations on the recent actions of the EPA – good marks! Look at all of these things from a reasonable viewpoint – the federal government must lead.

Chesapeake Bay Foundation/No Child Left Inside Coalition. Need additional tools to support the No Child Left Inside Act. Amendment of Elementary Education Act could provide funds. Maryland's Children in Nature plan is developed. Seeking to embed the ideas of No Child Left Inside within the Elementary Education Act to get outdoor and environmental education integrated as part of core curriculum. Small amount of money to these educational plans could open window. Consider how to leverage funds that are already being spent to connect kids to the outdoors. Try to get environmental education into the core curriculum of public schools. Doesn't always have to be reliant on transportation; it can be on-grounds garden or changing operation of school building and grounds.

Encourage parents to bring the kids outside, so that they can show them where to go, what to do, and how to do it safely.

I know of this program which brings in local food to schools because most of the cafeteria food is really all processed food. So they would slowly bring in locally grown foods from nearby farms and inform the students about where the food came from.

But how can you make them want to go?

What do kids do on the weekends? They go to the movies, get ice cream... Bu the park service has events. Need to make the kids want to go... it doesn't cost money, which is a start

The parents are important

We have to make it as cool as superman

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

What Diamond said was poignant. We are plugged in and need to find a way to connect the two. When I have my iPod in listening to music, I can use it to help connect me to the outdoors. The GPS in the phone already has the outline of the area, so it can show me where the parks are.

I see these gardens popping up more and more often just in the most humble places you can think of around the city.

Get more people interested in growing their own food, it would cut down on gas and other things. So you don't have to go to California to get oranges in DC. It's logical because you get more for your money and you waste less

I would suggest being a little more unconventional about the approach. You have the Boys and Girls Club, Parks and Rec, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. There are lots of different organizations.... You can incorporate something into this. It doesn't have to just be schools... you can have promotional things on the bus or the train. All of these groups have mentors since the kids are being coached or taught.

The carbon footprint goes down tremendously since you don't have to drive the food 2000 miles

Giving the kids stuff like reusable water bottles, things that they could use and put to work makes a long lasting impression

Even just like a food drive where you bring a plant to put in the new garden that's been set up

Government support in school systems. Educate children

Youth need to have interim programs to do land service projects, not just "get a job" because they need the money. Green ROTC program, bolster Americorps.

NPS stewardships - if an easement is violated and no regulatory action is taken, the easement is lost and few people will follow suit with more easements. FCC force broadband into other areas so that these areas can compete especially with GIS

DOI jobs in agencies all over the country in parks, refuges, lots of lands. Encourage to talk about job opportunities

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Great to be here. Impressed with consistent themes. Been in DC 3 ½ years. Promote partnerships...biggest partnership with next generation. Introduced the "No Child Left Inside (NCLI)" initiative. Studies show youth spend about 7 ½ hrs day on electronics and only 4 minutes on outdoor recreation. There is a need to be tech savvy but something is out whack with those numbers. Support real resources to get youth outdoors. Primarily into school. Incorporate outdoor education. 1700 orgs across country pushing to get NCLI legislation passed. Hope to get included in education authorization. Gov has to perceive when people are pushing for new framework...new energy framework. Build new framework, the next generation, most aware of the environment, take over this issue, make it your issue, using social media you can become the leading edge in Environmental Awareness in this country. Most exciting thing in decades. Every high school should have an Environmental Club. Own it! Exciting prospect what you can do with this issue on the environment. Pledge to be a partner.

Prepare model legislation relating to the problem. Urban planners want everything to be concrete. Worried that no conservation. Model zoning code related to conservation of resources. Same way transportation built highway. Model curriculum for colleges that teach urban planning. Have rural planning and suburban planning. Model program that says incorporate these things in program. Master program for landscape master---green infrastructure.

Increase access: partnering and helping support outdoor nonprofit organizations, and increasing access through public transportation

Lower rates to go to outdoor places; more sidewalks; free buses on code red days

Role of land trust should not be forgotten.

We have all these great ideas, but message coming from top, but involving public in message and having simple, NPS has amazing resources but get stuck in hole when on web site. It is hard for general public to extract meaningful info to public. We need to get fed government to simplify message for general public, it is as simple as get outdoors. That is message we need to embrace. Need simple and short message.

Ask for a mileage buffer around battlefield parks.

Prepare model legislation related to a problem of urban planners with everything concrete – maximized tax return, highest and best use – model zoning code related to conservation of resources – tie acceptance of model code to grant – like you have to accept transportation standards with federal funding – model curriculum for colleges that teach urban planners and teach them suburban and rural planning – we have a mix – to incorporate the totality of an area

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Outreach: to youth and parents. Parents teach kids through communication and bond. BBQ – national BBQ free to all (gov pd) bring everyone together. Everyone likes to eat-this is a common affinity across different ethnicities and cultures.

NPS stewardships - if an easement is violated and no regulatory action is taken, the easement is lost and few people will follow suit with more easements. FCC force broadband into other areas so that these areas can compete especially with GIS.

Analysis paralysis - “we need better GIS”. There’s a lack of communication between local and state / federal levels. They need to share this information so that they aren’t repeating themselves. More time needs to be spent on the ground doing the work - local organizations aren’t getting the information to the federal levels. GIS is hampering movement forward because we’re always looking to improve GIS systems. If we can make all of the GIS information available, Federal, State and Local organizations won’t be repeating the same data collection, waiting to make decision

Can encourage teenagers to teach younger kids. City of Annapolis interns work on green jobs programs. We need to look at this as stewardship, taking care of something that doesn’t belong to us. Think about demographics; think about the opportunity to increase diversity in the environmental community. As government officials, look at multi-family housing when it comes in for approval. Encourage connections between trails, environmentally safe areas, storage for recreational equipment, environmental design. Give people ownership through small backyards.

CB Gateways concept is good. Tell stories. Should be fully funded and staffed and permanently authorized. Do education with conservation. Look at transportation funding for connections.

Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. Tree canopy is in the MS4 permit. Need to encourage/incentivize jurisdictions to submit the preservation and enhancement of parks in their Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act processes. There is an opportunity to connect with green infrastructure initiatives within EPA.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. State Department of Health partnership—CDC grants to build health awareness. Great opportunities if the programs can speak the same language. Physical exercise relates to the outdoors. There could be connections with No Child Left Inside Act & the FLOTUS goals.

Concerned about access.. the government has set apart many places for people to go. There are many public lands. Typical urban population doesn’t know these lands are available. Bus from SFO goes every Sunday to beach and every Sunday the beach gets more visitors as a result from a population that doesn’t regularly visit beach. NPS doesn’t have access to dept of transportation to plan with them. School groups don’t have access, NPS can’t send buses out, dept of transportation could.

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

concerned citizen who likes the outdoors and grew up in Yonkers – as Boy Scouts we had urban overnights and overnight camps that I still remember and the biggest obstacle today is the prevalence of the computer and the indoors – change obstacle into a tool – a website by the NPS or others and TV spots and ads to direct people to an enjoyable summer

connecting to grown-ups – that group doesn't know how to do this stuff – NPS has tools such as Junior Ranger and Climate tools and education tools and resources at HFC, parks to help – the tool is the places to connect them

Enhanced tax incentives very important. Need additional incentives and continuation. State funding for land conservation is in jeopardy.

Estate tax expired in 2009 - some tax will be put back in place. HR3050 to be introduced into the senate - estate tax to be partially exempt from easements with a cap. Expand the exclusion and the cap, they are old and outdated with inflation!

Excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment - make a similar tax for other equipment that would be given to conservation organizations and trusts.

Farms, DC environmental education consortium. Forest communities, people only concerned w/ survival. Childhood obesity is real problem. Growing own food- impress on young people how important. Low cost, low carbon imprint food Expose kids to natural world, draw kids in, meet kids where they are and teach them. Teach teamwork, teach about parks Edible gardens, people sitting around not doing work, put them to work in gardens Agricultural runoff is #1 source of pollution. Wants DOI and EPA to work on this

Feels Chesapeake Bay is a national asset. Federal and state governments have stewardship responsibility for the bay on behalf of the entire country. Same principle applies nationwide to public lands. For example, the Red Rock Lands in Utah are a federal responsibility, want multiple use strategy. During the Bush Administration BLM did not recommend wilderness designation for this area; he feels they can't unilaterally rule in this way.

Forests are 60% of the Bay. They are the lungs of the Bay. Best is to save both land types (forests and farms). Need to do more to recognize forest land owners as producers. Especially through Farm Bill delivery.

Fully fund historic fund. Fed should take care of cultural resources, sustainable community innovation. Culture is so important

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Her group has been fighting a lot of battles on the Mattawoman Creek, one of best tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay. There is a new highway proposal threatening the watershed. Need to work on educating local planners and politicians on the value of local land use planning. Need a national toolbox for communities for areas that need to be protected. Need to protect best tributaries to the Ches Bay. Need national blueprint for green and blue infrastructure that syncs up with transportation planning that makes these types of projects ineligible for fed funds. There are opportunities through the new livability initiative and reauthorization of federal transportation act. Should also prioritize providing transit access to national parks.

His organization raises matching funds to match federal and state funding to acquire battlefield lands. Was created 20 years ago by Congress. Key tools are American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), Farm and Ranch Land Program, and Transportation grants, which provide funding for conservation easements to help preserve lands and keep as working lands. Want to maintain viewsheds in productive agricultural lands, don't want to pay for maintenance. What works – having matching grants in order to ensure local folks have a stake in projects and are engaged in public private efforts. Recomm: keep funding for ABPP; make permanent conservation easement tax credits. Ensure that LWCF funds can be used to acquire inholdings (the issue is the lack of funding, not policy towards acquisition of inholdings). If NPS had funding to buy out partners (like CWPT) would allow partners to reinvest their funds in other projects. Ask for a mileage buffer around battlefield parks.

How can we work with you (federal programs) to make these things work? The key is to work together

Is asking for feds to work on landscape level efforts. And increase full funding for LWCF. 150th anniversary of Civil War is an opportunity to promote LWCF and battlefields preservation. Need also to focus more on cities – provide better help for smart growth planning, and having parks in cities to provide opportunities.

Mattawoman creek - more public education about the ecological services that aren't being documented. Laws aren't being enforced. The federal government is essential subsidizing the loss of the ecological habitat and citizens are forced to pay for restoration. Stop the problem before it happens, enforce the laws.

Mattawoman Creek and bass fishery threatened by local government effort but is one of the most pristine watersheds in the state – the federal government should use the bully pulpit

money is tight in this economy and parks on hold or get shut down or projects cancelled – we spend time now applying for grants to supplement our funding – we could not apply for some grants based on our narrow geographic scope – our trail was not long enough – a solution could be to reconfigure criteria or have dedicated funding sources for smaller-scale projects

More money for budgets? The budgets continue to be cut - agencies are already underfunded and under staffed - what is the federal government going to do to counter the cuts in funding?

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

National Trails Day. Introduces people to the outside to engage. During 2008-2010 there were 1900 events. Theater hike, Bronco football player hike, geocaches, giving the kids temporary tattoos. Get edgy. The obstacle, national trails funding. It's all about the funding. There are many requests for trail head signs, maps, etc. Need the money.

National Wildlife Refuges have programs that are not well-advertised to universities and the public.

Need additional tools to support the No Child Left Inside Act. Amendment of Elementary Education Act could provide funds. Maryland's Children in Nature plan is developed. Seeking to embed the ideas of No Child Left Inside within the Elementary Education Act to get outdoor and environmental education integrated as part of core curriculum. Small amount of money to these educational plans could open window. Consider how to leverage funds that are already being spent to connect kids to the outdoors. Try to get environmental education into the core curriculum of public schools. Doesn't always have to be reliant on transportation; it can be on-grounds garden or changing operation of school building and grounds.

Need to look at green infrastructure more comprehensively in permits.

Need to promote jobs that connect the youth to the outdoors. USAJOBS is not easy to navigate; and many nonprofits don't have great websites. Need better advertising of internships and job opportunities in the environmental and outdoor recreational fields.

need to reinforce value of conservation and place

not enough places to go, especially in the Mid-Atlantic – financial means to make more places happen – federal funding through matching funding such as LWCF or other and working with delegation should make that happen and working

Notes that a big issue in the last two comments is that they will cost money. He feel strongly that need to fully fund LWCF. Is how federal agencies pay for land acquisition. He support efforts in Congress to require OCS revenues to be spent on LWCF.

of interest among kids especially of color –getting the First Family out more often with media so people can see them – we need role models – climate change – need to establish a more robust youth corps and give them jobs to prepare lands for climate change

oil spill in Gulf shows how fragile our public lands are – this should be a focus in the AGO

Parks need public awareness campaigns (PSA) to increase stewardship, usage, ownership

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

physical access to the water and Bay – not a lot of places people can go – even less people who can get on the water and to the shore – obstacles in Bay Network with adequate number – 2nd point: many successful programs are institutional and they are wonderful but many connections are personal through use that is special to them – person self-directed, but institutional context doesn't allow that extension of a connection to happen

Programs need more direct purpose - i.e. Latino Youth Conservation Corps

Public access is very important. We have a dedicated funding source for Program Open Space in Maryland. We have an excise tax for water access. Those special funds are raided on a regular basis! If you are concerned about this you should contact your local elected officials and let them know. There is no mechanism to restore the funds to these programs once they've been removed. Carrying capacity is also an important issue. The call for more public access is drowning out the need for a study regarding carrying capacity for these sites. There's a reason there are only two parking spaces in particular areas – those sites can't handle 25 cars, and the nearby communities cannot handle 25 cars. Look at the sensitive areas – are we balancing their protection with appropriate amounts of public access? From state side, everyone is so interested in these efforts – we're seeing a federal effort that's "pushing down" on the states. The state's efforts need to be respected and looked at before the federal programs override them. We have many studies and programs already in place. The feds are forgetting that the states have already done a lot of work – they truly need to work with the states.

Public housing right next to St. John College. Writing a proposal for neighbors to learn about rain barrels. Q: Math and Science curriculum is very restrictive. How do we include Environmental education? Can there be electives? How can we get the freedom to do what needs to be done?

Remember that poor kids can't purchase technology; and poor kids don't have yards and safe places to go. We need to work with over strapped underfunded school systems that aren't focusing on the outdoor experience. We need more funding in school systems for outdoor educational programs. And we need to target young children to help them to become comfortable outdoors; children can be molded to think anything is cool if they're young enough.

See more historic sites with natural resources get funding. Support the expansion of national parks and monuments including USDA monuments and the Antiquities Act. People are reluctant in the field because of public interest with locals and site managers.

Some of the funding is tied to matching grants. Change some of the grant administration policies because many of us don't have matching funds. Maryland has a fantastic program for forest conservation and we're starting to see efforts regarding agricultural conservation. There is no widespread tax break for the forest conservation program. Some of the land is on private lots – the people on those lots don't respect the intent of the easement because they do not directly benefit from it (as the overall landowner does). Provide a tax incentive for each individual participant.

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

started grassroots lobby for historic preservation and there is a caucus in the House and we would really like to be working closely with partners and conservation because LWCF and HPF have the same interests and ability to get things done

Stewardship grants issued by the federal government should be expanded and tied to kayaking and boating; and go hand-in-hand with stewardship messages. Regarding boating: clean water makes for good boating. Contrary to the popular misconception, boaters are “first in line” for cleaner water. Make a renewed commitment to the Clean Water Act – bring water trades, industry, etc. into the conversation.

Takes teachers from Title 1 schools who go to national parks during busy season, providing volunteer staff. Take this environment back to the classroom. Stats: 84 teacher rangers resulting in contact with 230,000 people, taught 24,000 students. Intermountain region unable to hire as many as they needed.

tax dollars for agriculture are a subsidy that benefits recipients and not taxpayers – same goes for cover crops – a corporate socialist system – ban our representatives from receiving contributions so representatives can better represent the people –

The federal government could be a clearinghouse for environmental jobs for young adults.

The lack of funding - properties in federal parks are intended to be intended but are still in private hands. There are developments in areas where there shouldn't be. Create a competitive program for easements on private land that promotes the historical aspect. Provide more tools for neighbors of refuges to do great things. When other federal organizations don't respect federal conservation - Highways going through wetlands undermining the protection from environmental organizations. The park culture is outwardly focused is great - it used to be inwardly focused on themselves rather than rallying with other federal organizations - support this culture.

wants a buffer around every National Park and National Military Park. Need to act within next 7 months in order to have an impact on GETT battlefield casino threat.

We need matching funds for stewardship - invasive species removal projects

We need more funding allocated for baseline environmental monitoring for the state of Maryland coldwater resources and fishing in general. We don't have recreational catch data.

working lands and recognizing value of preserving pristine landscapes and keeping land productive and economical – financing and funding for conservation we need to rethink how we fund it – organizations base their work on donations and industries that do poorly in a weak economy – needed financial security will secure a long-term future

Discussion Question 3

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

The media are highlighting dangers of being outside. The federal government could try to present positive side of being outside.

They have 1500 members that hike, canoe, bike, Stewardship is key. Partnering is what helps them. Partnerships supply labor. One example, they partner with federal government on National Public Lands Day. On Assateague, members spend hours per day, cleaning up trails, providing free labor. The park provides free campsites. Gives people ownership of that park since they worked on it. One weekend in National parks – free camping – work.

To retain private working lands they have to be profitable. Credits are a huge source of income. The USDA rural developments have to be provided as grants rather than loans. Equity investment for beginning farmers & emerging businesses.

Valuation to private landowners who hold easements. Appraisals need to be done better. Funding needed for all land trusts—not just accredited ones.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

Ref Ken Burns' movie- momentum for a push for more land set aside- esp needed in middle GA- allowing hunting on NPS lands would increase support for NPS lands with local communities

AGO is a right step--full funding of LWCF would make a big difference- equalize federal and state funding- LWCF is biased toward federal

AT would not exist w/out LWCF-need funding for continued stewardship of the land after acquisition- volunteer model works when it is supported by a diverse base

Agree- collaborating with USFS as well as a community revitalization group-example: Jackrabbit mt. bike trails (Tusquitee RD, Nantahala NF) – collaboration on grant writing is esp. important

A lot of expertise in agencies- share expertise and make available to smaller governments and non-profits- share your tools

Fund no child left inside act

A lot of fed lands in the west- fewer in the east- need more focus on recreation where people live-

Federal Government Role that is a real challenge. Big South Fork River and National Recreation Area. Five federal agencies with involvement with this watershed and four state agencies with involvement in this watershed. The federal agencies do not have a basis for interacting with each other. Interagency cooperation is a big issue. Agencies need to be directed, from the office of the president, to manage their resources so that no action taken would not prevent another agency from reaching their mission.

Leadership. Assuming this process produces a report and eliminates some issues. Reports are on the shelf and we have a dysfunctional congress. Unless there is leadership and a public support, the report will just sit on the shelf. We, as an American public, will have to generate great support for the change to come about. There needs to be real leadership across the administration has to make this into a campaign not just a report.

Making the recreation opportunities that parks/forest provide accessible and known to the public. Need to do more publicity/marketing of these opportunities.

There isn't clear alternative energy development. Need clarity regarding energy policy development. Speaking to example of tradeoffs between preserving viewsheds and supporting alternative energy – windpower.

Need more emphasis on how to use MOUs and volunteer groups. In the face of climate change and invasive species, it will require a bigger base of federal employees.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Only major country where climate change skepticism is still a majority. We have a lot to overcome regarding climate change. Need strong public support from the federal gov't. Fed. Gov't has an obligation to educate the public regarding the validity and consequences of climate change. Would like to see more public education.

Look at signage in parks/forests. Many people unfamiliar with outdoors are scared by signage in parks warning of hazards. Signage should be encouraging, not discouraging visitors.

Put more money into river health and purchasing conservation easements to buffer river, buying land in the flood plain. Pointsource pollution issues need to be taking into consideration to protect water National blueways initiatives. Establish some sort of funds with national initiative to protect lands near water. Specifically in floodplains.

Is there a way that agencies or the office of the President can provide more follow-up on the following of the executive orders. More collaboration and thus more commitments.

Showcase the solutions of competing and conflicting agencies.

Challenge we're faced with - food security in the face of global climate change. Federal gov't needs to coordinate how we are going to change how we produce food in the face of this climate change. 15-20 we may see real food shortage problems.

Facilitative role taken to ensure that executive order are followed, collaboration happens and the government is effective.

Looking for ways that the government can be a little flexible. Have rewards and incentives to have more flexibility.

Value of USFS to recreation is very high- the NVUM results report high satisfaction with USFS recreation- has not had the status with the agency mission it should

Moving FS to USDI would be a bad move for recreation- recreation is not a mandate for the NPS- USFS is more recreation oriented- FS and BLM need to document benefits of recreation better than they have, incl. health benefits- private advocates often don't have the info they need to be effective- should have NVUM surveys for NPS and BLM.

There is a disconnect between states and feds in recreation planning—no mechanism to connect fed and community planning efforts- exception is the Overmountain Victory Trail- NC and SC are working on connecting two state parks---another example is the Guilford Natl Battlefield in Greenville SC, tied in with a community greenway

Feds need to be able to take corporate funding to support local efforts- losing millions of \$\$ by not being able to accept these funds

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Agency has had a positive move towards ecosystem management. Bringing prescribed fire to the landscape (through Wyden amendment- providing ability to manage across public/private lands.

make sure the money gets where it needs to!

People who normally pollute are uneducated specifically on being outdoors. Inter-city people need to be taught!

Servant leadership. What are the values that have been embraced and how can the government serve the people.

No landscape vision for what these lands should be, should contribute to. Need a landscape-level vision for the Appalachian corridor, especially given climate change issues. State purview stops at state lines. States need a federal entity to bring together a landscape vision. USFW Landscape Collaborative is a new effort in this regard.

USDI needs to link more closely with EPA re: pollution and land management. Need for prescribed fire for ecosystems, need to work on ozone and particulate prescriptions that will allow for prescribed fire.

LWCF is the economic engine that will make America's Great Outdoors a reality. 2014 is not soon enough. House Act passed today. Now is the time to move forward.

One role that the federal role can fulfill is coordinating state initiatives. One example of this is an initiative is to place the Appalachian Trail on the federal registry of historic places.

Education to inspire volunteers. Get kids to take ownership of parks and forests.

Challenge of how do we wrestle with the roles of government? Gov' t should set a tone for conservation and recreation.

Role of gov't is to educate and empower people to do the right thing. Local gov'ts getting to determine where funding goes.

Grant funding is a huge negative – it sustains a project for a small time and then fall apart as funding runs out. Instead, create project funding to sustain a project.

Funds allocated to the agencies for specific work is not used as intended.

encourage Forest Service have strong science-based policy on biomass

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Train transit needs to be expanded

PSA's – find good examples of what works well elsewhere

Federal government can change the tone of dialogue on the questions of subsidies; sometimes current tone is skewed; inconsistency in funds for extractive subsidies vs. subsidies for conservation

As Muddy Sneakers evolves, children may be charged a fee because of funding concerns. Can the federal government (Forest Service) waive the usage fee if they start charging a fee?

also natural gas explorations

need to improve the accessibility of federal personal to communities; need to connect and speak out; help reinvigorate US Man and the Biosphere program; a paradigm for the rest of the world; let's don't just take care of our own house

Needs to be areas set aside for children to play and 'disturb' the land. Perhaps a role for FS.

Pilot school funded by government!

NC parks have a program for kids K-5 for kids to come to state parks and learn that the outdoors is a good place to spend time. State should expand the program and the federal government should look at this program.

A new CCC.

More stringent environmental protection laws and increased enforcement in concerns of pollution. The idea of production outside the country should be rethought as well.

Get beyond the EOG and connect the students by other means, music etc.

More fed encouragement of recreation

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Rural areas have to have infrastructure; local Rural Development groups support rural businesses, etc. Could assist with some community niches; could help find partners and help; e.g.: Community Facilities program, low interest loan program; funding for schools; eco-tourism and relating small towns with parks – can help with revitalization (sidewalks, benches); can finance businesses in rural areas; Mountain BizWorks program receives loans at 1% and then provides low interest loans to small businesses

Conservation Easement; initiative for conservation easements need to become permanent

Decreased funding to National Parks and Forests. Maintenance a problem. Need an incentive program to help out. Needs to start from the top. Makes it difficult to partner when things take so long.

ENFORCEMENT! Need to be more enforcement of rules and regulations-needs to be more transparency when things are being funded, and there needs to be more accountability-more enforcement of already listed regulations

Wanted to know how involved the Department of Education is with this effort. One of the challenges is the state standards of learning/education standards/teaching to the test. Teachers are too afraid to break from the testing curriculum and take the kids outdoors.

Sustainability across administrations—how do we keep this moving with administration change.

Government should be willing partner on these programs. Need to decrease the amount of red tape involved in partnering with federal agency.

Biggest federal government role often is knowing all resources available.

Richtop development and wind power--- fear of developing wind power mixes with conservation mandate. Needs to be changes in attitudes. Influence of fed government to show us an “equilibrium with nature” there needs to be marketing of the importance of everything the outdoors has to offer as well as how we should continue to practice conservational efforts to better maintain such valuable recreations Tougher and tighter regulation of what goes into the rivers. (ex: pigeon river) make private industry sectors more accountable, they should be using their profits from dumping to also clean up the waters, etc.

Effectiveness of volunteers: kids exposed to volunteerism are more likely to be adult volunteers; need federal programs

Great Smoky Mountains National Park needs to charge a fee, and the majority of the fee should stay in the park.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Administration should take advantage of the economic downturn and publicize how inexpensive use of public lands can be. Show that money is not a barrier to camping in or visiting public lands.

White water paddling on the Chatuga River is not allowed on the upper portions. Lots of money is being spent to fight this. Waste. Battle could be simply solved – only river managed by FS like this in the forest. River managed to the needs of fisherman as opposed.

Rivers Trail Conservation Assistance Program is less than 1% of park's budget. Need more of an effort and support for this program.

Fed Govt needs to recognize that reducing the size of agencies is not fixing the efficiency issues; staff shortages for those that help maintain federal/park land is really affecting visitor experiences; less supervisors is a problem; #2 from rural Jackson Co – eastern border with Blue Ridge Parkway and very close to EBCI and GRSM; those federal agencies have funding problems; but use this challenge to think of creative solutions – see oil drilled in the western US and fees/taxes related to that helping fund public lands?; Current environment is prime for land conservation due to prices, etc.; NC is growing at rapid rate and these lands are threatened – biggest tool to help is the sale of public resources;

as NC expands lands programs, it would be a lot better to have more access to federal and state agencies – find out what lands are strategically important to all of us; work through acquisition process with federal land managers – historically hasn't always been what it could be

Getting kids and families back into the outdoors. NPS could teach families how to use their time at parks. Supply recreational opportunities (eg. rent kayaks, bikes). Need system of teaching unfamiliar outdoor families how to connect with outdoors.

Go straight to the teachers. Bureaucracy gets in the way higher up than that. GSMNP pays half a salary to a school teacher.

Fed govt needs to play a coordination role. Very little coordination between federal agencies particularly with regard to bureaucracy. Need coordinated efforts to set priorities collectively. States also have role, states need to get involved. Needs to be ongoing coordination. Who is the best agency to handle a certain issue or priority.

Fed government should take leadership role in river way development-often an interstate issues- too often it is just the local govt that drives it—important not only for recreation but provide conduits for wildlife

Have to give people a reason to care. Need educational component in schools.

Transportation. Need good public transportation system. Need to look long-term as to how we move goods and services, and how to get urban population to outdoor settings. Long term transportation plan that takes into account our economic and recreational needs.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

(500 mountaintops have been mined in the Southern Appalachians); natural scientists in all the agencies only talk to each other; can't speak outside their own field; need to have authority to speak to individuals; spoke to Southern Appalachian Man in the Biosphere (SAMAB) conference – no federal scientists have spoken to the outside world on climate change –

Loss of farmland. Models need to be developed. Need to make it affordable for new farmers. Need to recruit more farmers. Think creatively. Incentives for keeping farmlands farmlands

Preserving federal tax incentives for private citizens.

Money follows programs; mandates create programs – i.e. incorporating environmental ed must be mandated for money to be available.

Buncombe county advisory board is focal point of conservancy groups; can work across counties; cross-section of public and agencies; Federal and states could reward local jurisdictions with money to fund land conservancy programs

Get DOT involved; fed government needs to increase funding to federal natural resource agencies

Need to get DOT to the table – they need to be educated on natural resource management;

Wants to underscore the connection between resources and dollars. NC state parks had highest year of visitation ever last year. Not all states are that fortunate. Neighboring states have not been so lucky and Fed needs to help

GRSM has similar issues of air pollution. Continue to designate wilderness areas within National Forests. Important for enjoyment and preservation of species.

Advertising/campaigning not allowed and it's not taught in schools, so the message needs to get out there somehow, someday!

have more directional information, easily navigable user database with an inventory of recreational opportunities, and advertise it nationally (ex: great American outdoors online) have an index of all these activities

Tax credits are highly effective and need to be expanded.

NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program. \$ to preservation vs restoration has shown preservation is better way to spend the money. Feds could have similar program that provides \$\$ incentives for preservation.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Need stricter zoning around NPS sites to prevent encroachment. Would be cheaper than buying adjacent lands.

Full funding for preservation; easements are great working tool and funding is being reduced; federal government needs to recognize full value of easements and provide incentives; Section 106: largely misunderstood at a local level; feds could help explain initiative

Encourage federal development and participation in "Historicorps," emerging CCC, HABS/HAER

Not enough support in the right areas – schools, camps, educating the youth.

agency relinquish control – allow local entities to be empowered; engage at a local level to enable local initiatives

Unfortunate that some public schools only get small opportunities to engage in outdoor education.

Continue to have the tax credits for conservation. NC has a state credit for conservation. On a national basis, encourage states to provide tax credits for conservation. Collaboration needed with Land trusts. State/Federal need to be open to re-purchasing the land acquired by Land Trusts.

Wants EPA to stop air pollution in western NC. Mountains are at top of watershed. Wants stronger regulations on air pollution. Brook trout are challenged, black bears don't recognize state lines nor private property. Migratory birds need a good stopping place in their migrations.

NPS has gateway community planning, National Heritage Area has started the process of connecting communities to their nearby public lands as well. Fund that planning process, facilitate it, and follow through with it. It doesn't just happen. NPS has developed this process well. Use the same process for all public lands, state, local, federal. You don't need to own a cabin, just get a tent and enjoy western NC.

Need a strong, 30- year strategy of funding in order to make a difference. The feds need to step up with a similar dedicated stream of revenue that can be depended on in order to develop a long term vision.

Use local farms as part of the process. Use federal involvement.

Need to do a better job of interpreting and preserving the Rutherford Campaign, the southern frontier in the American Revolution. It's a national story and should be done by the NPS in concert with the Blue Ridge NHA.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Federal agencies need to be talking with each other. Interior and Commerce need to work together. What are we doing at the national level to build sustainability? Need to break down agency barriers to working together. Need to see it more broadly...find some balance and work together for noble and worthy goals.

Using the wrong criteria to measure success. Should the increasing number of cars on the Parkway be a measure of success or should we be looking at trams? Agencies need to be working together better...EPA, TVA, NPS. Agencies need to get out of their 'silos'.

Develop books for children, books that parents can use to better connect with outdoors, get children outdoors. Federal govt needs to be involved in getting kids outdoors.

School requirements (ex: EOG)... have some of the classes taught outdoors-outdoor classrooms

Need more planners at the local level who can go out into the communities around the parks/or forests to communicate plans and work collaboratively with towns and cities.

Benefit to feds is that with a dedicated federal funding stream, federal agencies can improve on their track record.

Federal role could be increase in communication. Michele Obama could tie her obesity initiative to getting kids outdoors.

NC needs to see that the Feds will indeed match state programs. It's an incentive for the states to step up to the plate.

purpose to cross-reference for agency contradictory regulations – Comprehensive review of Federal Programs with conflict rules – ie EA for one dept might be diff for another agency. Env Planning Process needs to be same cross agency rather than the barrier now.

Well funded marketing campaign would be helpful.

More focus on greenways, hiking trails, bike trails, etc. Connect the cities with the outer lying natural areas. How could the federal government be a better partner for implementing these types of plans?

Expand parks and wilderness.

Provide educational enrichment for teachers. Teachers then develop natural history curriculum. Need to encourage educational involvement.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Need national energy planning so that long-term conservation efforts can be improved.

Political battle – how much government should protrude in everyday lives and these programs? We do not have very many well financed powerful friends. Need to fight on broader political front. Campaigning would be helpful but is limited by government agencies.

Stay positive – campaigns against cigarettes and littering have taken years to implement. We don't have an exact path, but a lot of persistent people have done a lot and affected a lot. It takes time to get where we are going, but if we stay dedicated and optimistic, positive changes will begin showing.

Incentivizing local communities to contribute to Federal monies; NC has great track record in being leader in conservation; nice if Federal Government would recognize and weigh this into how funds are dispersed – in local programs, incentives are in place to match federal funds

look toward required community service for youths, like the AmeriCorps program

Volunteerism is the key. Volunteers can advertise, campaign, create support.

Get folks involved at federal level.

federal govt can help with staff to turn around approvals quicker – number of projects waiting approval is backlogged/massive and costs money; example – taking 3 years for one small access area...; currently not an effective system or use of resources

federal govt can play bigger role in marketing; reinforce youth session idea of finding celebrities to be spokespeople and engaged in these messages

uses state and national parks for experiences and sees inconsistencies in permitting/application fees/etc – need more consistency across agencies

develop a “rec easement” for private landowners that would allow them to provide for public use without worrying about liability issues, and give tax advantages for doing it

Lead the way on climate change.

Would like to see fed government be a leader in landscape level conservation. Longleaf pine restoration is a good example how it has been done.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Feds should partner with states to develop civilian conservation corps. This would educate and provide benefit.

All have been energized by Louv's Last Child in the Woods. Can the government help us with collecting data and convince school districts with this data. Inventorying the programs that work.

Hard to get corporate partners. Need to involve corporate partners in GAO Listening Sessions.

Need government to provide incentives to businesses to play more active role in these programs or to fund these programs. Eg. Provide incentives to businesses to support outdoor/environmental programs.

Support the No Child Left Inside and Elementary and Secondary Education Act --would encourage supplemental education for teachers. EPA puts out environmental education grants for states each year and this funding is very limited—need to provide more funding and more grant opportunities. Also, create funds/grants for connecting people to the outdoors. Lack of funding needs to be improved and provide incentives for teachers to get additional training.

Sea level rises will result in additional land needs. Wildlife corridors will increase in importance.

Emphasis on Education – Green Issues/Industries – Push toward that in Education, esp cities – NC is no longer a Rural state. Bring back the music..? Endowment for Arts, so why not Endowment for the Green umbrella.

Publicity for National Trails Day is very good. They use website to make all the opportunities known. Can the federal government create website where trails groups and other organizations can upload information about recreational events/opportunities for the public. Would be one-stop shop for finding rec. opportunities. American Hiking Society's National Trail Day website. Make it easier to find opportunities.

Federal partners need to bring partners in as part of the "family". Organizations do not want to be controlled by grant requirements, reporting requirements etc. Simplify grant process.

Fund the YCC more in all communities (embracing future generations)-provide man power for the national forest-develop conversationalists

federal government should fund a PSA (public service announcement) or campaigns to encourage retirees and other citizens to volunteer at their nature centers (botanical gardens, arboretums, etc), specifically locally.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Ask federal government to retain its promise of LWCF. Great program, with dedicated revenue stream. But almost from day one it has gone downhill. Have LWCF fully funded and fully dedicated is something desperately needed in NC and across the nation. Funds must be dedicated so that they do not have to go through the appropriation process every year. Gives people an opportunity to plan, not just speculate, on what they can do each year.

Thanks to NPS and USFS for doing a lot with a little.

Blue Ribbon commission produced report for NPS that provides importance of education of youth. Lots of good recommendations in report.

Need to identify partners. DoE should be involved in these discussions. Own lots of land.

Need national level backing for this initiative. Need Department of Education involved as well as other agencies—not just DOI, USDA.

Dept. of Education needs to put emphasis on outdoors and natural history. Give schools incentives

If we cut on taxes we cut jobs, maintenance and sections of every service the government provides. Need to do better job at letting know and educating public on what taxes contribute to.

By investing in green technology, energy resources specifically, a huge difference can be made. Not only in helpful in our surroundings and environment, but with peoples' attitudes. Online technology magazines have proved to be useful.

Need to have more hiring programs for youth like SCA or provide ways for more agencies to use SCA programs.

Present use value program – allows farmers to pay less taxes. Farmers want land to remain in present use value as they age. Extend this program

Re: Youth in the Outdoors; what about the youth desiring to be in proactive positions? Government should push internships and help emerging youth develop their career paths

children are wired and stay in their houses and parents encourage this – need to get people out and interacting in nature; need PSA's to get people unwired, medical community needs to understand the importance of nature, as well as educator's

SCA – one thing Fed could do – get more kids involved by new energy/recognition to youth corps.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

decision makers need to get outdoors to see it first hand; inform developers of “sense of place”; fund staff time to do community education

Depts of Transportation at fed and state levels need more emphasis on trails- want higher \$\$ spent on trails as means of transportation

Use broader initiatives to work with scouts and other organizations to market outdoor opportunities.

SCA students make good ambassadors for outdoor jobs and recreation. Have returning SCA students engage scouts and other organizations to promote careers.

A great thing about our state parks is the ability to step up from easy camping to hardcore. Need to get the message out that there is something for everyone.

Make the outdoors more multi-media friendly.

We updated science standards recently, why not nature education. What is the federal responsibility?

I think the perception is that the parks are in a bubble, this is not the reality to how water flows, where animals live. Park service needs to lend expertise to smaller units on water conservation, green initiatives.

You have to put nature and outdoors into the curriculum in the schools. Today’s technology has worked against getting children outdoors. Need federal funding.

Stability in relationship with turnover of personnel. Multi-year projects hard to start over. AMEN

matching funds to where people are i.e., Great Smoky Mtn NP or Blue Ridge Parkway (have highest visitation in system)

Consistency in message to American People

Partner with McDonalds to support the parks and conservation measures. National park trading cards.

Remember that the arts are a vital link to the parks.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

protect buffers around military bases – need increased DOD funding for farms and forests around bases

keep entrance funds local! Look at park units individually

get children outdoors; FHWA has huge impact on state's budget; FHWA – get back into thinking about alternative transportation; need money to staff educational programs; public needs to get on to their public officials; has to start at the grassroots level with local officials; FHWA needs to be involved at the beginning

funding – tax incentives, project funding, etc.; land agencies need to be talking to the commerce agencies; rural economic development - need to promote REAL rural development such as tourism

National parks should promote their tourism benefits, sales tax dollars raised and how local recreation promotes quality of life.

drop in staff, 50% Drop, shut down parks—teachers losing job- PE first to go—why are trying to get people out there but they have no Play/PE time at young ages.

National wildlife refuges generally only day use- opening them for more camping-would generate more local income if people stayed longer

Need more advertising. Use more celebrities to hype parks.

There is bad propaganda, no showers, cell phones, etc... Camping doesn't have to be extreme. Doesn't have to be roughing it. Can be luxury.

We need to teach teachers to go outside and teach nature.

Dept of Ag needs to pay attention to Small Farms as much as it does to Large corporate - Subsidy rules, Health and Safety food act

chickens in Urban settings, Protect that right. Ermaculture

Need to promote mountain sports in schools, thrill seeking sports (extreme).

We need to bridge the gap between youth and outdoors. Using social media take away from each other. Using facebook to convince people not to be on facebook and go outdoors...

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

I have no idea how to apply for a NPS job.

responsibility to make good on promises – inventoried roadless areas, wilderness study areas, etc

Private lands need to get access to adjacent fed land for uses such as riding stables/trails- will generate jobs in small towns- pvt lands need to utilize nearby forest lands better-

Short term politics and long term projects are a big disconnect. Programs started by one administration cut by next administration.

Need a grass roots campaign to convince congress to put initiatives into the schools.

Adjacent PVT to FS – calls and complaints – need to rethink the good neighbor policy – ROW etc addressing.

Getting \$\$ to the NGO's and work collaboratively with them- provide tech transfer- use NGO's to get federal information out

Last Child in the Woods –book should be required reading!

Air pollution----ozone alerts discourage outdoor recreation-need legislation on climate change

D o NOT tear up lands already preserved-energy policy should encourage biking, etc

Be as inclusive as possible when planning recreation- don't go straight to wilderness- preserve hunting opportunities

Emphasize pack-in-pack-out---- campsite 70 in GSMNP a mess- attracted feral hogs during a recent trip

USFS contracts out timbering- be sure they supervise these guys- I live near the AT near Mill Ridge-need to move USFS to USDI to prevent timbering

Agencies have multiple jurisdictions --don't communicate with each other- volunteers have a hard time getting agencies to talk to each other- when they do, great things happen-volunteers are the mortar between the bricks- initiatives don't come together unless the volunteers do it

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Need a natl office of environmental education- agencies need a cooperative, unified plan

Trout streams are being filled in by mountaintop mining; need better controls to prevent damages from this resource extraction

Federal incentives for conservation easements need to be made permanent; people are shying away due to the uncertainty

decision makers into the field – can make conservation advocates out of them; what is land trust communities role in climate change? – federal government needs to provide leadership on this, incentivize conservation; target NRCS programs towards conservation programs

Local schools are getting backyard habitat. Fed provide incentives.

Identify highest and best use of National Forests. In TN and NC this use is recreation. Need more money for trail maintenance. Need to ask for more.

-Include part of the educational curriculum to be taught outside, or have more recreational education, environmentally hands on education

-keep up to date !!

Initiatives towards institutionalized “fitness” campaigns, as well as recycling campaigns and Go Green type pitches. Get kids outdoors, childhood obesity and benefiting the land.

have the gov simplify things to the public

Incorporated a city in order to protect resources – many grants available, but it's hard to comply with the rules – need to break down barriers and not just base of household income – should “beta test” some innovative projects and programs beyond current ideas – clustered development and use plans, env-based charter schools – green incubators – also to share info on what already being done

many local inhabitants have never experienced locally available sports (like rafting) – high-speed internet infrastructure a necessity for growth of rural areas – WNC a great incubator for this (Bryson City, for instance)

need a comprehensive national database of local recreation economic impact studies – would help those trying to convince local managers of rec's values – need to make electric grid corridors available for recreation use, where needed for trail connectivity

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

change FS mission to emphasize natural ecosystems (ID this economic value), and other uses subordinate to this, including recreation uses – how to fund? - Make Pisgah RD a National Recreation Area – would increase this economic value, move away from dependence on fire & timber \$

May need to limit use of rec areas to protect them – more rec use isn't always better

major role - stop frivolous lawsuits brought against agencies on environmental grounds

multi-use greenways should be a priority for funding – to connect resources and people – both in urban and in rural environments – a major federal role to fund these, help w/permitting and design

Greenways important – make them a required part of DOT development plans – and make FS trails sustainable

great to see agencies working together on this initiative – a good process – to be successful, much be collaborative between fed/state agencies, NGO's and local govt's

Confusing to know the rules in each NF unit – “can I have a beer here?” - not communicated well – need to get the info out better for the public

In GA, had the same problem with family services, made a small sub-agency from representative of the larger agencies to help public navigate the bureaucracy

Accountability. Are funded programs including the underrepresented population? That is key. Rate or grade the programs.

Manage to “protect” the natural resources. Federal government needs to stand behind conservation and laws as opposed to bending to the will of business/corporation.

Federal government should make parks more accessible.

Local governments give tax incentives for development, federal government should provide incentives for ‘green space’ in developments.

Most of the Pisgah forest is used for education, hiking, fishing, recreation. Is there any value in designating forest or portion of the forest as recreational area?

Young people see role models in National Park Service employees. Mentoring is important. Young people emulate parents and other adults.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Federal government senior positions – many are eligible for retirement. Losing institutional knowledge.

Cooperation is key. Federal government has the opportunity to encourage collaboration and cooperation with other agencies and private sector. Sustainable communities is a great idea that puts multiple objectives into one basket.

Lack of funding to take care of the lands we have. See that with the EPA, statewide only 7 people to do erosion control. Things fall through the cracks when you don't have capacity.

Disconnect between where the funding is needed and

A challenge in education is that we haven't reached the educational policy makers. There is a fear that kids won't meet appropriate mandated national education standards.

There is a challenge in reaching the staff – educating the teachers.

Funding. Upgrading and maintaining our parks.

Facilities that are historic and cultural resources.

Greenway development. Referred to British government as a model for preserving green spaces.

Old SCS (NRCS) is an excellent example for ecosystem protection. Need a regional look within the federal perspective to align investments. Focusing cost share money where it can make a difference. Ultimately the private land needs a stronger focus.

Issue of fear of engaging in nature.

Federal agency emphasis on consequences of climate change.

Advocacy is not generally seen as part of a federal employee's job. It is difficult for public agencies to be advocates.

Agencies who want partners are not the ones who are writing regulations. Too much red tape just to do anything on forests ericve land. Need to streamline means to work with partnerships.

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Need way of funding the programs that can demonstrate that they have made a difference.

This listening session is an example of good governance—to come and ask for public's input and use a bottom-up approach versus a top-down approach.

Green Opportunities should focus on smaller issues that everyone can participate in, such as keeping hometown clean. It's a trickle effect. Reach people in areas that they care about and

Recruit volunteers and make sure they have a good working experience and they will spread the word.

Harvesting wind energy

Farm initiatives in Atlanta schools - outreach to kids

Turning dammed rivers into natural rivers

Easier access

Increase awareness of outdoor opportunities like SCA

Increase state and local funding and info

gov could sponsor a summer camp for kids who would normally spend summer indoors, family doesn't have money

gov could take inner city kids outside - discussed outward bound trip to show people how to live in the outdoors

more visitor centers/education to the public on parks

challenge the American public to go a day "unplugged"

proviging information of activities to do in parks based on age and family structure

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

continue funding at all levels of local, state and federal levels

1. federal government working with schools to do more class trips and getting classrooms to hold class outdoors (especially to target urban schools, historically black college [HBCU's], no child left outside); emphasize parks in biology and environmental

1. emphasize funding for low-income communities

1. media partnership: team up with television stations to hold "black-out day" allowing kids to get away from technology and get outdoors

1. new advertising campaign (ie. Smokey the Bear)

1. make all parts "cool" through advertising (direct and indirect) and holding outdoors events/concerts/etc. in parts to get folks interested

1. education for parents: often with multiple jobs, busy schedules it's tough, but sharing information with parents about parks and programs

a. safety in the outdoors, but without confining with cameras, security, police, etc.

i. community run program with local volunteers

1. programs (like day-care) where working parents can bring kids to enjoy outdoors for the day

1. volunteer programs (like anti-litter) in parks and local communities to get kids interested and involved in enjoying and protecting outdoors

lots of parks have limitless programs, but not enough public outreach to increase awareness of programs

can be integrated into local school districts, teaching (teaching teachers how to teach in the outdoors)

1. Emphasize No Child Left Inside in urban schools and historically black college's with greater emphasis on parks, landscapes, and outdoor fields trips

Discussion Question 3

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

1. Create after-school programs and outing clubs that are led by youth

1. Media and government partnership to spark public outreach in classrooms and with parents; with the classrooms, emphasize teaching teachers HOW to teach in the outdoors; for parents, educating them on how to be safe and create safe havens in the outdoo

Discussion Question 3

Bangor, ME

Feds educate people about the natural resources, gov consider a feasibility study of Maine North Woods NP

Websites need to be easier to use Easier to find information. Currently information is buried too deep in the site to find. Websites should be more interactive and information readily accessible.

Delphi Forecast Techniques to develop who will own forests in ME in the future. It is anonymous. This technique the Federal Government ought to use. It identifies inherent polarization.

Key to Project SHARE is that the federal government is a peer to other partners. It is a partnership of large landowners and agencies. It is not us against them.

Maine has 7000 farmers with 800 million dollars in products and they own 1.34 million acres which is 7% of the total land in Maine. Most of this land is open, but farmers do not receive one penny for keeping their land open. Farmers and landowners need incentives, such as paying landowners to keep their land open. Federal grants through Farm Bill Cost Share programs should do this.

Forest landowners produce the wildlife habitat which is the basis for wildlife economy. In ME farmers can't charge for hunters to hunt on their land. Landowners do not benefit like the guides, etc. do. The NRCS programs can provide compensation such as keeping trees on their land that provide deer habitat. NRCS programs can give some compensation for this if programs are configured properly. Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife are mapping the knowledge of what we have for natural resources. This will give people info as to what we have and is the key to get people outdoors. Need more of this. Could the feds combine this info in one spot.

If we trained our replacements, we can double ourselves. Need mentors to double youth interest. Knowledge is lost because we haven't educated the youth in what we know about the natural resources. Youth leave Maine, make money then come back when they retire. [a deep concern for building constituency in conservation.]

Incorporate into curriculum at all grade levels experiential conservation education and environmental awareness.

The entity that wants to do conservation has the same permitting process as a developer. Feds should come up with a permitting process that is different for putting a dam in and taking a dam out. Good conservation and returning [the land] back to natural should be easier. Feds got together 4 or 5 years ago. Has anything been done?

Nationally there are lots of special projects in the America's Great Outdoors web site. Getting here you should have noticed the sheer scale of forests and waterways in Maine. If one thing would help us move ahead, let the Maine woods be an example at the national level. Maine forests need to rise to the top of the list at the fed level.

Discussion Question 3

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Keep federal designation as part of the mix. For example, Umbagog National Wild Refuge [a federal designation] assisted the local partnership in obtaining an expansion of the area in conservation.

Organization-North Maine Woods- who collaborate with landowners to develop maps and public access signage. But..underfunded. There are some fees for access to support the information that is available, but if the federal gov't could fund it somewhat, the effect would be much better.

Envirothon is very helpful for students to increase their awareness of natural resources and career opportunities related to natural resources. Envirothon brings kids outside and specialists into schools. Also, Nordic skiing is a big sport in Maine that is often overlooked.

His wife is a teacher and the problem is that everyone wants the schools to be the sources of environmental education. More education, hands on education, is needed, but schools seem to be the dumping ground for all the extracurricular stuff. Working extra things into the regular curriculum can be challenging. Funding outdoor education during the summer is an alternative if day camps can be funded partly by the federal government.

Need for large scale funding is there, but small scale funding is also a big need. EX: \$4000 grant helped make a festival possible to bring a community together around a fisheries project focus. It shouldn't be a cumbersome process to request small amounts.

As we look to some of the federal stewardship programs, it strikes me that there are quite a few with different details. Maybe it would be good to combine these programs make it broader and make it more flexible. Conservation easements allow the working forest or working agricultural to meet economic needs as well as provide non-economic benefits. We have two large conservation easements. A 200,000 easement that eliminates all commercial development and allows the public access for all traditional uses. The other easement is a 400 foot strip along both sides of the Penobscot River. Conservation easements provide the opportunity for the best of both worlds.

Money is always the problem. This is an industry that relies on volunteers. Grooming 14,000 miles of trails is not easy, and the expectation to have well groomed trails exists. If the legislature would allow us to govern ourselves then we would have more money in the system.

Encourage the fed. Gov't to support innovation. The projects happening here are innovative projects. I think some of this innovation is out ahead of the fed. Gov't. Some of our innovation is ahead of the federal curve. We require cross-agency involvement and that is sometimes difficult.

Take a risk and thank _____ for support. Keeping Maine Forests as Forest - all the grants have real specific requirements and the programs should be carried over across administrations

Discussion Question 3

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Feds can watch what's happening in Maine. Please help us financially to compensate the landowners. 14,000 miles of groomed trail across the state - the highest number in the northeast. But the entire system is built on the backs of volunteers and the volunteers are getting older and not enough young people are interested in grooming and riding. We need to increase registration fees.

Create the Maine North Woods National Park and a feasibility study

Greatest way to maintain the forest land is eliminate estate

Mythology of what a NP would be, some parks allow hunting, different access, showcase some models of different models to diffuse some to the mythology. Possibly create a new model for a National Park.

Farming example, Fed owns lots of land in the west farmer graze cattle in the west pay a fee to GOV, in Maine how about State pays farmers a grazing fee for the "State owned" Wild life (Eco Serve)

Extend CE tax benefits, fund more CE programs.

enhancing the partners program and reinstating landowners incentive program

No more programs, but more funding for the existing successful programs.

Make NLCS lands a priority, fund a symposium to science BLM decision

American Heritage Rivers, River navigator, deals with the beauracracy and may be beneficial to model on other programs.

Landowners understress to maintain public access, all levels of Govt to help landowners to keep land open instead of purchasing

Science - I am concerned about the effects of windmills on our viewshed. We have to use the science to camouflauge the turbines. We need to do that with noise as well - use science in everything we do. The government needs to provide these science.

We need support for federal legislation to address NNIS. Also we need support for the National Invasive Species Council. It insures that fedearl agencies work cooperatively. The Council started well, but it has suffered from lack of support

Discussion Question 3

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

We need expertise from engineers, environmental engineers, fish passage engineers, etc. In Maine we do not have a large engineering staff and we need this help.

Lack of qualified and competent project managers. The Federal government is key to funding, but we need these funds to be somewhat flexible. It is difficult to weed through all the funding opportunities to find the right fit.

Fully fund the National Park System. We have 340,000 members in our Association. PLEASE fully fund the LWCF. There are many programs that are working - please fund them.

Some type of partnership between the Maine Woods and the National Park Service. There has to be a way to set aside a part of the Maine Woods to establish a National Park.

Fully fund LWCF. The state should get a portion of the LWCF. The Forest Legacy Program is working well. We are limited by the funding we can get even though we have far more forest than any other state.

We need a New England Forest Management Plan - we need to start thinking large scale

There are unique roles of the federal government. Making and enforcing rules and owning land is a unique function of the federal government. Existing Parks, Wildlife Refuges, and Forests need to be funded.

We need the Maine Woods National Park. Only 6% of ME is in federal ownership. Only .09% is protected in Wilderness. These are some of the lowest percentages in the country. The ME woods is under huge stress - biofuel, wind power, biomass are putting particular pressure on the ME woods.

The ME Woods National Park would be an economic engine, connect people to the land, and protect the north woods. The key is feasibility study that would look at the options and have an open public conversation and give a hard look at this possibility.

We'd like the portion of the WMNF back. Auction it off and give us the proceeds to build roads and trails.

Available federal funds to incentivize private owners to protect certain areas with particular resource values. For example, deer wintering yards.

We provide landowners with conservation alternatives. We have conserved over 800,000 acres of easements. ME has the largest contiguous forest land east of the Mississippi.

Allow the Sec of Interior and Agriculture to take risk and fund the most important projects first. Invest and learn.

Discussion Question 3

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Bought land for conservation. Worked with paper company to get the land but there were no incentives to keep land in conservation. Interest rate for land is 8% (high). A low interest rate program for people who want to buy land for conservation would be great. Private landowners don't get tax credits large corporations get so they have to think about changing how they manage their land (conservation vs. economic). Everyone needs to look at KMF website

Education comments need to be taken with a field based components and work with schools to incorporate into their instruction. Schools need the resources to take students to the field to work with environmental experts (Field days)

Government education programs are available, but there's a need to promote them and use as a resource.

School administrator's need to be educated always.

SWCD, RC&Ds, School Districts, source of volunteers but funding is just too hard to come by. Can't federal government provide funds to support these type of groups' efforts for education and public access. Small amount would go a long way. Need to get be able to get to resources easily.

As you witnessed, we are enormously proud of the Penobscot Project and the continuing commitment to its successful completion. The project includes several federal agencies, the Penobscot Indian Nation, the State of Maine, hydropower owners PPL Corporation and Black Bear Hydro LLC and several conservation groups and many other partners. The project is the result of exemplary collaborative federal leadership, from the negotiation of the agreement to technical assistance to funding. For instance, the Department of the Interior (U .S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs); Department of Commerce (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency all play key roles; partn ership with the Department of Agriculture is also promising. This vital collaboration remains critical.

We are actively seeking both private and public support to ensure completion of the project. Support from the President in FY12 would move the Penobscot Project quickly toward our goal of completing the core elements of project implementation over the next 4 years.

We welcome your thoughts and leadership on how to ensure the Penobscot Project's success. We hope this model is the very type of project to be highlighted in the AGO report and the President's FY12 budget.

Discussion Question 3

Berkeley, CA

Easier to get a group of wilderness permits: streamline process/bureaucracy

Pay for internship programs = complicated: Hard to hire local youth (VIP program); Formalize internship programs (MPS and partners? / D of A / D of I?); Better/easier access/pay for undocumented youth

NPS--new "series"--youth development/stewardship/internship

Prevailing wage issue: Make youth priority/youth friendly, don't lump with unemployed adults; mechanisms to provide "classification" for youth and people who work with youth

Money for transportation

Streamline /simply partnership agreements and expectations

Bring "park to youth"--i.e. CA state parks working in central LA to create new park : focus on urban areas and urban fringes

Use cultural resources in addition to natural resources

Money/policy -- energy dept. -- to refocus on bikes -- connect to open spaces

More partnership/volunteer coordinators: Forest Service, NPS , BLM (all agencies)

Access to jobs for young people : preferential hiring authority for young people who serve in Cons. Corps, etc. -- healthy forests public lands corps act

Better systems for seasonal employees (health insurance, etc.) or better "pipeline" to permanent positions (so we can keep youth once we get them)

Bring "living stories" to communities

Use of cultural resources to engage youth (emphasize interconnections between cultural and natural resources) -- holistic approach

Discussion Question 3

Berkeley, CA

(cont.)

Creating youth-friendly environments where young people can feel safe -- train staff

Replication of successful models that better integrate NPS interpretation and education with park partner education and stewardship

Tribal interface

Support connection with youth from every age; promote potential future employment opportunities...train youth to go back to their communities as promoters of programs

Recognize gaps between "silos" of engagement: Provide support to bridge those gaps (i.e. youth participate in program, then don't know what to do with their transformation)

Streamlining partnership agreements and expectations (internal and external)

Simplify and create access to paid internships, long-term careers

More positions--youth program coordinators and partnership coordinators

Looking at cultural/natural resources holistically, in terms of outreach, partnerships, and programs

Emphasize creation of youth-friendly environments with youth leadership

Building in family components to all youth programs

Better integration among and between agencies and partners in development of youth programming

Encourage funding of "Learn + Serve" CNCS -- funnel money to get kids into park

Liaisons for NPS resources/ heard to connect with resources /get bounced from one place/person to another

Using cultural resources as "bait" -- build bridge to natural resources

Discussion Question 3

Berkeley, CA

(cont.)

Support programs that engage families (i.e. passes for future events, directions for returning, etc.)

Programs that provide repeat experiences

We need "youth development coordinators" who can facilitate connection between orgs and parks

Importance of providing emotional/physical safety (know "quiet history" of sites -- why some populations won't recreate there)

Early Age--utilize a variety of community-based organizations (e.g. youth, religious, cultural, schools, etc.) to expose youth to outdoors

Pre-teen/Adolescents -- foster a sense of environmental stewardship/responsibility through more intense experience; maximize peer to peer communication and connection (e.g. outdoor camp operated and maintained by Boys and Girls Club)

Young Adults -- provide skill building opportunities in the outdoors (e.g. Corps) as part of a career pathway; provide challenging and transformative experiences

Provide a national framework within which public-private partnerships (cross-sector collaboration) can work instead of disparate efforts

Facilitate conversation between different funders (currently there are few linkages between corporate funders and foundations grantmaking in the same area)

Land management agency should consider multiple benefits when allocating funding for projects or maintenance and include youth development goals

Explore ways to leverage non-traditional sources of funding, such as Department of Labor (WIA) or safe schools/healthy start/crime prevention

Start with activities in the city, build up to going to the camp, then coming back to help maintain the camp facilities

Start with community-based organizations: schools, religious groups, athletic programs, youth groups, etc.

No Child Left Inside; Outdoor education; Connect art and nature

Discussion Question 3

Berkeley, CA

(cont.)

Make school funding more secure to make room for innovative programs

Federal legislation; fully fund Public Lands Service Corps Act; pass Youth Corps Act

National framework to organize efforts - Ex. AmeriCorps. Have a database?

Encourage funders to collaborate

Connect private foundations with corporate funders in same grant making area. Right now we have separate conversations - corporate funders talk to each other and private foundations talk to each other

Make Workforce Investment Act (WIA) dollars more accessible for this type of work

Local, state, and federal maintenance dollars could go to youth programs if allocated according to multiple benefits, include youth development goals

Tap into more non-traditional sources of funding; Public safety community – officers /workers/funding are untapped resources

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

Take the environmental evidence, map out the corridors and dispersal areas, protect these areas so that the wildlife can move as freely as possible. Limiting our rerouting commercial semi truck traffic in ecologically sensitive areas is critical in this effort. The Western Gainers Resolution must be followed. Use environmental reports to determine corridors and disturbance areas. Educational corridors for schools to teach to the next generation. The government should support our efforts to support wildlife corridors in the entire state of Montana, especially the Madison Valley as well as Idaho and Gallatin Valley, Hwy 191.

Organize communities to develop local strategies to protect waterways. Educate and train children on water clean and free. Employ state and federal guidelines for oversight and regulations.

Make our parks and forests a priority in the federal budget. Think long-term when we decide what we want to use our land and resources for.

Reduce traffic speed and eliminate long-haul trucks from the Madison Valley. Implement setbacks on riders and eliminate dumping and pollution. Corridor development and get more land into conservation easements.

It is critical that outdoors activities and the facilities to provide them are able at all levels. Local governments and states have increasing use, aging infrastructure and limited staff and operations to provide these types of opportunities close to populations and with easy access.

Fully fund the LWCF with equal funding to the stateside to provide operate and maintain local recreational opportunities

Support grassroots efforts with federal and state money. Tough legislation to face individuals and cooperation to take appropriate action.

We are not creating any more lands, but we are supporting more people. We must preserve our diverse and unique public lands and landscapes, watersheds, wildlife, fish and bird habitats for future generations and engage young people in their protection. Uses must be appropriate not destructing public lands belonging to all Americans- whether or not they even visit them- they are out national heritage. Local people must avoid seeing these lands as theirs not ours. Politics, money and climate change.

Engaging all stakeholders in a collaborative approach resulting in solution on issues of public lands for the common good. Uses must be sustainable. Bring people together to solve problems- leave divisive rhetoric behind.

How do share access to wilderness and out doors without people feeling left out- There should be NO snowmobiles in National Parks- but there should be places for them - some with atv's on some trails ect. Balancing is the key!

To create buy in for balance- by insisting on more dialogue and more education

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Climate change and building resilience into our ecosystems so they can adapt to this change. Connecting people to natural landscapes and fostering future conservation leadership. Protecting our remaining core habitats on public and private lands that do not currently have permanent protection

Local partnerships informed by the best available science. Fed govt providing funding and technical assistance to inform collaborative partnerships. Support for legislative efforts that grow from local collaborations such as SB 1470- The Forest Jobs and Recreation Act.

1. Carbon initiative- pricing 2. development guidelines 3. use less/ guidelines

Manage our resources for future generations not for short term profits

Fractal landscapes from development sprawl, great demands in fewer resources - (water, air) as well as transportation routes. Threat of "no net gain" of public lands is strong in Montana, but is very shortsided and destructive. Please protect against "no net gain" policies.

Protective laws for watersheds and lands including cluster developments and enforced air and water quality standards

Maintain large intact national areas that are interconnected to allow movement of animals and plants as the climate changes

Reconciling agenda 21 goals and maintaining private property rights. Agenda 21 specifically eliminates private property rights as well as most agricultural freedom. We cannot destroy these freedoms without destroying our way of life.

Revise our game flow to promote not destroy private property rights. Most of the best managed lands in American are privately owned and the worst are federally owned

Fundamentally, recognized that current populations density and levels of resource consumption create pressure on ecosystems and wildlife that did not operate as strongly in the past. Consequently stronger policies for preservation of ecosystem function and species conservation are necessary.

1. strong federal policy for the preservation and expansion of protected areas and endangered species! 2. strong federal policy to internalize the environmental cost of economic activity for extractive/ pollution activities. (as with ozone, so2). 3. Strong federal promotion of the development of carbon-neutral energy.

Fully fund WCF. Plus more and into working lands conservation programs like FRPP, GRP, FLP, WRP

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Adequate funding of NPS, LWCF to protect the core and critical landscapes. Work across boundaries to protect large landscapes. National parks are the key to the AGO initiative, start there. Fund what worlds, RCTS programs, youth deer program.

Conservation issues in Montana are most successfully addressed by bottom-up, grass roots efforts that are based on collaboration. These are inclusive of multiple issues (forestry, weeds, wildlife, water) and the local privatization of the issues

the best strategy to address the challenge that these groups face is support through programs such as funding. The cooperative watershed management act, land and water conservation fund and others

Most land managers recognize the impact of invasive but lack of resources and energy commitment. 1. reenergizes NISC give it the same emphasis as the Clinton administration did. 2. include basic funding for invasive in agencies and field units.

Lack of understanding that all the natural world is connected and we are part of this web. Showing how a philosophy of what is the common good is important not just "what's in it for me"? Implementation use of education in schools about connectedness. Get children off electronic games. understanding how to show people to understand what each does and what one state does affects all of us. (environment is not a bad word)

1. NPS get back to its most basic, oldest mission 2. revise update the 1972 Mining Act 3. Fully fund LWCA 4. Strategic land trades and purchases to enhance public benefits of public lands.

Climate change, all land management units within DOI must have explicit mandates to manage their lands for both present and future climate impacts. Decisions should be sound science. climate smart management should focus on 3 main tactics 1. protect adequate core areas, buffer areas and connecting corridors 2. limit non-climate stressors (logging, ORV use, etc) 3. Interagency coordination with state and local counterparts to develop and implement ecosystems-wide climate-smart management programs

Regulations- 1. mandates and guidelines 2. collaboration between federal, state, local agencies and non profits 3. Involve local citizens and organizations

Pryer Mountains of south central Montana needs better protection of anchor his tried sites and better protection of the land with control over 4 or 2 vehicles

Coordinating diverse state/ federal/ local programs for common goals. Time- people are maxed with work and school responsibilities. Finding common ground between groups/ stakeholders that have antagonistic relationships.

Support financial and with policy local watershed/ conservation groups. Support flexibility with work and school programs to encourage people to get outside. Start educating kids about restoration early -middle school, continue through college, Support these programs. Support financiers for salaries for people working on these efforts.

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

1. wild land being locked up to all/ any activity other than walking/ back packing 2, good farm/ranch being subdivided 3. oil dependence

1, keeping lands open to motorized access, youth and the age will be better able to access these places, house specific trails/ paths for motorized access., Have specific trails for non motorized activity. 2. raise the estate taxes or eliminate it. Better/ easier easements. Incentives for youth farmers/ ranchers 3. developed new oil strategies on land not 50 miles out in the ocean.

keeping very large ecosystems in trust forever.

conservation alliances between public and private sector

Combined CRP and WRP programs, conservation easements on Private land that consider reasonable public access.

amend the act and grant more credibility (i.e., less vulnerability to frivolous lawsuits) to the environmental assessment process.

Engaging urban populations minority and youth populations in active outdoor lifestyles.

1. complete streets 2. connectivity of alternative trails and recreation networks in urban areas 3. recreation services and infrastructure

The Federal government can't lock up millions of acres each administration and then fret about the lack of participation in the "great outdoors" providing more access to and through public lands. "wilderness" legislation are putting too many recreational areas off-limits to all but a few able-bodied long-distance hikers. we need to be more creative and inclusive in how we define uses for these areas.

More trails and existing roads open to motorized vehicles. We can take turns like what was done in the 70's in the Gallatin National Forest for snowmobilers and cross country skiers. They each has designated days of the week and or weeks of the month to be on the trails and roads, and it worked.

Grant support to community based NGO's that represent sustainable projects and show more betting acumen.

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Enforceable standards to maintain core needs and values. Financial and other assistance for coordination , communication and collaboration. Applied to a comprehensive national strategy to ensure wildlife and ecosystems can adjust to a changing climate and a national network of conservation lands sufficient to ensure all our wildlife and ecosystems will be available in abundance for future generations. Key strategies- maintain core areas such as public lands. Through short, clear, understandable and enforceable standards and through full funding for the land and water conservation fund. -Maintain wildlife and ecological connectivity including across private lands, through: strategies and programs that promote coexistence with wildlife and ecologically improved land management, including more funding for existing programs such as Forest Legacy Program, WDF- Livestock assistance program as applied to wildlife conflicts.

Managing and conserving our watersheds for clear water and habitat. Restore our degraded habitats. Promote thoughtful human development patterns. Connect conservation and local, sustainable food initiatives. Focus conservation efforts on large, reground linkages for biodiversity.

Promote public-private partnerships and financially support them through programs and funds. Adjust government programs to fit current needs and conditions (i.e. WREP pilot for NRCS) . Expands contracts or cooperative agreements between federal and state government and conservation NGO's and watershed groups.

Redefining corporations business entities without political rights. Rights are the domain of human beings and their fully voluntary associations.

Protection and connecting large wild landscapes. Protecting and connecting habitats for fish and wildlife (examples: bison, bighorn sheep, grizzly bears).

Protect habitat and promote regulated public hunting and fishing, fully fund land and waters conservation fund, Eliminate wasteful government intervention. Abandon ARS Domestic Sheep Experiment Station in Centennial Mountains. Abandon domestic sheep grazing on public land Bighorn sheep's habitat. Abandon Bison capture facilities at Stephens CrkiN Yellowstone National Park. Abandon bison capture facilities at Horse BVTTE on VSFS land.

Incentivizing water conservation and quality improvement Projects. Encouraging local communities to develop comprehensive water management plans, include all stakeholders (youth, feds, local government, private landowners ect.) if those plans are in place communities can receive federal financial incentives for water conservation and quality improvement projects

The control of our public and private lands. Federal level putting our state land into wildlife reserves. Treasured landscapes and grasslands. I also find it odd that the biggest place of the proposed wildlife refuge in eastern MT. is over a very large oil and gas deposit.

Let each state control there own land , put the people choice first. Let us vote at a state level.

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Funding for land and water conservation. Protecting resources while including all recreation users- balancing - maintain tools for working forest and ranchers.

Full funding for land and water conservation fund

Passage of global climate change legislation, better and less political management by our federal agencies.

1. Do not lock up public land (national monuments) to eliminate timber, mineral, oil extraction. Especially in the Baitken Shall Area 2. Do increase access to public lands. Even through mandatory easements. 3. man made climate change is bull shit.

Anticipate and adapt- don't keep on business as usual, head in the sand. Don't spend money to keep/ replace status quo

1. Agriculture education in curriculums nationwide. Public outreach and education. 2. Manage wildlife rather than putting responsibility on ranchers. Be accountable

Leave the lands to the locals. The Federal government cannot manage all the lands of this nation. The federal lands are owned by locals.

Broad involvement coordinated leadership and education

Kids are out future conservationist, and they are spending, less time outdoors and more time on the couch. We need to find ways to re-connect children with the outdoors, whether on a large scale (trails, national parks) or small scale (urban parks)

Rather than reducing school budgets for physical education (and art, music) our government needs to ensure adequate funding or even increasing it. Public school curriculum should include field trips to local parks for in depth exploration of the local landscapes, whether it is examining a square of soil, the diversity of wetlands and kids get engaged in their environment on a small, local scale they are more inclined to maintain an interest and get involved on a larger scale.

. estate tax relief for working farmers and ranchers . Continued livestock grazing on public lands. Federal conservation programs that are incentive-based that reward people for doing the right things. Use land and water conservation funds to fund projects of local working groups, not just federal land acquisition. Include term easements as well as perpetual easements in federal programs

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Include youth in more outdoors oriented activities that teach them about the connection that exists between ecosystem health and human health. Michelle Obama works "Let's Move Outside" is very important-- Try to integrate this with science education. Public health crises like the obesity epidemic, asthma prevalence and even autoimmune dysfunction all have connections with sedentary lifestyle. Academic performance is boosted by exercise. Integrate movement by health and science subjects in k-12 education.

Change the subsidy system/ Introducing and ecologically understanding at the highest levels to counterbalance the misguided intimate relations between government regulators and administrators and technological/ corporate AG.

Education! At a very young age. Mandatory service projects in our public and private schools with a conservation based program. Reduce the development and prioritize these defense funds for conservation of open space for both our public and private lands. Utilize existing organizations, timber, conservation, recreation, bring them together and dialog as a group to work in concerted effort for restoration and protection. There are plenty of groups in existence with their own expertise already established. The great outdoors initiative would best serve this country by bringing these various groups together.

Preservation of wildlands. Enforcement of existing laws, eliminate motor vehicles from 50% of public lands

Health habitat education- how to be in wild lands. Access to public lands to much public lands is locked up for example NLCS- upper Missouri River Breaks MN only 22% of the monuments is open to the public without land owner permission.

Mandate the forest service to conduct winter travel planning

The best science possible, widely shared, collaboratively acted upon, communication to the public- engagement. Large scale restoration and conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, key resources- water, wildlife reg. communications. Leadership building engagement of people, groups to address conservation- changes accruing on the landscape

Assisting non-profit and private organizations

Protect public lands with protective designations- National monuments, conservation allows on Wilderness Area of Concern is the Pryor Mountains which needs of protective designation so that the three land management (BLS, FS, Park Service) will have a common set of values for managing the Pryors

Tax incentives for personal conservation- ex. Water educate for water conservation

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Local input and management. Making funds available to local organization so they can do their important work

Provide greater financial incentives for private landowners to seek conservation easements or dedicate their lands to the public. Promulgate the benefits to the nation when children can walk and ride bicycles to school and around their neighborhoods. Incentivize the construction of community trails that serve all ages and not just drivers sixteen years and older.

Repeal the no more wilderness settlement in Utah. Right now, millions of acres of wilderness quality lands in Utah are hanging in limbo. Many of those acres hold vast archaeological and cultural resources and would benefit from the additional protection that wilderness designation would provide. Fund the BLM, to protect the cultural resources. Archeological sites in Utah are being looted and destroyed at an alarming rate. Last year federal investment and subsequent legal action against looters in Blanding is not a start. Just field officers in the Monticello BLM is not enough to manage 1.8 million acres!!

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem should be a priority landscape for the administration in developing and implementing strategies to reconnect people to nature. And conserve treasured landscapes. With Yellowstone national park at it heart, protecting the GYE also means protecting, restoring the wildlife migration corridors and watershed that surround the parl. The administration should use all the tools available to further our nation's conservation legacy including: working with local groups to designate new areas and expand existing protecting areas (from wilderness degradation to new national monuments ect). Launching broad scale restoration efforts to improve degraded fragmented fish and wildlife habitats

Prioritize GYE as a key area that connects the biodiversity of Yellowstone to wilderness areas in ID, crown of the continent and rocky mountain front. Existing programs need to match needs and conditions currently on the landscape- adjust these. Make cooperative agreements lasion and plentiful so local NGO's can add capacity and technical expertise to state and federal government programs. Promotes success stories- use media and social marketing promote multi-model transportation to trail systems,

The top federal priorities that will benefit the outdoors in my opinion: Strong federal policy for expansion and preservation of wilderness and other ecologically functioning areas. And endangered species. Strong federal policy that causes extractive/ polluting activities to bear the environmental cost of those activities. Strong promotion of development of carbon-neutral energy. Full funding of land and water conservation act, ASAP.

Reconnecting children to the outdoors will only be accomplished by giving them repeated exposure to outdoor recreation. This required mentorship type programs that insure kids got an experience that is reinforced until child is both comfortable in the outdoors and capable of recreating on their own. This requires robust funding for salaries to coordinate and conduct mentorship programs.

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

I appreciate "Washington" coming to Montana. I appreciate that the issue are complicated facing the Administration regarding putting a value on nature. I am worried about what is happening in the worlds oceans- over fishing, pollution. I thank the administration's for cancelling the Bush administrations last second oil and gas lease sale and instituting needed reforms for onshore drilling. End the BLM's "No New Wilderness" policy It's wrong to have surface and subsurface rights separate surface owner should own subsurface. Ranchers should not bar canoes, boaters, fishermen from access at bridges. RS2477 is being abused BLM and Forest service are asked to protect and sell off for lease land- allowing land abuse is this the fax guarding the hen house? No more natural world is being made, It's vital to our health- mentally, physically and spiritually.

Many good comments and feds need to listen to them

We have our agencies in place use them and stop appeals in could. Help us use or land practically with out governing. Money which this our hands, If we could count our timber and open our mills it would bring dollars back to our schools put our people back to work. We don't need more govern closures on our lands, NO MORE WILDERNESS land of no use. If people want more trails and parks raise money privately and use volunteers. My main concern is loosing my ranch three government control by zoning and not allowing me to do raise on my land. I wont our water rights lift in Montana not sold to out of state.

This is a great opportunity for you to hear local concerns. We appreciate it. Please don't try to make a one-size-fits-all type of program at the Federal Level. Local communities must like with energy decisions. Please let us implement you rprograms at our level.

Montana Black Management Program, which allows hunters to access private lands for a fee needs expansion and more funding. Both recreationalist and hunters and landowners want this but the program is limited by funding which only comes from out of state hunting fees. America needs a mandatory service year followin high school to give urban and rural kids experience in the outdoors that otherwise are unattainable.

Tree fight addresses many of the issues and challenges addressed today. We are a volunteer force, pledged to prevent forest destruction through on-the-ground in-the-forest public participation. I'd offer, families, schools and recreationalists the opportunity to hike into and do the most famous forest in the world and help protect some of the most beautiful, ancient, productive trees in the U.S from continued beetle predation, and also provide them a means to share these experincies with the world. We would very mich appreciate the governments support of this ground breaking programs.

Thanks for brinding such a diverse group together to talk about conservation and getting people outdoors. This is a great start and I hope these conversations are heard. Some of the topics felt were compelling: - working groups and non-porfits are the way to get things done. The government should look more toward this model and use top-down management. - move focus on outdoor education/ stewardship in schools. -Eliminate estate tax to encourage farmers/ ranchers to stay on their land.

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

The new century needs a new model for conservation. Large scale land acquisition and designation of new monuments, parks, and wilderness is the old model. The future is public/private partnerships driven by local working groups. Hundreds of local working groups are working throughout the west. Funding needs to be available for these groups to accomplish on-the-ground conservation. The future is incentive-based conservation that rewards people for doing the right things and nurturing locally-led, volunteering efforts, verses the old model of top-down regulations.

Please use the output of this process as a foundation for a more inclusive visioning process that would become the conservation component of a national development plan. Do the same thing (simultaneously with the same people) for an industrial development component. Development and conservation are always antagonists and people need a national process to sort these out in their own heads.

Please issue a Secretarial Order to give specific directives to managers of the National Landscape System. Specifically it should include clear support for the conservation mission of the System, budget transparency line authority for the Director of the Conservation System, increased budget for conservation measures and staffing with the system.

I'd like to see transitional research and programs that bridge biomedical NIH and form the basis of CDC initiatives including K-12 health science education. For example, research by Dr. John Ratey Spark (book) on the effect of exercise on brain function then boosting academic performance. These could be integrated into subject areas (health, science, math) and also play a role in how daily school schedules are structured. Universities and community-based organization could be instrumented in helping implement these programs. Channel these to inner city as well as underserved, rural areas. Provide support to school districts so that burden doesn't fall solely on teachers' shoulders. Involve conservation corps and local health departments.

Keep logging in place, we need logging to continue on federal lands for jobs, fire prevention and to keep trees healthy. By thinning out forest it will keep the beetle kill down and keep wild jues from getting out of hand. We need to keep federal lands open for ranching. Ranchers need the land for their cattle's. It would be detrimental to ranchers and loggers. We do not need to lose more jobs. keep federal lands open to everyone.

Wild lands are important to Montanans for the services they provide, such as recreational opportunities that fund our economy. I'd like the administration to use all tools at its disposal to protect our public lands

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Generally, balance of natural and cultural resources is important. Regarding cultural and historic landscapes. What works: SAT programs. Historic Preservation. The T.B. Syoy Mansion. One of 3 full-block mansions in the state, built in 1910: Future Threatened and a SAT grand (layest ever awarded) limp-stated local preservation efforts-matched by City of Bozeman, prompted the founding of a non-profit to support city ownership. Without the SAT grands, i believe the property would have been ruled to a private owner, subdivided ad it's historic charcter lost, SAT established a value to preservation Historic Preservation stimulate economy promotes histoic education and tourism. Please fund and expand and continue Save America'sTreasure program.

Encourage the development of clocally driven, comprehensive water management plans at a community / watershed scale. With the development of these plans (stakeholders that much be involved include youth , local government, federal agencies, pivate landowners ect.) communities can recieve federal or state financial incentives to institute/ implement water conservation, water quality restoration projects. Potential funding sources could include recreational equipment/ extractive industry tax... similar to hunting logger fees.

Regarding bruceccsis in wildlife in the Greater Yellowstone Area: bruceccsis eradication is not a reasonable goal. Reuse animal and plant health inspection service bruceccsis regulations. Clarify that bison are values native reublic trust wildlife just like eck and other wildlife. Promote systems that manage livestoke reasonably and wildlife ecologically. Phase out USFWS feedgrounds in Wyoming and promote habitat preservation work on better livestoke vaccines-not wildlife

allowing recreation in our public lands is going to be a dying mission. The agendas of groups to allow their type of recreation is going to limit all recreation from happening. Trail maintenance and trail; building is going to be the future of forests. Do not allow public lands to become wilderness areas. allow all to use out lands

Reauthorize secure rural schools, but tie the payments to the condition of the land. Tie the payments to collaborative partnerships ripariam restoration, catrbon sequestration ect. Fpr specifics, please contact me.

Wants to repeal Federal Lands Enhancement Act. Referred to Gulf oil spill. Felt corporations have expanded there power too far and can influence environmental policy. Need clear separation of business from political policy setting. Citizens should have that power.

Youth conservation corp. is working well. Needs more funding. Work with existing groups - don't need new ones.

Protecting and connecting habitat is important including large wild landscapes. Challenges bighorn sheep, bison, grizzly bears. Need to eliminate wasteful government intervention. Example domestic sheep vs. bighorns in the Beaverhead/Deerlodge forest. Remove bison capture facilities in YNP and on the forest. APHIS regulations are worse than the disease (brucellosis) to livestock producers. Fully fund Land and Water Conservation fund.

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Water is important. Tool - some type of federal financial incentive for water planning at the local level. Then provide dollars for implementing completed plans.

Indian trust lands have only received 25% of the conservation dollars that private lands have. Need parity. Tribal irrigation projects haven't been funded for the past 20 years so they haven't been done - yet EQIP requires that to be eligible land must have been irrigated for 2 of the last 5 years. Needs a policy change on irrigation history requirements for EQIP. Wants USDA and DOI to work together as a package deal. Wants to get schools involved through outdoor classrooms and community gardens. USDA/DOI should set up a committee to work together on natural resources on tribal lands.

Concerned with wildlife corridors in the Madison Valley. Problem with animals crossing the highways. A lot of commercial vehicles are using the roads. Have been working with the MT DOT. Need to protect the wildlife corridor and educate children why it's important. Needs federal support for their efforts and funding.

Kudos to the administration for reversing Bush era initiatives on oil and gas lease sales and BLM for implementing Back Country Byway and initiating designated route systems for ORVs. Wants to repeal the No More Wilderness settlement in Utah with BLM. Wants more wilderness and BLM area of special interest. Such as in the Monticello BLM in Utah to protect cultural resource sites. More rangers are needed.

Concerned that Forest Service Region 1 has a policy to treat recommended wilderness as de-facto wilderness, eliminating mountain bikes. Suggest change in forest planning rule and provide guidelines for how mountain bikes are treated and allow them unless there is a compelling reason not to. Need options other than wilderness designation, such as national recreation areas, conservation areas, etc.

Wants to see a public referendum before any lands are put into the "Treasured Lands" initiative

Has outdoor TV show about hunting/camping. Access to public lands is important. Fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund. Funding will always be an issue. Hunters and fisherman already pay - now time for other user groups to pay. Private land incentives are important. Must have local buy in. Political process may be unduly influencing federal agencies in carrying out their public trust responsibilities. Feds need to be more adaptable. Gave example of inflexibility of APHIS on brucellosis issue. Need more flexibility in management to get easement. Also need flexibility in land exchanges to be able to deal with small local parcels.

Supports maintaining back country air strips. Blanket federal programs won't work - need local control

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Is 74 years old. Has given up backpacking. Depends on ATVs, horses and snowmobiles. Concerned about lack of opportunities. Wants accommodation for senior citizens who can no longer hike or backpack. Local knowledge is important to help agencies identify best options. Federal role is to back off and leave decision in hands of local people.

Motorized recreationist. Small farmer. Can't make a living on farm due to wolves, brucellosis, dead timber. Too many lawsuits. Solution is to remove all pending lawsuits. Go with the local agencies existing plans. Logging roads could be used for ATVs and snowmobiles etc. if managed right.

Frustration over perceived federal incompetence led to place based legislation that controls forest planning. Wants a congressional oversight group to review national forest administration and priorities. Has plans for reorganizing the Forest Service in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystems into a single forest or region. He has provided extensive written comments.

Great to see passion for this place. Most important thing is to protect what's left. Sees the area through the eyes of her grandma. Administration should step up incentives to recycle, protect land and water. Ag/wildlife conflicts tend to favor agricultural at the expense of wildlife. Number one cause for concern is climate change.

Encourage, partnership state and local govt. with Feds. Fed \$'s sustained state side funding down. Written testimony, meager budgets, can meet 50% grant share, support full, Higher level decisions hurt local communities & local demands are not being met- Communities are not able to find 50% of funding Bring equity to the program so everyone can enjoy the benefits

Can do? Find a way to let land managers & foresters do their work on the ground Taxes? Not so high have to sell & take land out production Grow trees on property instead of subdividing, manage fed. Ground, challenges – FS – hands tied, litigation, safety – millions acres dead trees in MT, rec. on ground, huge issue with hazard trees, need to address, FEDS – Find way to let land managers do their work on the ground. Tax issue – too high forced to sell

Wildlife corridor & traffic, don't mix, Feds restrict long haul trucks causing issues, identify and sign wildlife crossings

Federal government has important role-Legislature- financial decisions not long-term-role needed for long-term

Climate change- largest threat to environment, DOI needs directives for current and future impacts, protect core areas buffer areas, limit all non-climate stressors, interagency coordination, ecosystem wide climate mgmt programs

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Invasive species, affect ecology and economy of the US, hydro power invasive species, impact us all not recognized as a #1 priority, clean angling program, inspect clean and dry gear when done, private sector deliver this, Fed role is commitment to national invasive species council, fully fund state aquatic nuisance program, encourage partnerships, simplify grant programs, need social marketing tools to change behavior, youth education, successful programs are long term, keep them outdoors on a frequent basis, Need \$'s for teachers not products,

NPS return to old mission leave as is, bison of YNP, LWCF need full funding, access is needed; revision of the 1872 mining law, degrading public lands, repeal now, balance public uses of air water and land, uses have been skewed to private uses vs. public uses, need to find balance for today's conditions and populations

failing way behind on demand, not suitable for existing uses, propose initiative to get trail construction project going to get folks to work like in the CCC days – Feds need to do. FS no \$'s, woefully lacking \$

Cultural sites-all federal agencies lack-not protecting cultural sites Some sites carbon dated-1000 years old!! As a Crow Indian-can tell Crow story by looking at paintings-Pryor Mountains - Need protection! Under 3 federal agencies, NPR, BLM, FS,-NONE WORK TOGETHER!! All agencies should work as one unit-all federal agencies- Work against each other-programs do not work together- Biggest complaint-FED AGENCIES DO NOT WORK TOGETHER!!

Won national wetlands award, wetland & riparian program working a partnership to protect large landscapes, partnerships based upon trust are the best. Find common ground, hat am I willing to compromise on? Diversification of assets, 10 bird species to over 100 species, key players could go on, obstacles – trust, willingness to work with others, what's in it for them, cleaner air, water, biodiversity, common elements to all. Fed. Role - \$, expensive work to do. Need \$'s LWCF, All part of the problem all need to be part of the solution, energy, water, power, demand energy orgs help preserve what's left. Feds – flexibility is needed to constrained by regulations & manuals. Each situation is different, CREP – 400 acres enrolled in MT, 375 acres on his property. Critical point, \$\$'s there but \$'s are being sent back to Washington, Modify programs to make it work.

Recreation, education, & Stewardship - Water is important, Feds – help strengthen clean water act, reconsider private land ownership and split estate ownership for subsurface rights. Put surface and subsurface rights back together

1. When roads used by the public are threatened for closure that provide access to public land or water, the federal or state agency with management responsibilities should claim a **PERSCRPTIVE EASEMENT** on those road in the name of the agency and the **PUBLIC**.

2. When access to public land is blocked by private landowners the agency with blocked land should not permit any commercial outfitting on that land. In addition, existing permits should be terminated. (The present permitting system rewards landowners for blocking access by issuing permits so that they can profit from outfitting on the very public land they have blocked.)

Discussion Question 3

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

3. Make Pittman Robertson, LWCF or other funds available to allow agencies to construct short segments of road on public land that would bypass private land presently blocking access to important parcels of public land and water.

4. When acquiring access, add to the appraised value of the travel route, an additional monetary factor that represent the value of the access the route will provide.

5. Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Program and Direct Federal Land Management Agencies to aggressively pursue better access to public land and water.

6. Continue to restrict Off Road Vehicles from traveling cross country. Make them stay on roads and trails designated by the management agencies. Increased law enforcement.

Discussion Question 3

Charleston, SC

State Park Service – state and national parks; outdoor wildlife recreation areas that bring in kids – introduce them to nature and history working together; through programs that fit the curriculum.

loss of capacity in state government to take advantage of federal dollars – reduced state budgets.

Washington is getting in the way – can't figure out what they're going to do about taxes. It's got to be multiple tools, though we're all working to address the same need. Land is cheaper now so it's the time to do acquisitions.

tax incentives for keeping your land like it is – not develop it – people who keep a farmhouse, or other land as open space; developers get incentives all the time to keep building buildings . Can we switch it? So we protect the outdoors instead of building more buildings. She's referring to property taxes. Property taxes are the reason the gullahgetchees end up losing their land.

a great idea would be a program for small landowners – 1 to 20 acres – especially if you're trying to maintain a rural community. A program specific to do that.

Remove cropping history requirement from CRP.

bring forestry industry to public's attention – what it does not only for renewable wood products, but for air and water, etc. Education is critical – maybe public service announcements to elevate forestry to where it belongs.

Quality of life big part of conservation in communities. It would be helpful for gov't agencies to capture the things that are important to the people in the area. Land should have easy access for use for nature trails, cross country track teams, etc. Give the people access to use the land. Get the non-locals and bring them into conservation education via the recreational avenue. Introduce them to the goals of FWL refuge.

growing loblolly, redhead woodpecker loves the long leaf pines. The matured long leaf pines in the nesting ground for the redhead woodpecker. So when there is a presence of the woodpecker, then regulations are in place that say a land owner can't cut the trees because of the endangered species presence. Coordination from the agencies to eliminate this regulation is necessary to encourage the planting of long leaf pines.. This has the appearance of a being a penalty for planting long leaf pines.

upgrade forest resources and recognize what the forestry provides. Education is critical, starting with school age children.

Discussion Question 3

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Gov't role – If CRP is to plant long leaf pines then expand the program. Make the program attractive to the landowner for selecting the long leaf pine instead of Loblolly. Enhance the program to include incentives for thinning and burning properly. Ecosystems in SC need fire. Habitats need fire to allow native ground cover and wildlife to come to the forest and keep hardwoods under control. Help the landowner out on the extra seedling costs, site-prep costs and help them to offset the income loss for selecting long leaf pines. Another incentive would be to provide would be for harvesting pine straw.

CRP targets current farmland.

Tax incentives work. Federal government can restore tax incentive. CRP programs work. Need to establish reenrollment for continuous CRP when CRP contracts expire to allow landowners to sign up for new contracts which will require the landowner to thin, burn and plant native grasses. Programs need to place a value on forestry land to mirror the row crop programs without a limit on it.

remove cropping history from the CRP program.

DC is in the way – no one knows what the regulations are going to be. The landowner needs as much time as possible to implement the regulations to protection as much as possible and to carry the practice before the end of the year. Need to know law before the first of Dec. It is impossible to implement practices during the last 4 weeks of the year.

Major challenge – do not apply to landowner of 1 acre. These owners would not qualify. At death, now 14 people own the property. Thinks you can't have group of people apply for a program like CRP. Challenge is financing. Tax credit would benefit when the timber was used for building on land.

tax incentives to landowners to not sale and not build buildings. Property taxes incentives not to sale.

Government needs. Good educational program. Need to pay instructors to educate the public. Funds are needed to staff visitor centers at county/state/national parks by individuals who can education the public. Must spend the \$ to educate the public. Conflicts exist between county and forest service. There is a clause that states the land must always be used a certain way. The agency can't get past the law to say the land has to be used the same forever. \$ is being turned away because of the future use clause – Charleston County Greenbelt has a program but lawyers will not accept the language in the grant because of this 'future use clause'. Take lesson as to where things work and mirror this in the law

LWCR is one of the best tools, but need to stabilize the funding. Have the manpower but they need funding for managing the land. Permanent funds are needed, not something that changes each year.

Discussion Question 3

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

incentive to the small land owner to cultural/historical communities.

prescribed Burning education for the public. Federal recognition that prescribed burning in conjunction with forest management is needed to provide endangered species habitat, propagate plant species native to the lands, prevent wildfires using burning, prevent non-native species from encroaching, and improve sustainable wildlife habitat. Stop mandatory hoops to jump through to receive federal funding. Forest management plans are worthless because landowners do not understand the information. Keep programs simple. Add more funding for long leaf reforestation after clear-cutting. Implement a mid rotation pine release program for offsite hardwoods and non-native invasive species. Promote burning in all southern states through cost share programs. Campaign nationally that prescribed fire is good. Federal agencies are not utilizing prescribe burning practice because there is a liability issue.

Lack of communication from government agencies and there programs

Federal government has too much red tape to put practices on the ground

Payments from the federal government have to be financially advantageous to the landowner

working w/ military to establish buffers. Landowners waiting to see if federal incentives going to come through. Back log funds in jeopardy. Get people outside. GET KIDS OUTSIDE. The kids ARE THE FUTURE.

Army Ft. Bragg – partnerships. Military, too. Funding sources. REPI – funds. DOD – WHIP and EQIP \$\$\$ Partnerships best way to get conservation work done. Focus funding where good partnerships working

The extra level of protection. Military. Lands protected that link to other public lands

youth events. Depends on USFS, USFWS. Costs involved with events – grants such as more kids in the woods. Keep competing for that grant \$\$\$ for MKIW.

Agencies that have contradicting policies – USFS was giving Awendaw permits for waterlines which would lead to development on private lands. Strict zoning of private property is key. Fend off development in sensitive environments.

Developing public lands – minerals, for example. Destroying/conquering environment is a mentality that needs to be overcome through federal leadership.

Discussion Question 3

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Active management of public lands – threats of lawsuits, ecoterrorism are huge obstacle. Manage public lands with a wildlife objective and a forest products objectives. That we are importing timber from S. America and Russia is wrong when we have so much forest. Good sensible management on public lands that promote wildlife objectives.

2008 Farm Bill – REPI can not match w/ FRPP. Statutory change “killed some deals” with the military. USFS – Community Forest Initiative.

Centennial of NPS – 2016.

USDA National Ag Statistics Service include the delivered value of timber in its annual report issued by state Dept of Ag. FIA – need to be able to quantify recreation values. Federal govt should be able to provide this data. Affects rural development programs. Carbon connection.

USFS needs to reauthorizing stewardship contracting.

need to build relationships in order to develop partnerships

needs increased consistency with how federal agencies deal with partnerships; policies don't change and partnerships affected as individuals change (as an example changing priorities associated with change in National Forest Supervisor); inconsistencies between agencies regarding federal funding/matching requirements

need for a good plan and set of goals; re-iterates continuity of effort, long term commitment, not affected by personnel turnover; and federal government needs to solicit community input; communications back and forth between federal agencies and local communities, stakeholders and partners

hands on events initially get kids and others involved; but once exposed it is important that follow up activities take place to retain interest; access to such opportunities may be lacking; how are they going recreate, reconnect with nature and cultivate that interest if there is no place locally available for them to do so; access, both public (Making Public Lands Public) and private (Voluntary Public Access) initiatives need to be encouraged and expanded to enhance ongoing outreach and incentives, especially to private landowners, to make more lands accessible; spoke to each affiliation must first support the mission of their own organization, but that there are many commonalities that we can all work together on, making reference to longleaf pine restoration and the newly signed agreement between USDA, USDI, and DOD; expressed concern over the continued loss of rural lands to development

Discussion Question 3

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

need to look at common areas of interest; set policy such as no net loss of wetlands; coordinate across programs for conservation and infrastructure development; provide guidance; and make available financial resources to leverage with non-federal funds and other considerations; expressed local concerns about ability to partner with landowners with federal easements, especially those based on dollars earned and cost share; if a piece of property has an NRCS easement on it, the lawyer for the landowner will not recommend purchase

mutual interest among federal agencies has got to be there for partnerships to succeed; you can't start from scratch with an incentive, the interest must already be there, incentives just make it easier to pursue the interest; federal and non-federal partners in the ACE Basin are all "landowners"; and some landowners won't deal with federal funds because they are too much of a hassle

foster coordination and collaboration; serve as a catalyst; and support grassroots organizations and local efforts

fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund; need enhanced tax incentives for landowners who hold land for conservation purposes and enhanced programs for private donation of land and resources; mitigate conflicting government policies especially between natural resource conservation and rural development; exercise due diligence help to eliminate conflicts over different agencies policies and programs and what activities are being supported within the same areas; difficulty for federal government to accept non-federal funds; local county has one-half cent tax initiative that lead to \$65 million to benefit land acquisition for the Francis Marion National Forest; federal government needs to resolve this issue because of the great potential for use of the funds raised

limited federal involvement but find the right people; get local and national political support; retain flexibility and ability to move quickly on emerging opportunities; needs to figure out better ways to incentivize conservation; facilitate leveraging of federal state and private sector funds; programs and funds are tools to be used to accomplish greater good

Saltwater paddling program along the coastline – extending up the coast from Hatteras to Virginia; need more funding and resources to maximize recreation uses – most programs about staffing

½ cent sales tax for green space

Driving power or jobs; economic incentives; cash flow needed to do good things

Federal gov't "Blue Trails Initiative" -- connecting people to the water; need similar program for connecting people to the land

Discussion Question 3

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Pollution is a challenge; hard to encourage use when air and waters are polluted; aging sewer systems, storm water runoff, sedimentation issues; mercury contamination of waterways. EPA enforcement of 208 plans

Used to be that you got perpetual tax benefits for gift of 30 years conservation easement – but no more. When the gov't took that away, they deterred a lot of people.

Paperwork that accompanies some of the Fed. programs is a deterrent; landowners are basically afraid of making errors for fear of what gov't might do.

Money given to counties by the Fed. gov't to help with infrastructure placement – no one living there but have added infrastructure – now the development follows – not most efficient use of funds. When you continue to give the money to the counties for i

Access to funding and technical assistance

Grants are needed that are easier to obtain, smaller, maybe 10-50,000 make reporting easier

Leveraging funds, preservation

Consistency agencies---no one half plus to restore other foster sprawl Clean Air Act EPA, missions of different agencies might conflict

Provide transportation

Don't need more programs, have them Provide incentives, Kids in the Woods—spend money on what is needed Fund it all until you run out of money, ideas will come in from outside

Feds can't solve all problems, leverage Private funds, incentive to spend them All need to help solve

Economic incentives--needed Public policy—healthy markets Biomass feedstocks Renewable portfolio standards—green power standards Carbon neutrality—define

Forest Inventory and Analysis plots, need new current information, to make good decisions Research products ecology, holes in research

Next generation of tech experts, we need to recruit so that people can be trained Don't cut this, bring in interns Student Career Experience (SCEP) Program, etc. Corporate world does this better

Discussion Question 3

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Flexibility in entry level positions needed, training not do same exact thing to actually get the job (Needs a job)

PhD programs needed in Federal government, especially ecology

Inter, intra government communication, camping ok on some islands, high water line other no camping, too many disparities in rules Decide on goals and be consistent

Not enough opportunities, "young person's opinion", dirt bike racing, sponsor teams

Rent materials equipment to do backbacking, etc. Also produce revenue,

Federal Funding and Incentives—Land and Water Conservation Fund, Historic Preservation Funding Tools already there—fund them

National Forest System balance out managers that are having a forestry background---ecology background needed Others say that need they will need more foresters

Feds need to be more like The Nature Conservancy—they understand capitalism

National Forests should participate in planning and zoning actions so that developers know what the impacts are may be disincentive to develop

The challenge is consistency on part of gov't/. They don't have education to be able to develop a vision. The elected gov't officials want to be leaders, but they don't develop a vision, b/c they have particular expertise, and they drive that, and forget overall good for the community, and that's a problem. They have a vision, and they don't prioritize, they don't get funding

I don't know what their role should be. WE need more \$, but we have to recognize the fed. Gov't has their own financial issues. No more deep pockets. Is there someone they could play a role through tax system, or facilitate more private partnership/more collaboration. I sense there are lots of people in my perspective, lots of people think partnerships work

Outdoor ed. In public schools. It doesn't exist now. Private schools has huge wonderful programs and classes, but not public schools. Fed gov't could initiate an education piece into the classroom

Pass full funding for land water conservation fund. Great opp for feds to include a national water trail initiative b/c they are proven, cost effective, and get kids out on the river, and build support for recreation and conser. b/c rivers are a public resource. e Buldin in a national bluesways through ago. Outdoor

Discussion Question 3

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Pass conservation incentive act. Also experiential education..getting them outside, hands on. Not necessarily kayaking, hiking, but just more hands on. It's in public schools for the first time, but they will hopefully have this in public schools. Southeast is a great climate for this, but I feel kids are trapped in schools. Would like to have promotion of Greenbelts, and greenways/ corridors, and have states incentivize them and get towns and communities to institute them. When they do that, (1/2 cent sales tax) cities can learn from models like Charleston

No more funding cuts. No more staff cuts. Don't use national park cuts as a way to save money

Feds can't run everything from top down. Give us here locally tools/fund incentives/all conservation is local. You can't do easements or protect acres from Washington, but they think money has to be directed, and programs/bills, you can't do it in Washington. Funding. Local communities have to protect their own land, but incentive programs from federal level, tax programs are good, but the idea that all things come from Washington (alphabet soup) they don't understand complex programs and drive local people away. And we are here, these people are our neighbors, we know how to talk to them. Grassroots

Feds get their act together. Get coordinated. IRS is picking on little things. But when you have conservation targeted by IRS, they should be more coordinated.

Be consistent. Humans think they need to change things. We have some great programs. We need to fund things we can. I am worried that we are so much in national debt and that money pot needs to be used more effectively

Strings attached to Washington things. It is hard to work with different incentive programs. FSA has done a great job, NRCS great help locally, Forest service, but when it comes to applying for different incentive monies, you look at the strings attached, and the grant application. It is complex. Easement cannot allow forestry management, and some grants are just useless (KELP?). Folks aren't going to give up their forestry re-use. Manage. Rights. It is a problem because what you are trying to do can't be accomplished. I heard at the podium today about agencies coming together to mesh visions and goals and I hope this carries down to programs/ priorities and see how they fit together

I was taught if you can't afford it don't buy it. The government needs to focus money on proven projects that work. See what works and focus on that. Some tax code have their own people that do nothing but try to stay up with tax laws. It's amazing the complexities

People in federal. Agencies hold jobs to slow things down. The more I work with feds the more mind boggling it is. I think it is going to change. There is going to be some cleaning house. Appraisal department. makes you wonder if they even want the money to go on the ground. In some places there are 3 people doing one person's job

Discussion Question 3

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Summary of Fed. Gov't Roles: Simplify tax system; encourage collaboration; bring outdoor education to the school systems; create National Blueways initiative; pass tax bill; feds must stop funding things top-down—don't forget the foot soldier; need tools to facilitate work and initiatives from the ground up—on the local level; be consistent; fewer strings attached to funding; agencies should match visions and goals; feds trying to buy too many things; families want to carry on traditions, but tax system is getting too complex

Provide multiple opportunities and provide landowners with options. Create markets and retain and grow industry. Open international markets and prevent loss.

Need to get more forests certified.

Need to fix certification

Need cost share to level the economic table for longleaf.

Forest industry land has turned over to REITs and TIMOs. We need to account for their role and encourage longer ownership tenure and sustainability.

Promote the value of outdoor recreation. It has quality of life, economic, direct \$ impact, and indirect \$ impact to the community and the nation.

Closing Comments: Listening Session was valuable. It shouldn't be conservation vs. industry. Great that all agencies are working together. We have the tools we must work cooperatively. Fix capital gains tax.

Incentivize economically NIPL's and other private land owners to establish LL and other forests.

Encourage public policy that gives landowners incentives to grow LL - healthy markets, carbon neutrality, biomass, bioenergy feedstocks, etc.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

Fully funding the administration and management of National Scenic and Historic Trails by the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and US Forest Service,

Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at the authorized \$900 million per year to increase outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans, and consistently providing money for National Scenic and Historic Trails and land acquisition, and

Fully funding the Historic Preservation Fund to improve national capacity to preserve the sites and resources that culturally define the United States, including National Scenic and Historic Trails.

President Johnson envisioned in 1968 that the National Trails System would crisscross the land, north-to-south, east-to-west, connecting the entire nation. The 30 congressionally authorized National Scenic and Historic Trails, if completed, would span more than 50,000 miles through 49 states.

Altogether, 9,700 miles of the National Scenic Trails are currently open for use. But their total authorized length is 16,400 miles. That leaves some 6,500 miles of gaps in our National Scenic Trails to be filled mostly on private land that will need to be purchased from willing sellers.

For 16 of the 19 National Historic Trails, about 1,000 key natural and cultural resource sites still need to be preserved, according to the National Trails System FY09 Annual Report.

Without adequate agency operations, LWCF, and Historic Preservation funding, the necessary efforts of Federal agency and non-profit partners to complete the Trails land acquisition, trail construction, and trail interpretation will not be possible.

Full funding of the LWCF and Historic Preservation Funds will help National Historic Trail partners protect critical cultural, historical, and natural resources along their Trails. Full funding of the LWCF will enable National Scenic Trail partners to purchase land from willing sellers to close the many gaps in these Trails and protect their ecosystems and scenic quality.

The Supreme Court of the United States in the landmark case of *Tennessee Valley Authority v. Hill*, 437 U.S. 153 (1978), relying on the legislative history, observed that the ESA as it was finally passed, represented the most comprehensive legislation for the preservation of endangered species ever enacted by any nation. The Court stated that one would be hard pressed to find a statutory provision whose terms were any plainer.... Its very words affirmatively command all federal agencies 'to insure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out by them do not jeopardize the continued existence' of an endangered species or result in the destruction or modification of habitat of such species.... Thus, the Court stated, examination of the language, history, and structure of the [ESA] indicated beyond doubt that Congress intended endangered species to be afforded the highest of priorities.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Returning to your original question for this hearing - How can the federal government be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation....? - the answer is that President Obama must take charge of his environmental policy. He must make clear that the goal without exception, consistent with his yes, we can campaign rhetoric, is to preserve and protect the environment, including wildlife, public lands, water and air. He must ask any and all officials in the Interior and Agriculture Departments and EPA who do not understand, or want to implement, that mandate to depart immediately and replace them with more enlightened officials.

Historic parks must be put under land trusts in order to insure protection against privatization and building construction.

Create public announcements to encourage urban dwellers to enjoy the great outdoors.

Develop an agriculture education career recruiting program with area universities for high school students.

Urban residents need affordable access to quiet and healthy natural areas for passive recreation. To do this, it is essential for all people to have better active transportation options –bike trails, running paths, water trails, etc.”

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative should build on successful federal programs that and integrate innovative local programs into a new, smarter conservation and recreation plan that protects, connects and restores our land and waters, and the natural legacy we leave our children and future generations.

Creation of a National Wildlife Refuge, Hackmatack, now under study by FWS, would establish the first NWR in this urban metropolitan area. No NWR currently exists within 140 miles of the Chicago Metro region. Establishment of the Mackmatack NWR would help fulfill the Fish and Wildlife Service's directive to establish Urban Refuges near population centers, helping to connect city and suburban residents with nature.

Provide full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at the promised and appropriated level of \$900 million a year. This fund paid for by revenues from offshore oil drilling is used to protect parks, forests, oceans, refuges and local recreation areas. But it has only been fully funded once since it was created 45 years ago.

Realizing the impacts of rapidly unmanaged growth, local residents in the Chicago metropolitan region have passed \$1.3 Billion in Open Space referenda since 1995. Fully funded LWCF would provide an additional source for land preservation in urbanizing areas of significant biodiversity. In addition, Wisconsin and Indiana lack the statutory authority to conduct locally driven referenda, and would benefit from this federal source.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

The Fishin' Buddies! Program serves the urban Chicago area connection children to the outdoors through fishing and conservation programs. Its mission is to instill an immutable concern for the air, land and waters of our planet, and a desire to nurture the soul through communion with the outdoors. Fishin' Buddies! Believes in the emotional and psychological restorative powers of the outdoors and that it is important to expose this philosophy to children who's ideal of the Great Outdoors as being grassless, glass strewn, debris filled, concrete and steel playgrounds of urban America. Fishin' Buddies Youth Conservation Corps partners have included US Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago State University, The Field Museum, and the Chicago Park District, and the Forest Preserve of Cook County. The Fishin' Buddies Youth Conservation Corps is funded by a grant from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation as part of the Chicago Wilderness Leave No Child Left Inside.

Encourage the kinds of public/private partnerships that have proven to be so effective in the Chicago Wilderness region, Illinois, and across the country. Communities are developing homegrown, collaborative solutions to conservation challenges and the federal government should support them.

-Beginning of comment cut off in PDF- ...Federal collaboration with CW, through the initiatives of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) and Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC), will be extremely important in the coming years.

Thanks for having this; suggestions include 1. Continue education and awareness at local level, support not-for-profits and make funds available 2. Marketing this is what's hot; use media and promote being outdoors and holistic benefits; youth are addict

Make it easier to hire people in the federal government to get new people in the work force.

Have something to offer job skills and training what can we give you in return

Made a request within FNS to improve physical activities in adults; response was can extend lunch break but cannot be paid for it start inside agencies to encourage people to go outdoors & endorse it; allow people to go outside during day

Using tech to get people outdoors; mobile tech can be used outside; use incentives to encourage kids to go outside; link amount of screen time to amount of outdoors time

Feds could make it easier to hire people. Very hard to hire kids into the federal government; so easy in private sector. Need to do this to get new people into the work force.

When I think back to when I was a kid I would take off all day- now I need to know where my kids are all day due to dangers. Kids are programmed to be handed off to a trusted person or stay with a parent. More opportunities for parent/child activities a

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Recommendations to the President- Everything really starts at home and parents can help out by saying "honey why are you sitting around playing the Wii or looking on facebook, you should be outside." Also about safety and security because you have to be

1) Education: continue education and awareness at the local level. Funding is important and make accessible to community groups. Allow community groups to access this money so they can conduct education. 2) Marketing: In this country, we can market a

We have heard a lot about creative things that are being done in Chicago and IL and what they talk about is the a result of the funding they have available. However, in many states the first services to be cut are the parks and recreation programs. I wo

Replicate what they are doing at Eden's place.

Would like to see: Drill team, dance competition, large screen video competition

More money for movies in the parks.

National program run by the youth in the neighborhood to take them out of the neighborhood to areas where able to experience the outdoors and be safe. Funded by the government.

Get kids excited about the outdoors, opportunities close to home

Market scheme- can sell the outdoors (to youth)

Support organizations that run youth programs

I loved working in the woods this summer. Clubs that get parents and kids involved into the outdoors and nature would be good. Basically getting the parents involved in getting the kids out of the house to have fun and see how fun the forest preserve is

Obesity, kids eating lots of candy; if they knew more about getting out and getting healthy. IF they knew about the forest preserves, they wouldn't be getting unhealthy

Physical education both indoors and outdoors should be a requirement during the school day. If the Federal Government is really serious to the notion that then they need to start in the schools

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Sierra club previously dictated how they should get kids outdoors, but then changed their tactics so that they incubate ideas at a local level. This was more beneficial to both parties. He is curious how federal government ideas will be rolled out? How wi

Encouraging citizen stewardship is very important. Their organization is working well within national trail system.

Baby boomers have an opportunity – retirees have a lot of time and energy to devote to outdoors projects.

Many of the high schools in Wisc

Need to bring additional federal agencies corporation for community services. It is not a priority on paper to some agencies. We are trying to work with DOL, DOJ. DOI is working well.

Concerned that staff of those agencies are not interested in developi

Meet once a month, collaborate and brainstorm on ideas. Focus on helping land management and volunteers form an easier relationship.

Could be better implemented if you had agencies around the country who can roll up their sleeves.

Partnerships at local level with after school programs provide outdoor experience for many people. Changing family structures with two working parents there is a need for trusted caretakers (YMCA, after school)

Supports Moving Outdoors and Nature Act legi

The land in Chicago (77,000 vacant lots plus vacant industrial land) comes with baggage (contamination). We need federal funds to clean up this problem, cuased by businesses, carelessness, and it's making people sick.

There is so much to be accomplished to protect our environment in so little time that everyone needs to work together on it. I think that if we spread our knowledge and told people of the problems, they will want to help too. In my mind, more kids should be targeted because they are the ones growing up with these problems, and they are the ones best able to change the course of the future. If they are targeted for environmental education, then their knowledge gets spread throughout the family. Everyone wants to make a difference and if we all work together that difference will happen.

I think we need to put more money into acquiring parks in urban areas where there are no parks and increase access to nature in backyards in the form of gardens and native restoration by offering education programs and incentives.

We need to provide more public transportation to natural areas and resources such as a map with bus and train routes to natural areas and a list of activities.

We need more youth programs to get people outside and exposed to natral areas at a young age and at a high frequency.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

We need help with authorizing local schools to program in and/or develop course guidelines to allow students access to open spaces outdoors at least twice a week. To authorize hands-on activities in elementary school settings via gardening, nature outings, trails and waterways

Finding funding for projects; Army Corps permitting takes too long

Funding -- not just monetary but un-used equipment, etc.

But the Forest Preserve District is also tasked with finding resources and creative ways to develop new recreational and research facilities that can encourage residents of all ages to enjoy the outdoors as they learn about wildlife, habitat restoration and the wise use of natural resources. Of paramount importance is discovering ways to give young people formative educational experiences that will foster the awareness and civic responsibility needed for them to develop into well-rounded, healthy individuals who care about their own well-being and the protection of the natural and cultural resources that make DuPage County a great place to raise a family, work and play.

Local and regional alliances can serve as federal agencies' local implementers (regranting, outreach, non-regulatory)

Federal agencies can fund urban outreach and engagement projects (e.g. camping, fishing, etc.)

Increased support for urban waterways as community and redevelopment tool

Continued and enhanced support for urban ecology research (e.g. LTER, ULTRA)

Explore options for excise tax on non-traditional sporting goods - i.e., tents, bicycles, other - direct funds to urban populations.

Implementation of urban refuge policy that provides opportunities for people from urban populations to experience, value and protect natural areas in their region for projects such as the proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge. Land protection efforts near urban areas are significant opportunities for federal assistance.

The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program should be revived. UPARR was originally established in 1978 to provide matching grants and technical assistance to economically distressed urban areas for rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Support (continue to support) local effort to establish an urban National Wildlife Refuge (the proposed Hackmatack NWR), which would fulfill U.S. FWS directive to connect NWRs with urban populations.

Continue EPA 319 funding--encourage/require watershed and green infrastructure planning through these funds

Implement Green Reserve funding of state revolving loan and grant programs to support implementation of innovative green infrastructure practices to protect water quality and quantity

Assure that states spend the federal funds dedicated for wildlife protection appropriately. Provide oversight to prevent state legislators from using dedicated federal land protection and wildlife conservation funds for other purposes.

Continue support for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to provide for healthy ecosystems that provide the full range of ecological services

Direct/supply granting funds to states and regions with comprehensive green infrastructure plans

Multi-use greenways should be a priority for federal funding--to connect resources and people--both in urban and rural environments

Provide protection of wetlands along riparian corridors and support federal legislation to protect isolated that alleviate flooding, clean and infiltrate storm water, and provide habitat for wildlife.

Create a federal standard for liability protection for landowners who open their land to the public for recreation. This increases land for recreation without additional cost to the states of the federal government.

Fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Federal LCC and SHC initiatives

Expand U.S. EPA green infrastructure work and integrate across all agencies

Continued support for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to provide for healthy ecosystems that provide the full range of ecological services

Direct federal resources to urban areas, particularly those areas which are resources rich

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Provide leadership in carbon sequestration; help facilitate development of capital-driven market. Define the opportunities for carbon markets for natural areas, trees, native prairie plants

Federal agencies, through their local offices, can work with Chicago Wilderness to implement ecosystem-based approaches to climate change.

National climate action plans should include ecosystem-based approaches.

Federal agencies and Congress can support natural areas that preserve our green infrastructure at a large scale. Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, located about an hour southwest of Chicago, and the Calumet Open Space Reserve, which spans the southeast side of the City of Chicago, and the Calumet Open Space Reserve, which spans the southeast side of the City of Chicago and continues into northwestern Indiana, are examples of how large sites and networks of natural areas can exist within an urbanized area. There is currently also a proposed refuge Hackmatack, which would link existing protected natural areas to form a large preserve of natural lands in Southeastern Wisconsin and Northeastern Illinois. This proposed refuge and other like it create a resilient network of ecosystems that benefit people and nature, and help mitigate climate change.

Coordinate federal-level campaigns aimed at getting children and families outside (like the Forest Service's "Discover the Forest") with local and regional campaigns.

Provide a leadership role model to other organizations that want to leverage the resources of an alliance working toward the common goals of getting children outside and increasing the amount of time they spend there.

Provide safe places for generations of Americans to explore and discover their outdoor heritage.

Support the critical roles of federal employees--such as environmental educators and social scientists--in identifying and overcoming barriers to connecting families with the outdoors.

Direct federal resources toward collaborative programs that effectively reach new and diverse audiences.

Re-establish the designation of Biosphere Reserve and allow application to urban conservation reserves like Chicago Wilderness. The public doesn't recognize the global significance of our natural resources, and having an international designation would go a long way toward building a culture of conservation and encourage people to get outside and enjoy their natural assets.

Federal mandates and legislation should include policies that mandate that green infrastructure is contracted with demolition, deconstruction. Also brownfield and Superfund clean up projects.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

I would like to see Chicago region conservation advocates get involved in engaging the participation of developers, architects, city planners, environmentalists, educators, and physicians, institutions, organizations, and community members to have one voice in "open land use" policy. Barriers to use vacant land for conservation programs and gardening is too often due to local politics. Have you every tried to purchase a vacant lot in Chicago?

Trout Unlimited suggests additional funding for the NOAA CRP to expand its coverage of the regions eligible and to increase the number of projects which remove culverts and small obsolete dams and improve fish passage, in coastal areas around the nation.

Having still extant natural systems with which Americans may recreate and reconnect demands that the administrators of agencies operating hydropower generation facilities require proper mitigation, appropriate adaption to changed conditions and fully adequate stream flows for these projects. Particularly because of the new realities of climate change, some better and more comprehensive assessment is also required--which argues strongly for the need to implement such programs as the SECURE Water Act. However, in other cases federal decision makers must prioritize conservation and actually assure the open and unimpeded use of already adequate scientific information to inform fish and other aquatic wildlife friendly flow decisions. Trout Unlimited urges the President and the Congress to do just that, namely, in planning and in operating federal water facilities, to ensure that flows are adequate to meet the needs of the biota present.

Restore--restore aquatic habitats

For this Reason, Trout Unlimited and this Trout Unlimited Council urge the President, his Administration and the Congress to support passage of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act, as well as to sustain the existing programs--prinicipally that of the United State Fish and Wildlife Service--that support the landscape scale fish habitat restoration partnerships of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan

The continued success of landscape scale fish habitat restoration in this country, as well as the succes of conservation efforts on the nation's farmland as a whole, rests on the maintenance of authorized levels of conservation program funding in the current Farm Bill, on attention to NRCS staffing need, and on more significant conservation programs in future Farm Bills.

Trout Unlimited believes that a tightly focused "Good Samaritan" bill, on the order of Senate Bill 1777, the Good Samaritan Cleanup of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2009, can successfully crafted to avoid weakening current environmental protections and is long overdue. It, therefore, encourages the Administration to provide support for Good Sam legislation, to enable additional abandoned mine clean ups in the west and east.

Federal funding for urban parks through the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program, the Land and Water Conservation Program and the Liveable Communities Program.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Federal "Get Active" campaign adopted by the U.S. Surgeon General's office similar to the "Stop Smoking" campaign. This should be a national strategy to increase individual's participation in exercise programs.

Federal guidelines and programs that reduce our sedentary lifestyle behaviors by eliminating the barriers to physical activity.

Federal policy or guidelines with incentives that reward and support the use of local and state agency land for parks and greenways and trails (via transfer, intergovernmental agreements, permitting programs).

Environmental policies to incentivize urban municipalities to provide new neighborhood parks, recreation facilities and walking and biking trails. Neighborhood parks and greenways also serve to reduce our carbon footprint, clean the air and water and assist with climate change.

Additional incentives for federal programs directed toward the restoration and improvement of Great lakes (Lake Michigan) coastal ecosystem to include public beaches and parks. Lakefront parks and beaches not only provide open space for recreation but also have important environmental benefits: erosion protection, contribution to clean air and water, creation of habitat.

Development of new parks in the 55 of 77 community areas that do not meet a basic two-acre park standard.

Renovation of 400 outdated children's playgrounds in Chicago.

Completion of the city's lakefront park system. Twenty-six miles of Chicago's 30-mile Lake Michigan shoreline have been developed as public parks. Public parks on two miles on the city's south side have not been completed. The completion of the Last Four Miles would provide a park greenway system along Lake Michigan to connect with the suburbs to the north and to Calumet area & Indiana to the south.

"Following the model of New York, San Francisco, Seattle, "green" unused Port District land for recreation and conservation purposes. Specific projects should include: : 100 acres at Iroquois Landing & shoreline of Lake Calumet

Development of the ERA Trail, a 2-mile abandoned rail line as a public park in the Englewood community.

Development of the Bloomingdale Trail as a 2-mile public park in the Logan Square community.

Acquisition of 6,000 acres of forest preserves to achieve the statutory land limit.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Funding for additional quality recreation staff for innovative recreation and fitness programs primarily for Chicago's youth.

Make contact connections visible/linkable: one of our frequent frustrations relates to finding ways through bureaucracies to connect with the sections/personnel that are relevant to our work.

Names of sections often mislead regarding functions, projects, and personnel who are often not findable on organization web sites. We don't have time to play "National Treasure" in making connections, so connections do not get made.

Where multiple government agencies are involved, provide an umbrella site like CSI's Member Organizations page that will make searching more convenient and efficient

Provide contact information that is useful e.g. staff members' email addresses, phone numbers, or some such direct link to the real people we need to connect with. 15-layer trees are not user-friendly. Cryptic departmental designations are not helpful.

Make sure that the site and especially its contact information, is up to date. 5 year old data and dead links are a major obstacle to making useful alliances.

Make certain that your agency works as it is supposed to work for the benefit of the public. Recently when we attempted to find a way to connect Illinois veterans --especially victims of Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome -- to environmental projects, a process that research has shown to be productive for such cases -- we encountered an indifferent bureaucracy (1) in which it was difficult to identify key decision makers in the responsible agency and (2) when we finally made contact, led to the indifferent, essentially dead-end response "Contact your local veteran's organizations." Someone in the government should be monitoring such agencies to ensure that ordinary mortals can gain the services that are promised. We hoped, of course, that that was not how the agency was "supposed to work."

Abolish the requirement of prevailing wages. It is wasteful for local/county/state governments that are strapped for cash to pay people in excess of \$30.00/hour to spray herbicides on plants.

Keep programs funded, GLRI, ACOE, LAWCON, USEPA, USGS

Keep up the collaboration with federal agencies working with Chicago Wilderness. The Chicago Metro office of the USFWS has been crucial to the success of Chicago Wilderness, other agencies like USFS, USACOE, USGS, NRCS, USEPA, NPS all play a critical role in this region and provide important hands on technical assistance

Help us document what and how we are doing. Ecological assessment and progress measures are crucial to show our success.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Keep these things going and bring more opportunities to the metropolitan areas where people and biodiversity meet.

Consistency across states. Subsidize fees, maintenance and building of facilities. The state should own more tort immunity prevents lawsuits.

If the federal government could explicitly and intentionally support the implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans, both in direct investment and in partnerships. From the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives to individual programs under the farm bill, to policy decisions made by FEMA and the USACE, the federal government could be a strong partner to embark local and state level conservation.

It would also be helpful for federal agencies to be thoughtful about non-funding ways to support local and state conservation efforts by serving as a convener, lending staff expertise, mapping and technical assistance, etc.

Build on existing initiatives like our Adopt-a-Beach program, which offer stewardship opportunities tied to real work issues.

The federal government can help by supporting local wildlife restoration site and also by hiring more park rangers and on staff specialists. The city can help by creating all new buildings out of green material and supporting local farmers markets and green self-owned businesses. Supporting green movements can help stimulate the economy, and hopefully improve it.

Provide funding to small citizen groups and provide grant-writing and management workshops so they feel apt at grants management

Minimum cost grant workshops for members of the public--more smaller grant awards to fund small community projects provided projects benefit the community.

Engaging K-12 education institutions to take advantage of outdoor in the field learning experiences that promote science and outdoor careers. Environmental education in public schools especially should be promoted.

Provide resources to create regional infrastructure mapping tools that highlights green infrastructure, collects data on the issues, opportunities, etc. that these green infrastructure units provide to the public and have that data accesible.

Full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund is critical to doing the land protection we need for this region. Leveraged funds with federal support makes a huge difference.

More federal funding for green jobs both in the forest preserve restoration and true green technologies like wind and solar to prevent the worst aspects of the climate crisis. If we don't move now and fast our natural areas will be degraded severely.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Maintain support for and expand the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Support programs and education that engage our youth and provide career paths

Export a success story--volunteer stewards and citizen scientists that have supported stewardship in the CW region. These volunteers provide and donate their most valuable commodity--their time. This is a success story that engages our citizens and should be exported as a model throughout the nation.

To fund the development of new trails like New Era and Bloomington trails. The federal agencies must fund its program to expand recreational sports and nature areas. Chicago communities are discovering corridors where new waterways, trails, parks, and rail road sectors that deserve new land uses. These corridors are scheduled to bring improved quality of life to a variety of income communities. From the Cal-Sag Recreational zone along 127th to the new ERA trail along West 59th Street. Let's get moving to expand parks and nature sites in urban zones while connecting youth to conservation efforts.

Bring funding back to federal groups like USFWS and ACE and DNR and EPA. Re-hire passionate environmental people. Have staff for enforcement of EPA laws like Section 404 of Clean Water Act.

Most programs are successfully carried out because of champions at the grassroots level. As _____ pointed out, leveraging federal funding has allowed \$13 million dollars to grow to millions more and to accomplish preservation efforts at the level that most people care deeply about. Matching federal funds with volunteers and local funding is good business and reinforces a deep connection and commitment to these projects. Funding not just for large scale projects or sexy sell projects but funding for neighborhood and community projects that engage residents tie them closer to their communities and create a sense of place that carries on to the next generation.

Federal grants directed to cities to support community food gardens would accomplish many of the goals to get children and families outdoors and also promote good nutrition.

The federal government could be more effective as a partner by promoting federal leaders that understand partnerships. Too many people are promoted because of 2 years in DC. For example, the USFWS Chicago Field Office was started by a great leader, Ben Tuggle, followed by John Rogner. Unfortunately, the FWS has decided to put someone in their vital position that does not respect or appreciate what the FWS partnerships have achieved.

Historic parks must be put under land trusts in order to ensure protection against privatization and building construction.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Create public announcements to encourage urban dwellers to enjoy the great outdoors.

Develop an agriculture education career recruiting program with area universities for high school students.

Provide job training in conservation for the unemployed and rehabilitated.

Urban residents need affordable access to quiet and healthy natural areas for passive recreation. To do this, it is essential for all people to have better active transportation options--bik trails, running paths, water trails, etc.

Land and Water Conservation state side grant funding; federal tax incentives such as conservation easements; incentives for bicycle and pedestrian trails and walkable communities.

One of the most effective ways of connecting people to nature in our community is to provide bicycle and walking trails. Trails always rise to the top in resident surveys as the most desired recreation facilities. People are willing to get out o trails to reach a destination or to get exercise and then they experience nature as a side benefit. They fall in love with the outdoors accidentally! Trails are expensive to build, yet free to use. Federal government grants are an excellent tool to support local partnerships in building trails.

Money yes -- but research, education, and technology that would celebrate sustainable open space

Support the green field with a wide spectrum of educational and networking opportunities (to inform/prepare people for green jobs)

Sponsor more programs like this to inspire specific projects and programs to connect people to the outdoors

Federal laws for preservation of open space

Environmental program to plant and preserve plants and trees

Educational help from the federal government for continuing education for architects, engineers, and othe professionals in green solutions for gardens, re-design of parks, improving air quality, reducing waste, and healthier urban environments

The federal government could help the INDU National Lakeshore and us by helping fund efforts to clean up and open water trails, fund public access sites and continue to collaborate with our grassroots organization that has accomplished a great deal in a short time.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Use their authorities to protect areas identified on the Illinois Nature Areas Inventory and state endangered and threatened species

Better project wetlands--work to require the USACE to implement a protection consistent section 404 program across the country and work with Congress to restore protection to isolated wetlands

Use existing programs (CRP, CREP, etc.) to help build sustainable natural areas. This may require modifying these existing programs but does not require an entire new set of programs and incentives

Identify incentives for private landowners to maintain high quality natural resources in situ. The paradigm now in place is to provide an incentive to restore land to minimal standards after it has been destroyed. Let incentives be pro-active--not reactive

Find ways to engage municipal and county governments in adopting plans and ordinances to protect natural resources and encourage sustainable development. This will allow private lands to be a part of the solutions

Continue the new direction by USEPA on green infrastructure and ensure that state EPAs adopt and implement these programs

Restore federal funding for Chicago Wilderness and export this model to other regions. US Forest Service funded Chicago Wilderness for many years.

Please help make the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations permanent.

Help us get the word out about what we are doing locally and nationally.

Support financially and technical guidance

I would like to propose a project which addresses all of these challenges effectively promoting strategies of collaboration and partnerships to connect people to the outdoors. Currently a number of local citizens, regional conservation groups, government agencies, and state and local governments along the Illinois and Wisconsin border are embracing the opportunity to create landscape scale conservation through the creation of a National Wildlife Refuge, called Hackmatack. As US Fish and Wildlife Service begins their study of the proposed area for a possible designation, I would like to draw your attention to how the role of the federal government and its support can make this project a reality.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

First, the proposed Hackmatack refuge would fulfill the Fish and Wildlife Services directive to promote urban refuges. The study area is within 70 miles of downtown Chicago. The refuge would be easily accessible to the urban populations of Chicago, Milwaukee, Rockford and Madison (over 12 million people) and allow residents to connect to the beautiful and rare savanna and tall grass prairie landscapes of this glacially sculpted region and to experience wildlife such as herons, egrets and sandhill cranes which are drawn to the area's wetlands. The refuge study area lies in the flyway of the migratory flock of the endangered Whooping crane.

By connecting conservation lands already protected by the McHenry County Conservation District and the DNRs in both Illinois and Wisconsin, refuge lands would provide strategic landscape linkages necessary to provide wildlife migration corridors. Recognizing the agricultural heritage of the area, integrating federal programs and policies to protect agricultural land which promote local food production and implement the Federal Farm and Ranchlands protection program will be an asset to this proposal.

The Hackmatack refuge will provide educational experiences to children from underserved populations from the urban core as well as Latino populations that represent 30 to 50% of the school districts in Harvard and Woodstock. Unique collaborations with social service agencies, recreation organizations and outdoor businesses are already in place to facilitate development of curriculum, outdoor classroom resources and field trips.

Secondly, people connect with natural areas and open space through recreation. The refuge area sits at a cross roads of an expansive trail network in both states. Recreation such as hunting and fishing and wildlife viewing contributes billions of dollars in expenditures benefitting local economies. Canoeing, kayaking, bicycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, hiking and picnicking all take place currently on protected land within the refuge study area. Raising the stature of the area to national significance through a refuge designation will increase these recreation activities benefitting the health and wellness of the participants.

Third, the potential refuge can be an economic driver to gateway communities. These communities can create a new vision to grow that integrates natural resource protection and treats it as an amenity. The refuge will help these communities to attract business and economic development while maintaining their unique environment, heritage, culture and identity.

Overall the potential Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge is "the opportunity many of us have been waiting for" to protect important biodiversity and habitat while providing a significant protected landscape to truly address connecting people from urban, and suburban areas to nature, within an hours drive.(Hopefully also eventually by train.) The federal government can make a significant statement in support of health, education, habitat protection and helping people value and understand the importance of nature by moving forward with a designation and funding appropriation to establish the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Engage in collaborative conservation action at scale: The federal government should fashion its program to achieve more effective conservation of whole ecosystems and watersheds. Actions to facilitate this goal include facilitating integrated planning among all levels of government and private partners; focusing federal funding and programs on the protection of entire landscapes and natural systems of national significance; providing modest amounts of funding to act as a catalyst and designating targeted places for focusing federal investment. Protecting large landscapes/systems have the best change for achieving resiliency in a climate change context given their scale and connectivity for plants, fish, and wildlife (need to focus on functional ecological systems).

Increase and target federal funding: The most crucial and timely opportunity the federal government has now to protect the great outdoors is to support full, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million a year. Funds for key federal conservation programs, such as the LWCF and those in the Farm Bill, should be increased and targeted for the purchase of conservation easements and for public acquisition of sites of high biological value. This expansion of funding programs for public land acquisition and acquiring conservation easements on private lands will help connect entire landscapes that are intermixed with private and public lands. Now is the opportunity for Congress to restore its original promise to fully fund LWCF at \$900 million per year--through new legislation that makes it permanent, dedicated funding. More tax incentives for conservation easements are also needed as well as other tools that sustain private conservation land stewardship.

Increase flexibility of federal programs: Encourage and allow federal agencies to collaborate across agency lines, connect and focus existing federal programs within project areas and make the spending of those funds more flexible to meet local needs. This includes giving the local branches of federal agencies more ability to implement grants and programs, collaborate, in ways that fit a particular place.

Recognize the critical role private landowners play in conservation: Private landowners provide buffers and connect conservation areas within a landscape context and should be involved throughout planning and implementation of the federal conservation approach. Conservation easements funding in target areas that is available to eligible non-governmental organizations will incentivize conservation among ranching and agricultural constituencies.

Support existing homegrown conservation efforts that are poised for greater success with more focused support by private and public partners. The landowners and agency partners are already in place, providing additional funding will help these opportunities become larger, more successful, and be reproduced in neighboring and other landscapes.

The USDA Forest Service needs more funding to implement Urban and Community Forestry Programs to support job creation programs for urban forestry work. Healthy urban forests provide valuable ecosystem benefits by combating urban heat islands, reducing erosion and storm water runoff, and mitigating heating and cooling bills. Workers are needed to care for these landscapes and control and eradicate the Asian Long Horn Beetle and Emerald Ash Borer, nonnative insects that are devastating forests in cities throughout the Midwest.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Funding should be increased for programs that train young people to build and enhance the region's green infrastructure.

Federal support through partnerships with regional conservation alliances is incredibly effective because the federal investment is leveraged by multiple organizations working at the local level

It is critical that the federal government continue to support large-scale land conservation, especially in metropolitan areas where networks of natural areas are fragmented and natural systems threatened

Continued support for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiatives to provide for healthy ecosystems that provide the full range of ecological services

Support land protection through working directly with U.S. FWS, USDA Forest Service (Midewin), National Park Service, that works in partnership with local and state land protection agencies and non-profit organizations.

Different agencies at the federal and state levels need to align their goals, performance criteria, funding, and where appropriate, streamline grant requirements to address protection of green infrastructure

Advance LCC and SHC planning

Identify opportunities for large scale land conservation (refuge opportunities) and regional networks of green infrastructure.

Expand USEPA GI work and integrate across all agencies

Engage Federal Transportation agency in alternative transportation options--hiking/biking/mass transit, etc, to connect people to outdoors.

Expand federal programs to control invasive species.

Provide full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) which supports corridors for wildlife, climate change adaptation and species migration. Discontinue efforts to divert these funds for other purposes.

Protect high value aquatic systems

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Since enactment in 1965, it has been fully funded only twice. Trout Unlimited and its Illinois Council urge the Congress and the President to provide full and permanent funding for LWCF to acquire special aquatic habitats in coming years.

Trout Unlimited believes that special, protective designation will be an essential component of the conservation of high value aquatic systems in this century. Therefore, Trout Unlimited urges Congress and the President to accelerate the pace of the use of this tool by capitalizing on all occasions to designate those special places where communities, states, and stakeholders support Wilderness designation.

Healing the scars of obsolete, water quality destructive roads and properly maintaining still useful national forest infrastructure through such initiatives as the legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative is also critical.

Trout Unlimited urges Administration and the Congress to maintain strong protection for roadless areas and to continue to reduce the negative impacts of legacy roads in national forests

Reconnect -- reconnect headwaters to mainstem rivers to enhance landscape scale conservation

Trout Unlimited suggests that the budget of a conservation agenda worthy of the 21st century must provide additional funding to the FWS to increase the number of projects which remove culverts and small obsolete dams, and improve fish passage around the nation.

Federal land management agencies, notable the United State Forest Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management, are the traditional stewards of American public land holdings. Trout Unlimited urges that their capacity to perform their fundamental stewardship roles not be slighted in the conservation agenda worthy of the 21st century and that it provide additional funding for the Forest Service and BLM to accomplish necessary aquatic habitat restoration projects.

Focus on restoration of the nation's major aquatic ecosystems through targeted federal legislative initiatives has a value that is most evident in this region because of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. It permits focus of highly significant amount of federal dollars on the backlog of long anguishing conservation problems degrading those systems. Trout Unlimited and this Council of Trout Unlimited urge the sustained funding of existing Great Waters initiatives, continued agency efforts to carefully prioritize and monitor spending on them and their expansion to other of the nation's major aquatic systems.

Sustain -- improve citizen participation in outdoor recreation opportunities, and increase educational efforts to connect youth with nature.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Access to outdoor recreational opportunity is, for many Americans, largely a function of access to public lands. Just as it is a primary federal vehicle for protecting high value habitat, so, too is the Land and Water Conservation Fund a primary federal vehicle for securing public ownership of land for all levels of government. Trout Unlimited again urges support of full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to increase the amount and proximity to all US residents of recreational access to America's Great Outdoors.

This Council, therefore, is especially eager to note the importance of the 2008 Farm Bill support for voluntary, state-run programs that provide incentives to private landowners who allow public hunting and fishing access on their land and to espouse Trout Unlimited's suggestion that America's Great Outdoor Initiative prioritize funding for and support of such "Open Fields" program in future Farm Bills to increase angler and hunter use of private lands.

Incentivizing federal natural resource agency employees to volunteer one day per year with some non-government organization's youth education programs would significantly upgrade the overall national effort of those groups. Well considered grant programs to enable non-government organizations to put more conservation-related teaching tools in classrooms would certainly expand those organization's efforts. A well-publicized national clearing house connecting 13-17 year olds to existing non-commercial conservation education opportunities would help organizations with such opportunities reach a particularly difficult age group with which to effectively communicate.

The federal government can be instrumental in helping the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County advance these efforts by providing the leadership and support needed to orchestrate additional waterway and greenway acquisitions and by establishing initiatives that teach the public the value of nature and the outdoors and that create incentives for healthy lifestyles.

Use light pollution data in studies of nature and wildlife

Protect and preserve the right to starlight

Limit the use of lighting that contributes to light pollution

Protect the night sky over national parks

Increase public awareness of light pollution issues

Government and public-owned properties should not contribute to skyglow

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Every community should register Star Parks with the Global Star Park Network

Place-based education, or the use of local community and environment as the starting point for teaching and learning give students opportunities to get engaged in problem solving in their own backyards through both formal and non-formal education, fund trips (via schools) to natural areas, integrate effective curricula and create meaningful experiences. Repeat it all again kids need multiple opportunities to conduct stewardship in order to develop a sense of ownership for a place.

I would like to challenge you to focus on a broader landscape level, and transition your efforts on protecting ecosystems and the processes and functions that occur within them. This strategy will help develop resiliency and make the places we care about better able to withstand climate change and other pressures we place upon them.

Speaks out in favor of the DOI document on land management which suggests connecting the ecosystem at a landscape system and protecting national forests and parks to maintain ecological health and the health of Americans. No more wilderness policy-prevents further protection of land as research spaces.

The same challenges exist in obesity today that existed years ago. More funding is needed to establish collaborative, cost-effective, sustainable solutions to eliminate obesity. Stop making people aware of obesity (because they already are) and focus on solutions. Use people who are innovators, problem solvers, etc to solve the problem as opposed to organizations.

Supports no child left inside act – input environmental education in pre k-12 curriculum
Connect youth to nature – continue obama’s initiative
Educate the children on the benefits of outside resources to aid in their development.
Represents 70 million Americans.

Thank President, First Lady, and administration
Federal gov’t needs to play a role in local community – cant be in silos and need to work together

Utilize community service assignments & projects at parks/forests; Agencies need to find a way to incorporate partnerships into Position Descriptions for all employees to foster volunteerism and partnerships to accomplish goals of parks & forests

Encourage to come up with solutions to focus on relationship with Land Mgt agencies, meet regularly. Suggest using retirees to adopt forest/campground, trail to care for, and then use "older" generation volunteer to mentor a young person or kids group to care for resource.

Resources, many programs around the country are replicable and it boils down to resources. Feds can provide resources. State, local and community programs and NGOs have good programs, based on science and have the ability to be replicated.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Their mission is to prevent lung disease and are very interested in air quality; wants federal government to focus on creating strong air quality standards, based on real science, and federal government is only way we can get these standards set. EPA n

Fed Government can be involved in taxes, and putting the money in the right place. Need to be getting enough resources for schools to provide recess, and healthier food, instead of subsidizing air pollution. Cap and dividend make a lot of sense, but are

I am Director of the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway, Designated by the Federal Highway Administration as one of seven in Illinois and one in a collection of 150 of America's Byways throughout the US. These treasured roadways, deserve...We tend to think of Byways as the offspring of the 20th century conservation effort to manage and protect National Forests and Grasslands, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, and BLM lands. Byways are the "doorways" to experiences, connecting people...Byways remarkably combine recreation, tourism and quality of life with an emphasis on experiencing each place for its unique intrinsic qualities. While Byways work to attract and educate visitors, Byways also strive to reach those who live in the region... We recommend: 1. A greater emphasis needs to be placed on experience than on place. Outstanding outdoor experiences can be found anywhere if the intrinsic qualities, including history and culture, are well-protected and these stories are well told. 2. Include America's Byways in the federal resource that connect Americans to the outdoorsy. These are local grassroots public and non-profit organizations that rare deeply connected to the people, local, state, and federal governmental agencies. 3. Place the emphasis on "America's Great outdoors" that not only include the treasured outdoor assets that are in federal and state ownership but also those that are in the communities where American's live and receive the most frequent daily use. 4. Much of any outdoor experience is in the journey to and from the destination. Involve the transportation, tourism and attractions sectors in the project. Encourage the road less traveled and remember= the journey is part of the destination. 5. Please keep us involved. Contact us at www.Nsbfoundation.com

Federal government could be more flexible with their funding pots. Reestablish the biosphere reserve designation, which is an international designation. We have a globally rare biodiversity juxtaposed to thousands of people in this area but its not recognized because we are in an urban area. Lets increase this profile.

Get the local schools to use our native ecosystems as part of their curriculum. Rather than kids learning about the rain forest, learn about the local prairie which can be reflected back in the classroom and then they go home and teach their families.

Unused blacktops could be converted into green spaces so that children can play things like soccer. Educate children on safety and provide a safe corridor so that children can walk to a green space.

Create a nationally recognized cross curriculum that emphasizes environment and the usual, reading, writing, and math.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

National Park service could collaborate with the school system so that people in the parks give presentations about national park service resources that are available.

When students are going to medical school, the curriculum should teach how can their patients enjoy the outdoors to improve their health. If there were some standardization of this information in medical school curriculum this would be very beneficial.

Fed money went to Cook County, but not yet distributed to the local groups. Make the county accountable in how they use the money, make sure it gets to the community/ local groups.

Need full funding for urban park partnership. Support Nat'l wildlife refuge in Hackmatack, will increase open space, and provide wildlands close to large urban area.

Support Hackmatack. Support restoration activities, they can be a job creator. Involve the faith community to be engaged in restoration.

Focus on quality of experience, build it well and they will come. Fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund, and enhanced tax incentives for land easements. The tax incentives were a crucial factor for land owner participation in conservation easement

Need to help foster the interaction between land managers and the healthcare community. Need an entry point to health community for the ecological community.

With obesity rising and disposable resources shrinking, is there any consideration of financial incentives to improve health through promotion of active lifestyles? We have successfully encouraged home ownership, retirement savings, and education via incentives.

The America's Great Outdoors Campaign should include the following: Federal funding for urban parks through the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program, the Land and Water Conservation Program and the Livable Communities Program.

Federal "Get Active" campaign adopted by the U.S. Surgeon General's office similar to the "Stop Smoking" campaign. This should be a national strategy to increase individual's participation in exercise programs.

Federal guidelines and programs that reduce our sedentary lifestyle behaviors by eliminating the barriers to physical activity.

Federal policy or guidelines with incentives that reward and support the use of local and state agency land for parks and greenways and trails (via transfer, intergovernmental agreements, permitting programs).

Federal incentives for transfer of abandoned rail lines to municipalities for greenways.

Discussion Question 3

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Environmental policies to incentivize urban municipalities to provide new neighborhood parks, recreation facilities and walking and biking trails. Neighborhood parks and greenways also serve to reduce our carbon footprint, clean the air and water and assist with climate change.

Additional incentives for federal programs directed toward the restoration and improvement of Great Lakes (Lake Michigan) coastal ecosystem to include public beaches and parks. Lakefront parks and beaches not only provide open space for recreation but also have important environmental benefits: erosion protection, contribution to clean air and water, creation of habitat.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

Maple syrup producer. Local eating movement is growing, how about establishing a local building movement. Establish a movement to buy local wood from local wood producers.

EPA requirements discourage biomass plants. (Air scrubbers) In the Southeast US, there is a great supply of biomass material and great interest in developing biomass energy, but ever-increasing EPA regulations dissuade biomass development. USDA can provide leadership in sustainable forestry by working with EPA to have realistic regulations. Also, the USDA has to send a message about its support for biomass as a sustainable resource!

Ad valorem property tax has been terrible discouraging for forest owners. The World Bank conducted a study on the ad valorem tax and set up 12 (?) guidelines for an effective tax. Vermont violates 6 or 7 of the 12 guidelines.

Regarding energy. NH has a good system of independent power producers. We are aware of the inefficiencies of producing energy from wood chips. We are trying to encourage smaller scale heat only systems. Obstacles are that there are not economic incentives for thermal projects as there are for electrical projects.

NH has a native lumber law. Most local mills are not even aware of this law. Local sawmills may not be aware that they can sell structural lumber directly to the retail market. BUT building codes prevent the use of non-graded lumber. USDA can help by getting building codes to accept non-graded lumber for structural purposes.

Wood product manufacturers will locate in communities that are economically viable. Traditional financing for forestry and agriculture is not currently available. Wood product manufacturing is an "orphan child" for economic development efforts. USDA needs to increase emphasis on Forestry and Agriculture industries to help provide support (financing opportunities) for these businesses to grow.

The market will provide incentives for efficiency. There is a threshold question. Is our country really ready to embrace and support renewable energy. Congress and EPA are both calling into question if we really want renewable energy. What Congress is NOT saying is as telling as what it IS saying. USDA should state that WE WANT BIOMASS as part of our energy future.

USDA could take a strong leadership role in procurement regulations. If the federal government states clearly that wood is a highly desirable building product, that message will resonate throughout government and the private sector. If the government is promoting the use of foreign wood products, that will also send a clear message and damage our domestic market.

LEED does not state a preference for wood over other building materials. LEED should identify wood as an environmentally preferable building material. All studies shown that for a lifecycle, wood is better than steel, concrete, etc. The other industries may not like this, but wood should be supported as the preferred, sustainable material.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

We need to see leadership and partnership from USDA. Recently, Lincoln Pulp and Paper went bankrupt. If the mill was left unheated over the winter, the equipment would be damaged and the mill would be sold as scrap. The government heated the mill over the winter, found a buyer for the mill, and it now employs 400 people and it operates at a profit. This is the type of support and intervention we need.

Where is the organized support for the woods products industry? We need organized support for wood products policy, economic development strategies, etc

Four states and political boundaries pose challenges for long term management of forests. Our council has to sometimes make four separate applications for one project - one for each state. USDA needs to standardize forms and regulations so that we can manage across boundaries.

Green Building. USDA needs to draw a hard line - BUY AMERICAN WOOD.

Market access and market development funding is essential. Can we sell wood at the highest possible price

Recently received a USFS grant to build on our agriculture "buy local" program. MA is in constant warfare between the wood products industry and the environmental movement. USDA needs to show the environmental movement that cutting a tree is not on par with murdering someone. USDA can help provide information and examples of good forest management.

With regard to policy - USDA needs to send a CLEAR SIGNAL about the importance of working forests to the economic and environmental future of this country. This should include clear policy direction. This will change management across the country. This clear message will be the most important result of these listening sessions. Not all agencies are as far along on this topic as the USDA. (EPA is an example of an agency who is NOT doing what it should be doing to promote sound forest management.)

I am also afraid of federal involvement. I have used federal cost share programs and think I can do a better job by doing the projects myself. Conservation Easements are not the answer. Markets are important, but you must get the costs down. Between taxes, access costs, inheritance taxes, etc, I have not made a profit on my forest lands. We need long term policies that favor landowners.

USDA must advocate for forest landowners. USDA must stand up for landowners by providing information and policy to EPA regarding the carbon benefits of biomass as energy. This reflects what the Sec of Ag has released in his recent press release.

The USFS must change its climate change plan. Advocate for green building NOT advocate for LEED certification. (LEED is a "brand" and the government shouldn't endorse a brand.) USDA should advocate WOOD>

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Incentivize landowners by making permanent the repeal of the state lands sale tax. At least raise the deductible or lower the tax percentage. USDA should encourage Congress.

USDA needs to regionalize programs and policies.

Average parcel size is getting smaller. Who owns these small parcels? New owners. What is the message they receive about forest ownership? The County Forester is the most important messenger to provide educational outreach to new land owners. Our service foresters and cooperative extension foresters are critical for continued forest management on the parcels owned by these new owners.

USDA must help citizens make a more clear connection between their lives and lifestyles and forest management. The wood we use comes from trees that we cut!

Working on a commission formed by the New England governors to develop a resolution (www.negc.org) regarding to managing forests across political boundaries. A listening session like this in the state of MA would really assist MA in its conservation efforts.

Land conservation must also include the economic effects of management decisions. Keep farms as farms. Keep forests as forests. Protect coastal areas. Connect people to the land.

We have worked with seven state foresters, managers of LWCF, and agricultural staff and have designed five national demonstration projects and on July 12, all five governors have endorsed these projects. These projects recognize the relationship between the welfare of the environment in small communities directly effects the welfare of the small communities that depend on them.

Important: Parents taking kids to the White Mountains, enjoys taking his kids and wants them to want to go back. Should be no barriers no barriers. AMC has huts so minimum of equipment is needed. Federal program not necessary; anything that would facilitate opportunities for kids.

Board made up of fed, private, non-profit. Work with teachers to get kids outside and learning about the outdoors. Lot of great pgms (Project Learning Tree). Teachers frustrated with No Child Left Behind – teaching to the tests for fed requirements that don't fit. Would love to see federal mandates that cater to outdoor pursuits addressed.

Speaking for private landowners, I've heard overwhelming requests to raise money for education (I support this). Another is to buy developments. Wouldn't it be easier to educate landowners? Tax reduction for allowing recreational use on private land is 20 percent (amounts to about \$35 a year). I can post my land, still get current use, and only have to forfeit \$35. If I enhance rec benefits, pay me for it. Shouldn't be either or situation.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Oldest interstate hiking trail in Northeast, older than AMC. The 21 mile trail crosses 34 privately owned properties. Two problems with our northern trail terminus: land is designated forever wild, so no cutting or improving trails. Also, MOU with USDA prohibits dogs on trail. A private land owner whose property trail crosses trains dogs and was told that's illegal. Another regulation prohibits jogging. For many years a race on the trail has been allowed once per year. But no parking available at northern terminus. Would like a half-acre for parking there. For first time, a landowner refused to let trail cross property. Had to reroute. Later comment: A unique program is Municipal Trails Act: we fund easement for existing trails and turn over to municipality.

We are model of grassroots conservation groups. Help six towns talk to each other on shared issues like drinking water protection. Land trust with strong educational component. Ranch and Farmland protection program, along with 600 donors that protect farmland south of the Sandwich range. Hire grad student every summer doing research. Takes us months to get a stipend for them. Need a federal program that would allow us to pay the stipend and ensure we continue the program.

NH strength: collaborating well; only way to get things done. Challenge is what's happening in school system. Passage of No Child Left Inside act would greatly impact what states can do. Supports teacher professional development, also connecting schools to outdoors and supports field trips. Funding must be appropriate, and more than \$100K/state. We know the benefits of getting kids outdoors – they do better on standardized tests, problem solving, become more holistic citizens. I'm also watchful wildlife coordinator. In 2000 we had funding but those dollars have dried up, and we need a dedicated fund. Look at extension of existing programs. People need to thank their hunters and anglers because they are paying the bill. Later comment: Some places should be left wild, with no human influence. Education is critical; holistic approach needed.

Govt role should be providing consistent funding for various funds and grants. Also community assistance facilitation. Private landowners under pressure to host trails. Govt should do more than just hand out money.

NH's inclusive nature makes it special, has promoted more harmonious relationships. Work with private landowners to include motorized recreation, often maintaining roads at own expense in exchange for access. Offer donations to landowners for privilege of using land. Often there are restrictions such as prohibiting summer motorized use. Federal government can help by extending RTP (Recreational Trails Program – dollars from gas tax). The greater the amount of motorized trails, the more money received.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

In NH a number of state-specific programs to encourage recreation use on private lands. State has hold-harmless law which encourages landowners because it reduces their liability. If you receive payment, though, this doesn't hold true. Another encouragement of public use of private land is incentives from local property tax – more land, more money. Network of trail clubs (e.g. snowmobile clubs), self policing, helps out. Maybe a model at national level. Challenges: simple economics: if I can't afford to own land, it becomes a liability. Government should support local markets for lumber/timber over imported projects, should also support alternative energy (windmills). Expenses: vandalism, management costs, taxes. Sunsetting of estate tax break will hammer private landowners. Federal government should be an example in the management of their own lands, showing public how active management works.

A unique thing we do is stretch federal and state dollars, as well as funding a lot of volunteer programs (Fish & Game and others do this, too). Volunteer programs get the word out beyond what we can do as staff members. Challenge is how do we fund them /support them (e.g., conservation ed, Urban Forestry). Federal funding should be made available for these efforts.

Diversity is the key -- diversity of forest product markets. The federal government's role should be to support lion's share of activity, which is private markets. We can offer incentives to help people, but underlying problem is stronger markets. What can USDA do? Agencies show by leadership by using local products. Don't discourage use of sustainable wood and paper products. Promote rather than put disincentives in place.

Greatest NH success was establishment of the White Mountain National Forest a hundred yrs ago. It brought more people outdoors than any other single thing. New England is unique and WMNF unique, and forest need to be managed as a NE national forest, not a western forest. Federal government needs to recognize this. Multiple use sets an example (I'm also a tree farmer). Fed should continue and promote WMNF as multiple use, enhancing all aspects including recreation and economic development.

Focus is changing from management to stewardship, resulting in less timber harvest. In northern Maine, clearcuts are no longer allowed. Federal government should educate people in importance of harvest, provide incentives to wood products industry (e.g., mills facing closing). Message should be the importance of forest products to overall economy.

Need to build appreciation of nature and connect general public. Experience is exponential – will last a lifetime. Federal government should offer events to encourage this, to promote "ecotourism" and public awareness of pollution (such as Give a Hoot). The Ken Burns series on national parks is a good example of education.

No Child Left Behind focused attention on testing, not experience nature/outdoors. Money is a barrier to nature-based field trips. No Child Left Inside will go a long way to help. Target should be on the family unit: they come back and bring friends. Forest Service could help with conservation education funds. There is gap in awareness of connecting with nature and understanding working forests. Can't approach this piecemeal.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

ATC is a critical greenway connecting 8 states - much of it protected by private landowners and farms. The Fed Gov and American people get the benefit, and making it possible for this thru land conservation is critical... so these incentives and partnerships are key to the success of the AT and other like-minded conservation and outdoor rec. programs. Public lands are critical as is the public/private land interface (relationship)

The value of these lands, acquired through enormous energy and conservation effort, includes taking on a huge effort dealing with government bureaucracy and incentive programs. The government should rather allow for normal market fluxuations (supply and demand) and tax conditions to provide for land conservation, rather than government intervention.

Towns in ME have fallen on hard times, and deforestation in all NE states has doubled - like a second wave - in the recent decade. The need for conservation that can aggregate cons. Lands , and we need a climate and carbon initiative where small landowners can take advantage of these incentives (normally fir 1000 acre lots +) and 3rd. Private landowners and landowner outreach - is not technically up to speed - a method that would connect these landowners is needed. and finally - facilitating landowners as part of a solution to energy issues and policy.

The federal government can establish new programs or adapt existing programs to aid in the development of wood product energy uses and market place incentives to provide for private forest land management and the continuing development of these alternate energy sources and uses. Wood energy programs need federal funding to develop.

Community Forests - play the same role of providing resources like non-industrial landowners provide where stewardship is a large part of their goal but they do not have the same access to Federal incentive programs. Doing good conservation - resulting in public good - would be more likely if they could tap into some of this federal funding.

Fed Govt separate programs needs to work together to provide efficient successes at these goals.

Mud season is longer now and therefore the timber operating season is shorter. They have helped operators convert from old-style harvesting equipment to balloon-tire equipment, which can operate for a longer season and leave less residual stand damage to a forest. There should be incentives for contractors to convert to this type of equipment, which also uses 50% less fuel than old-style equipment.

Their area became an Americorps site for land conservation, protecting 24,000 acres. 7 regional land trusts came together (240 towns) with 20 staff to do conservation and stewardship. There is more of an economy of scale with a larger organization of partners. They want to incorporate strategies in selecting projects to help mitigate/adapt to climate change, but are having difficulty finding direction. There should be more connections between local/regional land trusts and the feds, partnering at the federal level to implement policies. We should also be talking more to the public about how what we do in our daily lives affects climate change.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

They partnered with Trout Unlimited for climate change and protection of a valued resource--the eastern brook trout. TU figured out where conservation priority areas for the trout are--TPL works to protect the lands and TU works to protect/restore the habitat. They involve other organizations, too, all brought together by the desire to protect this species. Another idea--protect carbon values and create economic incentives for private landowners. For example--the Forest Carbon Incentives Act--Senators Shaheen (NH) and Snowe (ME)--this is an opportunity to create these incentives.

Public utilities are encouraged to have a certain amount of their power generated sustainably--using biomass, for example. A recent study (Manomet) says that biomass is not necessarily sustainable unless there is cogeneration. The government should more carefully evaluate what is "sustainable" when power companies are working toward these incentives/laws, because they may not actually be sustainable. Power companies should not be allowed to do these things if they aren't really sustainable. We don't want to dig ourselves into a bigger hole. People may be trying to "do the right thing" but may not know what that actually is regarding sustainable energy production. As a private citizen, she would like the federal government to step in with scientific knowledge and provide guidance.

Studies in NH show that there are enough NH forests to sustain a certain number of biomass plants, but there is not enough information available to know if this is actually the case. Concern: we are having a difficult time sustaining our state parks. NH is the only state in the country that doesn't provide any general funds for state parks, which are at risk and have millions of \$\$ of infrastructure needs. These parks are a great education tool for climate change and natural resources and they are at great risk. Is there a way in this initiative to help improving state parks.

With climate change our ecosystems are under greater stress and it is important that government and private folks look at protecting areas and creating corridors for habitat from ME to northern NY. One way would be federal encouragement for towns to buy and maintain town forest. If there were federal tax incentives for managed town forests or federal grants for key corridor purchases, it might help offset the fact that towns will lose tax dollars if they have more town lands.

Haven't heard about what the monetary value of carbon is? We don't know where to get information on the value of carbon. This conversation should begin with discussion of the global carbon market. This will affect the value of land in "current use" because if carbon has a monetary value, the value of land will increase if you let trees grow. The government should do something about this.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Challenge 1: We need to better understand forest genetics in order to help forests transition in light of climate change. What species should we be planting? We need help. How are we going to help forests adapt? Challenge 2: Lots of landowners are driven by economics, therefore economic incentives are necessary to keep these forests. Low-grade markets, including biomass, will help and result in more carbon sequestration. The MA study about biomass does not say that it is not sustainable if you look at it from a lifecycle analysis. Another important component is green building—no better building material than wood from a green/carbon standpoint. How can the feds encourage green building? Federal policy to say “American wood first” as opposed to other building materials. More thought needs to go into the green building certification process.

Concern that there is confusion with the American public about biomass energy and whether it makes sense. There is a public education need. There is a way to do biomass responsibly and well, the government should think strategically about how it is incentivized.

There is a fear factor when people talk about climate. We need to build trust and acknowledge that a lack of trust will hold us back. Another challenge: resources. There was a grant program created in 2008 Farm Bill, but haven’t been able to get money in it. Biomass: created program in 2008 to provide \$\$ for communities to buy biomass facilities, and heat schools, etc. Haven’t got any \$\$ into program yet. Tools are there but not the resources/money.

Most American forests are owned privately. Families need healthy markets to keep healthy forests. They need lots of tools in their toolkits—easements and markets for green building. FSC is not the only certified sustainable market—American Tree Farm system as well, people should not have to go out of state to buy FSC green-certified wood when ATF wood is available. Families need incentive programs to protect their forests and store carbon. At the end of the day, healthy markets equal healthy forests.

Parks are such a doorway for getting people to learn about the great outdoors, continuing funding these programs is so important in showing the value of forests.

During White Mountain NF plan revision in 2004/5, he asked if anyone was considering the effects of climate change on forest composition projections in 100 years? The answer was: well, we don’t think that is important. He is happy that we are now recognizing that it is a problem and thanks for thinking about it.

SPNHF believes that sustainable forestry is responsible forest management. A lot of good things have been done in NH in the last 100 years. Our forests take up 50% of the man-made emissions that we generate. You can have healthy forests, healthy economy, and have a net gain on the carbon front. Wood is not a silver bullet, but it fills a role. It may not fill the same role in 100 years as it does today, but it plays a role. Government policies need to pay more attention to what is the most efficient/appropriate use for wood, because there is evidence that what we’re doing now is not the most efficient.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

FS shows real desire to put all the pieces of the puzzle together—"all lands" model is mission critical for success, especially in New England. Updating to federal grant criteria is taking climate change into account, including LWCF. Any program that isn't already updating their program should be doing so. Forest Legacy program, etc. If it still feels like there is a missing tool it would be that we need forest and agriculture carbon incentives programs. This would maximize carbon benefits on the landscape.

The federal government should not encourage wasteful practices such as using biomass harvesting and then burning wood quickly in a wet condition. Burning (and transporting) wood that has not dried is inefficient and wasteful. Focus should be on wood that is harvested close to where it is burned, and is burned in a dry state.

Idea: There is a proposal in Congress to allow community municipal bonds for purchase of forests. Sustainable forest management on these lands would pay the debt and there would not be a huge hit to the federal government because the purchase eventually pays for itself.

I would hope that the federal government would increase the diversity of our forests—working and non-working and support multi-use. Give carbon incentives to help people do this. There could be a huge diversity of uses with that land, which equates to huge habitat diversity—very important in NH and the northeast. The effects of climate change will alter New England like we've never seen. We want to be prepared for that change. A diversity of incentives for people is a really important piece that covers a lot of different bases.

Urges simplification of application process for landowners (such as NRCS's Conservation Stewardship Program) so more folks could participate. Their land trust is discouraged that they cannot promote to the public these programs because they're so cumbersome. We need more tools that will work for the "average" landowner.

The government should identify more lands that are already a part of the northern corridor and purchase these lands. Key linkages between core areas have already been identified—they should help to get info out to landowners so they realize that their land may be in one of these key areas and give them incentives to conserve. Need to keep corridors open to allow species to move across habitats and not isolate them to an 'island' of habitat.

Feels that state and private forestry is an important role that the Forest Service has filled—encourage this program. Within that program, Forest Stewardship Program helps landowners understand their forest, develop objectives and sustainably manage it. This is an appropriate role for the federal government and encourages continuation of that role.

Would like the federal government to play more role in sustaining small farms. 80% of farm revenue goes into transportation—government should support small, local farms, CSA, organic...these may be more productive than big monoculture farms. The more small scale, the less we have to rely on big lands for production. More clusters of small farms can allow for more larger areas of forested land. People can be reconnected to the outdoors by being involved in small scale farming or by purchasing from local farmers.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

We are looking at the perfect storm—intergenerational transfer of private forest lands over the next 10-15 years combined with the repeal of the estate tax—this is very serious for family forest owners. Have to look at value of different forest properties—not a one size fits all solution. Working forests have less of a tax burden. Also--the federal government should play a significant role in helping get kids outside--federal resources for environmental education should not be an afterthought, but a core part of the education curriculum.

In light of climate change and forest management, there should be a mechanism for the recognition of microclimates-cold pockets, for example-favorable to native species. These microclimates are important habitat for species migration and success and should be conserved. This could be addressed in best management practices or in some other way to get the message out to citizens and land managers.

We have small populations and low unemployment comparatively and so sometimes we don't get as much in way of resources. Often the rural areas don't get what they need and that is really important.

Youth Promise Act-being able to engage kids that are in the juvenile justice system in environmental service projects. We are seeing juveniles charged for minor infractions. There are issues with lack of parenting, etc. In many cases these kids are just bored. They have programs called diversion, and are required to do community service. Perhaps build off the SCA programs and develop some opportunities for these kids to spark their interest and engagement.

There is diversity of opinion; there are multiple ideas of the best use of a particular parcel of land. Encourage the President and Fed. initiatives to include the word "sustainability." E.g., don't just talk about growth and jobs for the sake of jobs; need to incorporate "sustainability."

Federal government and states need to agree to a broad principle to allow flexibility on the details for programs.

Biggest fear is that we will get more programs on top of other programs that we don't have the resources to fully implement. Emphasis on building on what is working and incorporate the new ideas with what is already working.

To president: don't forget that you have reached out to the youth and need to get back to them.

Support volunteerism!

Need to make volunteering cool! Volunteers also do that because they are passionate about it. They get paid by the change they make in the world.

Not just about being cool, but also about being practical. It is important to value AmeriCorps, SCA and other programs. They get money for college for this program and that also makes it valuable for them.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Make the SCA and other programs more accessible and do even more recruiting across all communities!

The Fed. Gov. needs to lead by example. E.g., Obama needs to go out and get dirty on a environmental service project!

Not necessarily adding more, but giving a boost to what we already have.

In our society we live on instant gratification, so need to get across the idea that working forests are for the future.

Thanks for this initial step; the dialog on America's Great Outdoors!

We have a financial system that is about to collapse and anything involving agriculture and the environment should be long term if it is going to be sustainable. Would like to see strategic banks, instead of NRCS being bureaucratically focused, would like to see the funds spent correctly as a representation of trust. Strategic banks need to be built to fund those starting out.

These experiences and place-based education is critical, but is important to not have it be a single time in their school career. It would be better for it to be integrated throughout the students education. E.g., extend through the High School years (from Elementary up throughout H.S.).

It is important to take the kids out and do different conservation projects and that it doesn't stop at the elementary level. One of the biggest things we can do is encourage propagating this type of program and get the word out.

Environmental literacy is development and sequential. We often let the bottom numbers dictate what is taught because the teachers may not have passion or education to teach science. "No Child Left Behind" has been detrimental-it has squeezed out science and made it difficult to get kids out for hands on experiences. How do we scale the Manchester SCA program out to other school districts? That works when there is a really interested teacher or an administrator that really understands the importance. We can do huge things to change the experience for kids.

There is a partnership in NH between the state, USFS (WMNF and S&PF), and others that provides a teacher's institute focused on environmental education. They do intensive professional development with teachers and follow-up over with additional workshops. The Federal Government role is to pass the "no child left inside act." If we are serious about this, we need to pony up the funds to support this.

We need resources and time in support of the environmental literacy plans (no child left inside act). That effort also supports the US F&WS. That legislation has been taking a bit of a back seat; she really supports making this a priority.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Would like to increase the ability to work across the Fed. government. It is really hard to work across agencies and if that could be streamlined it would be easier for programs like SCA and others.

Idea of modeling in addition to mentoring. E.g., tremendous example is Michelle Obama's Move It initiative and organic garden. Those are key models that can go back and be replicated in our communities. When kids have experiences with hunting, hiking, fishing, etc., they build strong environmental ethics.

Challenge the Fed. Gov. could help address is access on a number of levels. For ex., find places that are interesting, engaging and alive that are close by.

Need to also provide access on a socio-economic level. Having parents that are available to take kids outside is really difficult for some, e.g., single mother working and struggling to make ends meet.

Public Land Service Core is in congress right now-he encourages increasing opportunities such as SCA and others.

Idea of Conservation Leaders is important. For example, how could they take the Environmental Teacher's Institute model they are using in NH to other places to help increase the collaboration.

Challenge: every region needs something different and there are different ideas that will work in each place. The Federal role is to stay out of that to allow flexibility. Provide funding from programs, but allow flexibility in the solution. If we can "infect" the youth and future leaders that will make the difference. The Fed. gov. role is to understand the individuality and that it is by the people and for the people and stand back so the good programs can succeed.

Idea for an insurance product on a nationwide gov. level that could be created to cover liability for school env. education programs. To allow school programs to take the kids out into nature. Liability is often the reason used for not being able to get kids outside. If the school system is accepting fed. funding--would there be an opportunity to do this nationwide--and utilized nationwide?

Long term leases on NF ski area need to be more restrictive - require recycling and more sustainable practices

State agencies are respectful of tribe as a government – no federally recognized tribes. Some agencies aren't informed on role.

People care about the land - preservation not getting the press or being recognized

Farms, woodlots and scenic vistas important nationally. Preserving barns and other buildings, unique vernacular architecture preserves the area culture.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Preservation through reuse - sustainable programs to manage historic architecture, land and vistas

Praise EPA work with schools – keeping schools in community centers. Green schools in Ireland good example.

Help share programs and expertise - how to get the message out.

Support Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts programs with funding - it teaches children outdoor skills, preparedness, raising vegetables.

Support Cooperative Extension - they provide instruction and out reach

Improve conditions of trails - more maintenance. WVAIA – volunteer hiking group, would like to see Level I maintenance from SCA group. Hard for groups to keep up with the maintenance.

Bring back the CCC to rebuild infrastructure and employ people out of work

Support partnering with groups (Audubon, Squam Lakes), WMNF campground programs.

NH Coop Extension needs more funding and support. It is a much loved and respected in all program areas. They have a great service delivery.

Bring back the CCC program to provide jobs.

Support and expand YCC program

Wilderness should be a "no-fly" zone for military aircraft

Does not support multi-use trails (Nordic skiing, mountain biking & hiking on same trail). It is bad for the experience and a safety issue

Acid rain is a problem in our high county ponds. Need more resources for scientific data collection.

Unstated assumption is that everyone's outdoor experience happens in the day. Less than 10% of Americans can see the sky. Parks etc have too much light. Supports a better night experience.

Discussion Question 3

Concord, NH

(cont.)

We more support for multi-discipline programs and collaboration.

Federal Government role:

Invest in the successes of others and try not to duplicate efforts. Provide more federal funds to successful programs. More Kids in the Woods - Add DOI and DOD to these programs.

Federal Actions Needed:

these thoughts come to mind that might strengthen on-going activities that are working across the urban/ rural/ wild-land continuum:

Reposition the Land and Water Conservation Fund to better address local and state concerns: reduce competition. and improve collaboration among partners and the federal managing agencies. A national recreational resource conservation strategic plan might also be useful to public agencies. private businesses. communities and other stakeholders.

Reframe the role and relevancy of State wide Comprehensive Planning. as it needs to be more inclusive, inter-agency in nature, and expanded to include local. state and federal agencies, communities. private sector entities, and other stakeholders.

Work to make Stewardship authorities for the Forest Service and BLM permanent. The authority to trade goods for services through contracting and agreements has proven to be a successful tool in every region. The ability of a Forest or District to use these tools has resulted in getting more work done on the ground. putting local contractors to work in areas they care about. and the agreement authority allows groups and organizations to raise additional funding to leverage against scarce federal dollars.

Expand the delivery of NWTF programs that have demonstrated they can have landscape impacts, get more people outdoors. particularly kids and help local economics.

To be a better partner, the federal government needs to be more responsive. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have been slow to react to stewardship contracting authorities. Some of this is no doubt due to organizational culture and structure; leadership perceptions; lack of initiative; fiscal constraints, limited funding and inadequate knowledge of or availability of personnel.

Even with the slow response to embrace this new tool. there have been some notable successes.

Discussion Question 3

Fort Pierre, SD

I was on the staff of the presidential commission 25 years ago, under Ronald Reagan's program on Americans Outdoors. 25 years ago, Lawrence Rockwell created LWCF fund. I was editor of the report, and the #1 recommendation from all the data input was for full dedication to fund 1 billion dollars per year; which is still in the same place. We need full funding. The #2 recommendation was on the comprehensive climate change and energy legislature. We still address these issues today as a nation. Federal incentive funding for state and national plans to connect families to nature was the 3rd recommendation. The #4 recommendation was on regulation reform of the Corp of Engineers for river management, placing greater weight plans for wildlife and natural system benefits.

I'm wondering if we can keep LWCF funds from being raided for whoever needs it, and if there's a way for protected lands to stay protected forever?

There's a huge issue in some areas, over 50% of royalties have been used to fund other things. LWCF should get full allocations. We need to make it clear that there is full support to fund 900 million. I am a strong advocate to make permanent appropriations to go into LWCF. There is a good chance of fixing that.

The federal government can access and buy more land to accomplish goals. As a people affected by recession, we can't manage what we've got. If the government can't manage what they have why buy more? There are lots of things going on like the Mountain Pine Beetle, wild fires, etc., all those need to be taken care off. It will take money out of recreation and other areas that are low in priority. The government needs to take care of what it's got before it expands. The private sector is the most important sector. It should be upheld and supported by the government and not stifled by it.

I too, share concern about additional acquisition of property. These local areas can't lose more families, and when the fed government buys a ranch you lose the family and the livestock and these small areas can't handle that. It appears as though in many federal management plans, there is no management. This is a concern of mine that the management is not consistent. Right now we're in build fuel and burn mod. The real concern and need is to manage the land we own before acquire additional lands. Just because funding is there, does not mean there is reason to add more.

One way the federal government can be effective is to make it simple. Both the field (staff) and producers struggle with the paperwork and the bureaucracy. Simple is nice, simple is preferred. There are a lot of struggles in all the agencies with cultural resources. There are crazy things to accomplish; too much paperwork. The web is nice, but in agriculture, it is not a web based community. Most farmers have no access to internet. The process is too complicated.

Discussion Question 3

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

From a non-profit point of view from the YMCA, the Y enjoys working with outdoor education, but we don't have the resources to expose kids and families to what is out there. It's different teaching them in a classroom and a city park. We need to take them out in nature. We took a child who lived in the city to the badlands, and wow, what an impact on that child. Too many times because of economics and legal/liability issues, nonprofits and schools can't do that. We need to look down the road and start with kids and families, plant the seeds and expose kids to what's out there. The education process is the step being left out. It has one of the biggest impacts.

Offer stability – need increase funding, sod saver reinstated. So many of the programs that do work need to be permanently funded.

No child left inside – taxing non consumptive users.

Historical grants, they work with tribal historical preservations funds. They need to fully fund historical grants.

Equally share the land conservation fund. It can be used local, state and tribal.

Emraps program – can help do their job like Missouri river. Continued support.

Be aware of what it has going in here. Northern great plains – grassland areas. Historical grazing. Put to large areas plants animals. Fed gov can do good just in getting all agencies together to manage to protect this resource. Deal with tribal people – partnership. Pl owners, grassland easements, prairie potholes – this leg is all critical and effects pr – mindful of that and increase funding. Spending money sensibly.

Bring LWCF back to the original concept. Design to the health of the people. Back to the state and local gov. Should be fully funded.

Reprioritize where the money is spent. Their tribe has a biological grants only ____ acres with 2 biologists. Reinstated those funds and look back to our tribes – don't have access like the states have. They are limited (2 grants re-funded).

Land and Water Conservation Fund, SDGFP supports the funding that fund, when originally started in the 60's, money was split 40/60. That ratio mandate was removed at some point. Federal agencies now keep more of the share. Currently, 16% funding goes to the states and 84% to federal agencies. SD has great use of that money. Need to get that split to 50/50. Last year had a request for \$1.5 million from cities and counties and SD could only fund \$300K. Need more to be more equitable between the federal and state governments. All these federal programs need a local match. If we want children in the outdoors, federal money is important to accomplish these goals.

Discussion Question 3

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

State do not have control of how to spend the funding that comes from the federal government. States don't have access to royalties from off shore drilling. Local control or a higher role, local input of how funding is spent on local efforts. Locals know where the ducks are and going and what habitats to protect. Locals know the issues of the land. Need to let local participants determine how funding is spent. Local decision making process is important. Level of equity between federal and local organizations needs to increase.

Federal funding is essential for Historical sites. Access to these historical sites are critical to people (children) federal funding is critical. Try to purchase private land. Then state agencies will be able to protect archeological sites.

Land water conservation fund, it has to be a partnership. 600,000+ dollars since project started in the 1960's. Not enough funding because it sectioned so many ways. 16% is not enough funding for sustaining this program. Local governments have directed staff to find matching funds. Need to protect that funding. fear that funding is going to land acquisition. Tennis facilities are wearing out. Swimming pools wearing out need maintenance. Schools and other local partners put funding together to improve tennis facilities.

Federal trail program from transportation budget for off-road vehicles gets a percentage of the fuel taxes. That funding is important as 40% goes to non-motorized and 40% to motorized trails, while the other 20% to other activities. This funding source is critical to recreation. It is a matching fund grant program. Mitchell Lakes Trail in South Dakota is just one example. Local communities match the funds. Lake Poinsett trail and Lake Oahe trail are more examples. These trails get people outdoors. Its in the Transportation Bill, portion of that bill funds these local trails. Trail projects are on both private and public lands.

Highway Transportation Bill - budget looks like it won't have funding for trails. That program is in question right now. It has been in place for nearly 15 years. Now with so much infrastructure that needs maintenance, there is considerable competition for that funding. But the funding from this bill is essential for trails and connection to outdoors. Folks are willing to work together for these trail projects. Need that funding in the transportation bills.

Discussion Question 3

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

As we move ahead on the 4 questions, is this the way we should be going? A lot of the assets that we have on public lands (National Forests, National Grasslands, Wildlife Refuges, state parks) are under used. I don't believe the government needs to spend more money on new projects or land acquisition. There is currently a backlog of maintenance on federal lands now. Ross invites young people to hunt. There is a problem now with people not getting out of the vehicles to hike or hunt. The Issac Walton league is a successful group. 4-H is also successful. Local managers and biologists from the National Forest Service has local programs that are good for the youth. I strongly disagree that the AGO is needed. The EQIP program is tailored to the best use of the land and livestock. The program ooks at soil and drainages and what is the most appropriate for conservation. National Grasslands are mismanaged because of top down management from Washington D.C. and other regional offices. There is a need to listen to the land and local people. The land needs to be managed at the local level. The federal government needs to deal with the property that they already own. Parents need to take responsibility to take kids outside themselves. The AGO appears to be a top down organization. Maximize the federal and state lands that we already have and maintain and enhance them.

We need to utilize what is already in the hands of the federal government. Federal government agencies are not taking care of what they already have. Before expand or control more private lands, we need to enhance the federal lands that already exist. What are the impacts to private lands? We are expected to feed the world through agriculture. Agriculture can't pay the price of conservation. We need to pull Nintendo game boys and Ipods from kids. Parents are willing to spend dollars on technology. Parents need to change their attitude. If we went to 3 channels on TV, more kids would go outside. We need to know that food produced and that is in grocery stores are safe. For people that come from urban areas, the outdoors are a foreign place. Outdoor information maybe overload because people are not accustomed to being outdoors. However, South Dakota people already know the importance of outdoors. Conservation has to come from the local level. Agriculture plays important role in conservation, but at the same time agriculture needs to put food on the table.

Local should have more input on conservation. Don't need somebody from Washington D.C. to tell us how to do conservation. Local control over programs. More weight should be given to local conservation groups.

National Park Service is unique in that they have a division that comes out to communities. Need to build partnerships and help start the process if they do not know how to get an easement on private property. If other agencies also did the same then a lot more locals would find an avenue to get involved.

Discussion Question 3

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

One of the things that are very frustrating is the whole NEPA process. It's very cumbersome, it takes forever, and you don't see results for years. You're not sure what you're going to get. We need your vote to actually count, which the Forest Service is working on. The process needs to be upgraded to keep public interest. We need to streamline the process to fit the faster moving society. It's very frustrating for the lay person. Another issue is the struggle with the many different land agency boundaries. When off-roading, you need to pass different land agency boundaries. Do these agencies talk to each other? The meetings must be in secret, because I don't know about any such meetings. I would like to see and know about the different agencies talking to each other; need to at least witness what they are doing.

There are a couple of challenges to point out. There is a nature deficit disorder. The last report stated that the average American child spends 7.45 minutes less than 1 hour outdoors, and less than 5 minutes in a non-structured play environment. If kids are not outdoors where does our conservation leadership come from? I live on the Missouri River. The way it is managed there is no natural system to form. Regulation reform with the Corps is giving higher weight to wildlife. I've worked in conservation for 40 years and believe there is a strong need to get a hold of climate change, carbon emission caps, and we need funding to help address adaptability for wildlife. Addressing climate change is the biggest environmental issue that our generation faces today.

Input the people from the local basis – been a disconnect there. There is only so much the congress can do. Having these sessions on a regular bases would help and relate that the congressional staff. Structure where there would be a possibility would be great. Real opportunities.

Government! Big supporter of Gov't and needed in this country and have a great gov system. Survey the people – too many rules and regs not enough talking between agencies, restrictions on conservation. Need communication and need to say we the people – fairness into restrictions and reasons why it is.

Schools, grade school – looks like prisons – fences (no nature there). Nice if the fed gov (multi agency) get together with high school math/science create a nature environmental center. Staff could be mentors to help get a science group going. Bringing science and math into school get rid of concrete put ponds, grass, trees. If they are not on grass how can they relate to the environment. If we don't educate them about the outdoors - later they might not have any concern in the future to fund the programs. Mentor programs in schools!!

How do we get a realistic result to the president?

Keep working landscapes intact for the next generation of land stewards- with biological, social and economic indicators of success.

Discussion Question 3

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

Promote public and private partnerships through building trust and relationships between private landowners and managers, public agencies, non-profit conservation groups, foundations, corporations, policymakers, and academic institutions for the benefit of working landscapes across the country.

Communicate, educate and share on-the-ground challenges and success experienced by private landowners with congressional and agency decision-makers. As part of this strategy, advocate for stronger, more accessible relationships with representatives in Washington, D.C.

Support voluntary, incentive-based programs that are flexible, predictable, emphasize the value of people and partnership, and have measurable outcomes.

Transfer experiences, expertise and lessons learned about cooperative conservation and holistic land management tools, funding, and technical resources.

Increase and leverage funding for efforts that promote cooperative conservation.

Support local, watershed and/or place-based conservation efforts by providing an umbrella group to effect change at the regional and national conservation scale.

Promote the 80-20 rule for conservation: Work on the 80% held in common, instead of the 20% that divides.

The easement program has seen great success because of the partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, non-profit conservation organizations like Ducks Unlimited, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks and private landowners.

The primary role that the federal government can serve is to ensure continuation of the commitment of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to administer the program and to provide additional funding to meet the demand by landowners and conservationists to protect these important areas for their many benefits.

The PPR project would be implemented over 10 years at a total estimated cost of \$1.38 billion. It's anticipated that various partners and existing sources of revenue will finance \$427 million, with the balance of \$956 million coming from a "Treasured Landscape" initiative currently being discussed by the Administration and several Federal Departments.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the primary federal wildlife landownership agency in the PPR proposal area with the following ownership classifications and acreages: Waterfowl Production Areas and National Wildlife Refuges: 608,000 acres Grassland easements 713,000 acres Wetland easements 1,088,000 acres FHA easements / managed by the USFWS 11,414 acres

Discussion Question 3

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

The South Dakota Game Fish and Parks and North Dakota Game and Fish Department are the primary state landownership agencies in the proposal area with the following fee title acres: South Dakota Game Fish and Parks 81,873 acres North Dakota Game and Fish Department 156,833 acres

The following conservation organizations are also owners in fee title of the acres listed in the proposed project area: Ducks Unlimited 19,300 acres National Audobon Society 2,250 acres Nature Conservancy 17,000 acres

Over the course of ten years, it's anticipated that the following sources of funds could be used to help accomplish project objectives: Migratory Bird Conservation Funds ("Duck Stamp") \$160 M North American Wetlands Conservation Act \$95 M Ducks Unlimited, Inc. \$50 M Other state, NGO, and corporate partners \$15 M USDA Wetlands Reserve Program ("WRP") \$97 M USDA Grasslands Reserve Program ("GRP") \$10 M

During 2005-09, expenditures on grassland and wetland easements in the project areas were as follows: Migratory Bird Conservation Funds ("Duck Stamp") \$48.2 M North American Wetlands Conservation Act \$9.4 M Ducks Unlimited and other partners \$11.3 M USDA Wetlands Reserve Program ("WRP") \$48.4 M USDA Grasslands Reserve Program ("GRP") \$5.3 M Land and Water Conservation Fund ("WWCF") \$2.1 M

Easements are popular among many landowners, particularly ranchers. Currently, 805 landowners are on a waiting list to be considered for a grassland or wetland easement in the Dakotas. This represents approximately 364,000 acres of habitat that could be secured in perpetuity if funding was available. Since the inception of the easement program, landowners have enrolled 1.8 million acres in the easement program. All easements are secured on a willing seller basis and the land remains in agriculture productions with the basic provision that, under Wetland Easement, they cannot drain, burn, level, or fill in wetlands that are designated within the easement contract. Conservation also provisions apply to lands enrolled in Grassland Easements which pays to keep land permanently in grass.

A 2006 survey conducted by the University of North Dakota found that 89.1% of North Dakota residents thought that landowners should be able to choose whether or not they wish to sell or donate perpetual easements. In that same survey, 75.7% of residents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "we have an obligation to preserve some natural areas for future generations and perpetual easements are a good way to do that."

Discussion Question 3

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

In South Dakota, because of the current high water and sheet water flooding in the central and northeastern counties, landowners have stepped up their interest in the Wetlands Reserve and Grasslands Reserve Programs offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Farm Bill) and have continued to contact US Fish and Wildlife regarding the selling of USFWS Easements to protect wetlands and Grasslands. In addition to the basic programs mentioned above to improve habitat, both North Dakota and South Dakota Wildlife Agencies have hunting access "Walk-In" programs in which the landowners can earn extra annual payments if his/her private land habitat qualifies for the Walk-In program. These hunting access programs have proven to be very popular with landowners and it adds directly to the economic benefits of having bird and big game populations. Pheasant hunting provides an estimated \$200 million per year to South Dakota's income base.

Discussion Question 3

Godfrey, IL

Those who enjoy sport hunting and fishing know this first hand and have always been at the forefront of conservation efforts in this country and thanks to their financial contributions and strong advocacy efforts, we all have more places to visit and enjoy in America's great outdoors. In addition, sport hunting and fishing generate billions of dollars of revenue across the nation and support hundreds of thousands of jobs in related industries. State, federal and private conservation organizations need to do all they can to promote and support hunting and fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities on lands that they control and manage.

Our work would have never been accomplished without the assistance of numerous state, federal and private partners. Building upon the successful aspects of federal funding programs like the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), Partners for Wildlife (PFW), and the Land and Water Conservation Fund and conservation programs of the Farm Bill like the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), America's Great Outdoors Initiative has the potential dramatically improve the protection, restoration and enhancement of our nation's natural resources for future generations.

These federal programs provide the necessary government incentive to attract private investment and participation that has been key in helping DU and others achieve significant conservation objectives over the past several decades, but much more needs to be done and we encourage this Administration and Congress to continue to support and fully fund these, and other important federal initiatives.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). This federal program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides competitive matching grants to federal, state and non-profit conservation organizations for local wetland protection and restoration. DU and its partners have utilized the NAWCA program to conserve thousands of acres of habitat in Illinois and Missouri. Typically, non-federal sponsors provide up to \$2 for every \$1 they receive from NAWCA for local habitat projects. Lands acquired with NAWCA funds are generally open to the public for compatible recreational uses such as hunting, fishing and birdwatching. Federal appropriations for NAWCA are critical to the success of this program. Funding should be maintained or expanded in order to leverage federal funds to the greatest conservation good.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This federal program administered by the Farm Service Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture pays farmers to convert environmental sensitive cropland to wildlife habitat and to maintain it as a privately owned conservation area for a period of 10 to 15 years. Populations of grassland nesting birds, including ducks, bobwhite quail, and native songbirds such as the dickcissel, have rebounded thanks to CRP. The program also conserves soil and improves water quality by reducing nutrient run-off. Often, CRP lands are open to sportsmen for hunting with permission from the landowner. CRP caps limit the amount of lands that can be enrolled in this successful and popular program. Acreage levels should be maintained, especially in geographic regions like the Prairie Pothole Region where CRP is providing critical habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Discussion Question 3

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). This program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service under the U.S. Department of Agriculture is used to restore and protect wetland habitat on private lands. Typically, this involves the acquisition of permanent conservation easements by the federal government on lands that are voluntarily enrolled by private property owners. Such lands are restored to wetlands or planted to trees at no cost to the landowner. In addition to establishing vital habitat for wildlife, WRP lands provide recreational opportunities for landowners and their guests. Authority and funding for WRP is due to expire. This program should be re-authorized in the next Farm Bill with more opportunities to target enrollment and to encourage conservation partnerships.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). This federal program provides funding to federal agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service to purchase new lands for public stewardship and public access. State conservation organizations also can use LWCF to supplement state funds available for land acquisition and recreational development. Increased appropriations from LWCF are needed for federal agencies to acquire critical lands within existing boundaries of national wildlife refuges and national forests along the Mississippi, Missouri, and Illinois Rivers. To the extent practical, LWCF should provide incentives for states to increase their investment in land acquisition as part of a comprehensive program to expand outdoor recreational opportunities for their citizens.

Navigational and Environmental Sustainability Program (NESP). This program administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is authorized to provide federal cost-share funding for navigation and ecological restoration projects on the Upper Mississippi River, including the Illinois River. Appropriations are needed to implement ecological restoration projects designed to enhance habitat for fish and wildlife species along these important river corridors. Most lands subject to NESP restoration are either owned by a public agency or are considered to be public waters open to public access. Federal funding for NESP project should encourage partnerships with state conservation organizations and with private organizations like DU.

Maintain existing natural habitats by avoiding and minimizing impacts associated with federal projects or activities, and by removing federal incentives and subsidies for activities that work counter to conservation or that encourage the conversion of natural habitats such as wetlands to other land uses.

Improve targeting of federal resources by considering conservation priorities at various geographical scales, by channeling investments into programs and projects that achieve the greatest results, and by utilizing the best available science to make allocation decisions.

Encourage the integration of federal programs and activities by having agencies work together to address natural resource challenges and to establish networks of natural habitats capable of sustaining fish and wildlife resources into perpetuity.

Promote partnerships with non-federal interests and particularly with non-profit organizations by implementing policies that engage local partners in cost effective implementation of federal programs to achieve targeted outcomes.

Discussion Question 3

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

Expand public participation in conservation and in outdoor activities by increasing opportunities for volunteering, by improving marketing, education and outreach, and by making existing public lands more accessible.

Re-introduce school age children to America's Great Outdoors by providing outdoor sites and programs which allow them to experience nature, and ideally create lasting family bonds centered upon those shared outdoor experiences.

Supporting MOU by and between NPS, USFWS and Mississippi River Trail, Inc. to connect Federal, State, and local public lands, parks and refuges via the Mississippi River Trail System

River revitalization and restoration should be prioritized as well as the establishment of national water trails (blue ways). They connect people to outdoors; they are cost effective because they are already there.

Worried about a constituency being involved in the future. Need to motivate kids. Need something "Cooler" than Ken Burns National parks documentary to get kids interested. Need shows that are geared towards the youth and talk about fun activities like rafting. Need to ensure that kids learn about the outdoors. Would like to see mandatory national service of some kind for kids coming out of high school, other than the military.

80K site on the historic places register in Illinois. Fund the preservation fund. Historic preservation is a form of sustainability. Historic preservation is sustainable by encouraging reuse of buildings. It's a different way to look at historic preservation.

The watershed covers 10% of IL and has multiple partner types. They are concerned about rapid erosion runoff. Erodes banks and the sediment clogs rivers. WRDA 2007 and grants are being used to help with this. We have language to study it, but it needs funding. 3 years have gone by since authorization, but it still has received no funding. Kaskaskia can be a model for similar rivers in the U.S. IDNR is willing to be a cost sharing partner.

Need better trails for kids to learn and love horses. Paving trails isn't good for horses. National Forests have horse amenities but there are no local areas for horses. Need to convince people that horses are a lifestyle, part of economy. Greenways that are good for horses are good for people too. Need local help.

150 million dollars invested in reconnecting people to rivers. 11,000 acres of open space in the area and hundred miles of trails. Museums and visitor centers in bunches. Cahokia Mounds, Mary Meacham Freedom Crossing, Habitat Restoration with AmeriCorps on North Riverfront. These efforts are great for reconnecting people to rivers. We need sustained or increased funding for these types of activities.

Discussion Question 3

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

What happens next for the children? Community colleges are important. 700K people graduating in IL every year from community colleges. 1 in 10 people have gone to a Community College. Profound convening platforms, which is perfect for getting students into the outdoors. Community College presidents are collaborating together. We need more collaboration between federal agencies. We can talk to agencies separately, but it would be more beneficial to talk to them together and look at the whole system. Community colleges can have an enormous impact with federal collaboration.

Floodplain management. Terracing steps, walking paths, etc. have been built to work on reconnecting people with the river. The path has been covered (flooded) 4 times this year alone. We need bigger marketing efforts. Mississippi River is very important to us and we would like everyone to know about all of the trails, community cleanups, and services that are available on and around the river. USACE is helping the community greatly; please help USACE and other agencies, to be able to work with us.

Citizens voted for a tax to create trails in the bi-state area. River Ring of 600 miles of trails is the goal. We are trying to collaborate with different greenways, federal, state and local for the education of parks and trails. Also to educate the youth in a more efficient and effective way, so those individuals get engaged in the preservation and stay engaged. We need to look at how we can do more education efforts, especially in economically depressed areas. Make these people realize they are part of the system too.

grew up on the river. The river is cool. Very passionate about the river. Need to get people connected. One take away should be that the region is at a tipping point. Typically we have historically ignored the river. This has changed and we are really trying to move the opposite direction. There are numerous great efforts that you need to be aware of. These things happen because people get engaged. Help work with current landowners around the confluence from development. Casinos and developments aren't the only way to create jobs. Eco-tourism is an option. When planning roads and other developments, keep in mind space for cyclists, horses, people, etc.

Winfield to the Gulf of Mexico, 15K river miles canoed. Kids need physical interaction with the river to learn about it. Surprised to see that the Secretary of Education isn't more involved. Kids need more than video games. Need federal recognition of the Mississippi River as a water trail. It starts with stopping the building of casino in the only 11 non-navigable miles on the Mississippi River. Need to get more people here. I clean the river with kids. These cleanups help kids to learn how to change their everyday activities like recycling because they are aware of what happens when you do.

Owens a family farm that has been around for 188 years. Farmers have done a tremendous job of providing conservation measures. Still have a lot of problems private landowners can help with. USDA programs can help do this. Work conserving private lands will never be done. Good information can help. Need more staff, technical experts and incentive programs (keep them funded and increase).

Discussion Question 3

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

Current River. Citizens were able to stop a dam on the Current River, NPS helped enormously. Love/hate relationship with locals and NPS has always existed. Disagreements occur, but respect still existed between the groups. Recent managers haven't been as great as they were in the past. Need help getting attention for Ozark River ways. We feel it is being neglected unlike in the past. The park has fallen into disrepair. Turned into a party river instead of family vacation destination.

80K acre national park. It has been managed under ad hoc policies for decades. These contradict NPS policies. ATV vehicles cause damage to the land and a plethora of inappropriate park uses that degrade its natural resources. Need strict adherence to NPS management policies.

We are lucky to live in such a resource rich area. It is a very unique place. We are working in partnerships in this area. Gives a glimpse of the bigger picture of what could happen. Public land up and down the river with private structures (cabins). USACE has been working on removing many of these. Is there a timeline to finish this work?

Echo's previous comments of the Ozark National Scenic River ways. Concerned citizens have signed postcards to make the Ozarks more of a priority. Postcards were given Secretary of the Interior after the Session

Losing IL River to sediment. Need appropriations from WRDA to fix this. Planning on how to fix the problem is done. We just need funding to put it into action. This is the most important thing for IL River

Want to safeguard communities from climate change. Need to protect large buffer areas like Ozark National Scenic River ways. Want to increase the involvement of parents and kids thinking it is cool to be outdoors. Need to make an emphasis on urban rivers because not everyone can get to rural areas.

Over 1200 mayors have signed onto this program. It is an in depth assessment of carbon footprint of a city. Alton and Edwardsville have signed this. Hope other area cities in the area sign this. Promote this program.

Confluence area in Spanish Lake of the MS and Missouri rivers. Spanish Lake has the only Lewis Clark site in St. Louis City/County. Columbia Bottoms is in the Spanish Lake area too. Took her 30 years to get to the confluence because it was a private hunting lodge. It is now in public ownership. A casino is proposed for 500 ft south of Columbia Bottoms. Want the federal government to take a hard look at the land from I-270 North to preserve this land

350k kids were out fishing this year. My front yard is the Ozark Scenic River ways. Our program gets kids out cleaning, learning and loving the river. The kids feel there is no respect for the park. Can USACE speed up the AKERS Ferry permit? Kids must get up earlier to get to school because of the inoperable ferry. Vehicles are using the gravel bar to cross and it is ruining the river. Need the gravel bar removed so that the ferry can operate.

Discussion Question 3

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

Filed petition to apply to Clean Water Act for all water bodies in the state. Federal government, urban and rural non-source water pollution must be better addressed. Opposed to the casino and we need help.

Make a note for all of the special areas and programs in the area. Take this to the next level. Protect ecosystems. MRAPS study is going on. USDA Mississippi River Basin Initiative too. Midwest Natural Resources group are looking for projects. General Walsh is promoting a 200 year vision. Gulf wetlands. All of these issues are connected and bring together many diverse groups.

Need to actually monitor the river. Need better info and make it more accessible, understandable. Farm subsidy programs are an issue. There is little about conservation easements in the farm bill, which could filter nutrients and improve erosion. Clean Water Act needs to be implemented throughout Missouri. Stop the Casinos. We need fewer levees too.

Want to get kids outdoors. Make sure we have another generation ready to be stewards and ambassadors to the outdoors. Need upgraded version of things like Smokey the Bear and Ranger Rick. We need more media attention. What happened to outreach the public like this?

We need full funding of land and water conservation fund. Need for state money from this fund. 85% is diverted to non- conservation uses. Half to federal and half to state agencies are needed.

Another focal point for our conservation efforts is the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, Missouri's largest national park, which has come to be threatened by ever more aggressive private development, illegal motorized/off road vehicle access, abuse of scenic easement land, and a lack of enforcement by park management for laws that would have prevented the degeneration of this important resource. More attention should be focused on making this park and the area a park worthy of the National Park System. The Big Spring Area should be designated as a wilderness area, as "wilderness is a resource that can shrink, but not grow" as Aldo Leopold wrote.

Horse owners in Illinois represent a large segment of the economy, but unfortunately, not nearly as vocal as some other groups. There is a significant need for additional equine access to federal and state lands.

I would appreciate an opportunity to speak about the 375 acre casino complex being proposed just 500' from the southern boundary of Columbia Bottom Conservation Area which is located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers in Spanish Lake.

Many of us believe that this important area along these great rivers should be preserved in perpetuity as a national park.

Discussion Question 3

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

I would like to speak at this session and provide testimony about the importance of the National Park Service's program for historic preservation and historic sites.

In Illinois, there is only one National Park, the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield. The site speaks directly to the importance of historic places in the national collection of America's great outdoors and indoors.

The NPS has a special role in assuring that historic places are accounted for in the collection of America's "great places" through several key programs and policies. Foremost among these is the Historic Preservation Fund, which established and sustains the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) across the country. This is a shared federal and state responsibility that stems from the National Preservation Act of 1966. The NPS has been a leader in creating and supporting this partnership. The continued funding and even the potential full authorized funding of the HPF grant to SHPOs should be an NPS priority.

Interested in role of floodplains & levees in protecting environmentally-sensitive areas used for recreation, farmland & parks, e.g. Howard Bend district in Maryland Heights. Also interested in providing community access to MO River, wetlands and international flyways for bird migration.

Supporting Memorandum of Understanding by and between the National Park Service (2 regions), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (2 regions) and Mississippi River Trail, Inc. (10 states) to connect federal, state, and local public lands, parks and refuges via the Mississippi River Trail system.

The Ozark Regional Land Trust (ORLT) encourages the administration to support the work of land trusts. There are several ways in which this can be done. First, federal tax policy can be used to encourage landowners to conserve important farmland, forests, and wildlife habitats. ORLT urges the renewal of the enhanced tax incentive for donated conservation easements as well as a renewed estate tax exclusion for land subject to a conservation easement. These policies represent a modest investment for the leveraged conservation gains that are obtained through private landowner generosity. Second, ORLT encourages federal agencies to work with land trusts to further their statutory mandates. For example, much can be done in a cooperative fashion with private landowners to protect endangered species habitats by supporting conservation easement projects. ORLT has a current project in Missouri that is acquiring conservation easements on habitat essential for recovery of the federally threatened Ozark cavefish. This also represents a modest investment with significant long term gains should it continue to be supported. Federal land management agencies can also further their missions in cooperation with land trusts by protecting critical buffers around wildlife refuges, Wilderness areas, or national parks. ORLT thanks the administration for its commitment to conservation and for your consideration of these comments. I look forward to attending the listening session.

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

Making outdoors part of the curriculum, instead of optional.

Awareness factor is a big start to bringing people together

Have schools to give more trips outdoors, and less involved with electronics.

Making more time for going to the parks as a family or just with friends. Maybe more groups focused on outdoors.

Make Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK) a noational "figure". I never did anything outdoors, and didn't really care bout all that before I joined the group. Gets kids to go out who never really did before the group

Educate more on social networking. How it takes up most of out time. (Myspace, Facebook, etc.) Educate kids to take time for other things other htan social networking. Talking face to face rather than over the computer. The traditional way. You can play a

Take money from things we don't need and give and support the organizations that can help our environment. Many times money is spent on things that are thrown away and end up in a wildlife reserve. Help prevent pollution. Not so many crowded areas

Less crowded areas. Communicate the oppourtunities to the people so they know what is out there.

Focus on local Communities. Educate and showing kids where their food comes from, and what is outdoors that we don't always see. Transprtation. Go out where there is not a lot of peopl eto really enjoy the outdoors.

Go out away from technology and see what else is out there. Improve maintenance in the National Parks.

Work on transportation that does not pollute. Convince people that they shouldn't use lawsuits as an excuse to not get out and enjoy the outdoors.

Make lands more accessible to the public. Many are taught that government lands are government lands and we can't do anything on them. Let people know what is out there that they do have access to.

Colleges take their Masters programs out to see and view the lands. Make ethis a possibility for smaller groups of kids as well.

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Transportation, Programs, Education, Funding.

We need to education people from a very young age.

More exposure programs and more programs.

educate people to conserve and protect what they have, staying on trails because off trail can damage sensitive areas, more recycling

leave public lands public, BLM owns much land in CO for animal grazing, gas/oil projects, need to leave some for public

more funding for current programs, funding for schools for more programs within the schools, making people aware that outdoor programs exist

Start early with kids, must have a lot of opportunities, take care of smaller local city parks, not always the large state parks

more community based organizations, helping more diverse groups, the census shows that the population growth in diverse areas are growing and nothing has anything about diversity in their programs

fund projects that have ended, no need for new programs fund programs that already exist, so they can grow to other communities,

Find individuals who can make a difference, empower individuals to mentor, add volunteering/mentoring to gov employees along with mandatory training such as paid days off

start young to develop appreciation early, there is an awareness issue, people don't know what's out there, make programs accessible and post at schools, such as sign ups, like for sports, make information easy to find, so not spending a whole lot of time

Give teachers more freedom with curriculum to allow for more field trips, recess, unstructured play time, integrate outdoors activities in daily curriculum in schools

Buses are over committed, plus can't take school buses off city property need coach buses for that, that costs money, more access to transportation

nature classrooms, field trips

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

more commercials on television

convince kids that the outdoors is a lot of fun

Tell kids that being outdoors will change their lives

improve basketball, tennis, volleyball courts, keep clean and nets on, maintain local parks

make camping sound fun, word of mouth is important

Availability and access to knowledgeable mentors who can get kids outside. Have people who are willing to dedicate the time to share their knowledge with kids.

It can't be boring, it has to be new. The new approach should be kid-friendly and exciting. Fun.

Instead of creating more organizations, we should get more funding for existing organizations in order to make them stronger.

Make it easier for younger generations to get federal jobs in order for them to make a difference.

Funding. Specifically social media that youth are engaged in. Use it to promote getting youth outside.

Get more classes in science for kids, to learn about the outdoors. More after-school programs

Show kids how fun it is to be outside!

Educate kids and their families about fishing and camping, in order to show them how fun it is.

Create more opportunities for kids, advertised through facebook

Use twitter and facebook to educate kids about the outdoors

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

If the President takes his kids outdoors, maybe it would influence the country to get outside.

If kids were able to get their friends involved, the perception would be that getting outdoors is cool.

emphasize educating girls on outdoors because they will have the most impact on their children/household as moms, have more influence than men

use educational system to coordinate/encourage outdoor exploration, bring educational groups together by actually getting kids from schools to take advantage of the programs that are already established

emphasize outdoor appreciation in schools/educational system

advertise outdoor activity more towards parents so parents will get their kids involved... teach them why its important for their kids

affordable fees for national parks, ditto on educating women (women helped establish sand dunes and other outdoor activities). Get more women active in government

parks need more options (ie hockey)

proximity of parks to vast majority of population

Recommendation: Utilize outdoor public transportation to get the word out

recommendation: Wyoming extreme

Recommendation: education and exposure, once you are out there you will have ownership in the outdoors

Recommendation: exposure, get them excited they will want to go more.

Recommendation: national kid outdoor day, now just one day. Can expand with different activities as a start. Change the peridime, shift perceptions about how accessible the outdoors are

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Recommendation: more investment into the youth corps. Kids can work, get exposure and have more to do.

Recommendation: government funding, need the money

Recommendation: preserve more parks, don't build over them.

Recommendation: start locally in the community first. Continue to actually use them, take care of them and add new ones close to the user.

Recommendation: In the cities many of the parks are very polluted, we need to clean up the outdoors before we encourage outdoor use. Do not want to expose our kids to toxins

Recommendation: increasing access in the local communities.

Recommendation: make the parks free to open access to the public. Maybe just one free day to give more access.

Recommendation: Street fairs, events in the local area just get people outdoors

Recommendations: kids that are in the programs are 14-18 we need to start younger to build the experience and comfort level. Example take them to the zoo. Limitations (rules) on programs is inhibiting the access to the outdoors.

Recommendations: get the word out better on the local events. Having the information easily accessible on what is available.

Recommendation: Utube, is there a website that is easy to access for local information. Utilize the current media that kids are use to.

Recommendation: develop a website that kids can use to find out cool stuff.

Recommendation: currently there is a National web site to link to local area codes on outdoors (planetexplorer.org) find a way to get the word out to face book or twitter.

Recommendation: use social networking to get the word out. MySpace, twitter, Utube, etc.....

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Recommendation: Post environmental opportunities on your personal face book

Recommendation: How can federal government help. The federal government is always trying to create new initiatives, instead the feds should be supporting what is already out there and help getting the word out and use and support the current programs.

1. Recommendation: Use popular Media-getting the word out, advertise on local buses,

2. Recommendation: Keeping the outdoors clean

3. Recommendation: Support the existing organizations and providing more access.

4. Recommendation: Start people younger.

More urban parks and gardens. Boost Americore.

Community based outreach, planned "walk to river," "walk to garden" trips to connect people.

Transportation. "Build Your Own Bike Program" If people can see fruits of their labor, more apt to act and help.

Channel funding to groups such as Americore, people want to serve but need an outlet to do so.

Starting children's interest at a young age in the environment. 1st impression is everything.

Public transportation to state parks and wilderness.

Give schools enviromental tasks to serve community, incorporate into curriculum. Not just picking up trash, but something you could actually learn from.

Gov. Programs, working to gether on local and regional level. Mentorship programs,collaboration.

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Get families involved in outdoor activities.

Positive peer pressure to go outside and enjoy outdoors.

The Senator is very committed to environmental issues and does whatever he can to help out at state and federal levels.

I never had way to get around until I found out a way to build my own bike. Biking is free, now I can get around.

Obama can channel funding to organizations like Youth Corps, AmeriCorps Vista. Grow these programs and spread them out into communities.

Connectivity. The federal government can think of how to get from the White House to neighborhoods. There's a lot of emphasis on storm water, link to Green Infrastructure Movement; need more neighborhood parks, gardens, places for people to get to.

Peer mentorship.

Get people involved (siblings, family, classmates). First impressions are a big thing, make sure first trip is a fun time.

Transportation - encourage trains, buses, etc. to get up into mountains, hike into local towns, etc. - people need to be able to get out where they want to go.

If people started using solar and other powered things, it would be easier to get around and wouldn't use up earth's resources.

Obama: put environmental task force (monitored) into school so kids can go hiking, fishing, pick up trash - make it part of the curriculum. Take kids on trips sometimes during school hours, camping, hiking; inside that program, teach them about animals,

On a community level, reach out with trickle-up effect; all these great programs have their own challenges, need to find ways to work together in local, regional levels and move up to federal; mentorship idea is a way we can possibly break through 20th-ce

Get more families involved. People will go, feel comfortable, start telling other people about it, get more involved; have a class just about what kids want to learn about; not just regular courses, what about wildlife? How the environment works?

When just a couple of people encourage others to do outdoorsy stuff, people won't want do. Need get more people, groups, involved to encourage others.

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Walk to stores, garden, river - need a more inclusive view of how we connect people so we can walk, bike, get outside without it being such an effort or having to take a long trip. Make communities more accessible to just get outside.

If people saw outcome of what they can do, they would be more likely to get out there (example: for me, cleaning sand dunes was hard, but I didn't know I would be able to see the sunset afterward!

The problem with Fed grants, the process is too difficult for agencies/interested applicants that don't have the staff and resources devoted to applying for them. The forms are hard to fill out- Feds should streamline that process; make it less of a pain. CO Open Space has a user-friendly process.

1. Federal funds should be targeted and 2. Flexible and used across boundaries and agencies 3. Full funding for LWCF. It's not accessible to non-profits. There is fear of fed government by land owners who would work with a land trust and third party easements.

Storm water management is important. Make sure that development in urban-metro areas is accountable for the quality of our water. EPA needs to be a better steward, with more power and inspectors. They should work collaboratively with private sector and with developers to stress their impact on water quality. Also, federal forest, fed lands, there is lack of funding. There are plans-fund them. The plans were well thought out, implementation plans not being implemented.

Focus on the Conservation Act. The fed role is research, more innovative research leading to more scholarship for students who want to pursue careers in natural resources. Government can stimulate interest by funding environmental science students. Larger environmental policing force, recreation has degradation of parks, so there needs to be more agent personnel and strict legislation that would force corporations in certain industries to make positive environmental regulations.

Feds have opportunity for landscape conservation and partnerships; we need a White House coordinator to provide top-down direction toward conservation, in the form of executive order, firm direction, in light of global warming.

Federal government is capable and would do the public information campaign. Need it to be saturated, to talk about the health benefits of outdoor recreation that benefits every group in the room, not playing favorites-it makes everyone healthier, smarter, better-looking... Gov could do the campaign.

One thing the federal government can do is put a hold on anything different to our wilderness areas to keep wild in our wilderness. We need to think about what we are doing now so we don't ruin the areas for future use. There are great wilderness areas that are threatened.

Government needs to be courageous in the establishment of national monuments. This program needs to be strengthened and maintained as a national program that is in the executive branch and not in the states.

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Federal government needs to do something to help its agencies talk/communicate better. Right now we reinvent the wheel too much. We need to have more of the same programs throughout each agency rather than individual initiatives special to one or maybe two agencies.

The NPS, USFS, and BLM have been losing representation on the ground (e.g. Law Enforcement and Interpretation). We need to reprioritize budgets to get more money and folks at the field level so we can better work with our public.

We need to have an effective delivery system to our youth where they are educated. Thus not after or outside of school programs, but in school programs is critical. This is where the rubber really meets the road. We have skipped a generation in terms of outdoor education. However, teaching the teachers is a key piece to this (above statement) and something the federal government should be more involved with.

1. Expand tax benefits for selling developmental rights 2. Expand ease of acquiring easements

1. Estate taxes--keep reasonable

1. More interaction between public and the feds 2. Schedule meetings when public can attend

1. Research--field research 2. Federal influence on integration of experiential learning

1. No Child Left Indoors Act

1. Decisions should be transparent 2. Government should do for people what they cannot do for themselves

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have a strong service and leave no trace ethic. Exposure as children is important. These organizations get challenged by bureaucracy. Schools used to sponsor these groups. The Federal government should support these organizations.

Invasive species, bark beetle epidemic in Colorado. Dead forests aren't places where people want to recreate. Federal government can help with this.

Outreach through nature centers has really decreased. Used to be State Parks, National Parks, etc. would visit schools. This increases interest in participation. State and Federal programs could help with this.

Douglas County also has a nature based education school. Federal government could encourage this model. Communicate these successes. Develop common messages.

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Federal government to standardize data and research, tracking results. SCORPs are good.

Controversy over global warming. Federal government should have scientists working on monitoring and addressing global warming.

Federal government guidance and endorsement that instructional time outdoors is a valid educational strategy as well as promoting health.

Indemnification for public purposes to expand participation by youth.

Youth Corps funding increase.

Program in colleges teaching outdoor skills. This is paid as part of tuition (CSU and ten other universities). FW111, Outdoor Field Skills. Work with partners (outfitters, state and Federal agencies). Excise tax on outdoor equipment (backpacks, hiking gear) -- could be a minimal tax.

Better use of federal funding for NGOs to help carry out some of their programs. The more they can involve NGOs the more they can help bring in young people, teach realization of the importance of these landscapes.

If there was some program or some money from the fed gov, matching funds, would help get them out in the outdoors but it's getting harder and harder. Have to get money somehow. Get funding so don't have to charge so much – keeping some people out. Maybe we need more national parks.

Most of us live in urban environments, so I feel the government should focus more on urban landscapes. Have an office about landscapes where people live. Provide funding source for urban projects. Full funding for Land and Water Conservation Fund over a period of time. Think there's a need for seeing how city connects to the country and vice versa. CCC Effort in Depression – in this environment, maybe 20 and early 30-year-olds could get involved with their kids, provided with an employment opportunity.

Encourage federal government to expand partnerships with organizations that get young people working on land, eliminate fiscal barriers to relationships, increase funding for organizations like ours that get kids outdoors. Consider whose assets can help solve problems. Youth unemployment is huge. People in 20s needs to work and go to school – Youth Conservation Corps.

Encourage funding for wilderness management. Get people out there – whether volunteers or professionals, need more funding. Facilitate communication between society and wilderness groups - education, guides and outfitters, conservation groups, land managers, etc. Use wilderness as key outdoor touchstone. Place volunteers in field to assist wildlife agencies.

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Get kids out there, get them active. Find ways to bring local groups and government together to make that happen. Federal government role may be limited – must be ground up. Get kids started early.

Partnerships need to focus on environmental education. Funding opportunities for this education, programs. Remove the gray, replace the green. Bark beetle kill – need to take a look at. Will just take away opportunity we're looking for, connected to climate change. Connect dots – recreation with preventative healthcare, obesity crisis. Next crisis will be emotional (when troops return). Insurance companies need to play a role in helping the government care.

Bring disparate groups together under one umbrella. Federal government needs to consider flexibility in how they direct land and water conservation fund dollars and other grand funds to consider states that are getting it right so can implement great ideas to overcome challenges. Lack of awareness of benefits and how to access outdoor activities. Government should help say what opportunities and how to get involved – gap analysis. Benefits – education and media campaign similar to “This is your brain on drugs” – get outdoors, America – inundate Americans. UPAR funds that help inner-city parks that are failing, rescue fund. Bring back UPAR!

Using landscapes to teach across American West – easy in east, only way to learn about landscape is to be on it, landscapes are ultimate classroom, history, culture, biology, geology, powerful tool build respect for culture, need new landscapes set aside, NLCS provides vehicle for teaching about lands as entire ecosystem. Improved access to lands through government funding that provides classrooms. Provide competent and diverse teachers, need standards for outdoor education from Department of Education – crucial role. HHS needs to be eminently involved in obesity awareness, Department of Agriculture needs to undertake education for relationship food and natural systems, Interior. Outdoor-based curricula, comprehensive inventory of lands, public and private, which can function as classrooms, inventory teaching resources that are available, competent teachers, and link. Do away with public attitude of fear toward access to difficult places. People need to be encouraged to swim rivers, climb mountains, without having every piece of equipment from REI to do it. Teach how land forms and water shape human history. National Trust for Historical Preservation involved in campaign to do what wilderness society did with creation of NLCS, set aside cultural landscapes. Know and be able to teach how people at Sand Creek used landscape to save selves, grasslands shaped hist of Santa Fe Trail, etc. Teach about landscapes from landscapes – will get people out, make them healthier, engender tremendous appreciation for entire planet.

"At a time when our natural resources are disappearing at an astonishing rate, the government has an obligation to promote sustainability, biodiversity, and conservation in any way possible: education, regulation, provision for quiet recreation (hiking, biking, fishing, enjoying animals and birds, etc.), discouragement of destructive practices such as off road vehicle use and destructive extraction processes.

Federal Gov't role. Nature close to home and first experiences must begin at a younger age. Large minimally inhabited areas and control and balance of the management of offroad vehicles and RV's.

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

As simple as getting kids out fishing. It's huge. Federal government shouldn't forget about the tribes. They get little money, but the eco tourism for the public. Many are intimidated, and the government is a huge part. Transportation to these reservations is a big part.

Federal gov't to create a database about the outstanding attributes of the land and wildlife.

Public transportation is there but can improve greatly. Federal involvement in transportation to get people places more safely.

Federal gov't has a role to give guidance on water, and help communities create water trails, etc.

Challenges: IRS fraudulent accusations, encourage outdoor use, increases the impacts and waste disposal on the land. Group size damage, impacts to the environment. Need to educate about what the outdoors are about and preservation. Concerns from San Isabel involve the IRS; Crystal Mountains and problems with massive trash, etc. from people who use and damage the area because some people being allowed to do whatever they want when there while others' accessibility is limited. Educating youth on preserving the area. LEGACY FUND.

Tie Federal initiatives to the local levels.

Challenges: How important it is to have the dollars for landscapes - farm and landscape protection. LWCF is important. Tapping into the energy of land trusts. Relationships between the Federal, Local and State Governments. More flexibility with the Federal Government to have roles that are more coherent. Federal programs that aid preserving landscaping are vital. Ways to tap into the energy of land trust and private citizens, goes a long way. Overlap - more flexibility on the Federal government working to have rules that work across such overlaps. That the Federal government recognize there may be a legitimate need for more protective rules in metro areas than are necessary in rural areas and not trying to have a one size fits all mentality.

Federal government focuses on the land we manage, need to place more investment on stepwise progression from urban areas to lands. Need places where families can take them first, then to state parks and federal lands.

Education - fed dept of education needs to get involved and partner with them/outside agencies.

Fed Govt has standards for highway; need to expand for pedestrian and bicycles that is realistic.

Exclusions

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Getting the word out - making it cool to be outside. Have govt to help w/ public sv announcement in theatres, schools, etc... Assistance in funding the marketing aspect

Let public know why ELK does what they do - wildlife belongs to the people and our future children.

Conservation CRP - whats protecting our native grasslands. Allocate about 2MM acres - land that farmers get to farm - encourage on a Farm Bill; 60% sits East 2nd largest area. Wind Energy is the doom of our prairie crops ; not the answer unless its put in the right place. No regulation on wind energy except for State of WY.

Reaffirm that BLM establish acreage - BLM wilderness has been leased to oil n gas. Impact of going after oil shell (land, water)

Leadership role in helping wildlife survive. Praise for Natl Park Sv - staff people/partner liasons wkng together and need more of. Funding for these types of volunteers or planning.

Renewable Energy on Public Lands - getting help fm Fed. - incentives when energy plan passes. Royalties that we get fm oil n gas

Fed Govt partnering with Lands Trusts - 2008-2009 leveisl would be nice to get back to - tax deductions would be nice. Natl Inst of Health - get people encouraged to exercise due to them using our parks, natl forests, etc..

Let's Move Outside - First Lady. Congress allocations for conservation budget. Enable Congress and Fed agencies for more funding on Conservation, etc..

More fed state dialogue. With the local govt's wkng the best way.

Fossil fuel - renewable issue; Americans waste energy - the wasting makes it a either/or. If you get standards for retro fitting - homes i.e. carbon negative it is a powerplant then we don't have to worry about windmills /renewable energy. Govt needs to push for new homes, deep weatherization. Standards for new homes/ have glass that overhangs. We can do all this and not use the windmills.

Under the guise of what works, with motorized recreation, the money is allocated formally, but partnerships with land management agencies - they don't have the capabilities to deal with us and our monies

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

I have lots of ski experience and outdoor experience. Our Denver area Founders understood the relationship between front range and mountain uses. Winter Park endeavors to get kids out. We approached Denver, but this outreach is stalled. No growth in getting kids to ski areas. Cost of winter sports has created minimal participation efforts. We need to look at President Obama's own upbringing and fostering of value to him for parks and the outdoors. Need to work with families to help them understand these values. Funding is finite, so you need to motivate families and kids. Work with emerging populations to get them to feel more welcome and getting outdoor use. Legacy of public lands is needed.

Vignettes of education are needed. We need to mentor young people in the outdoors.

Support leaders of outdoors in kids and others being in even just their backyards. Support initiatives - getting people out, revitalizing cities. North of Denver are working farms - I love to see these. Important to see areas outdoors is not exclusive, and you don't have to travel far. You can even just plant flowers on your doorstep, or you can just stay close to home sitting under a tree. All this is really getting outdoors, too.

I've raised two kids in school systems - public and private. Unfortunately, neither have any more physical education nor outdoor programs. We need to bring these back in our schools to get kids outside.

Federal agency coordination, low hanging fruit, empower employees to think beyond their agencies, need to drop barriers to agency employees working outside their own silos

Forest Service Planning rule, asking for public feed back on the new rule, use data FS is accumulating can be used as part of the AGO effort, conserving water sheds etc will help preserve land and wildlife for more than just people

Question for you. On Public Lands Day I've seen agencies work very well together. How is it one day a year the agencies can work very well together and, yet we hear they can't the rest of the year. We have to take care of what we have. CCC's long time ago. Those of us who like to hike will just hike further from the developed areas.

There should be full-funding for the Land and Water Conservation fund. We think there is a need for projects that concern the big picture, and will be beneficial for years to come. The CCC effort in the depression has been a great help for many people. Let's get more young adults involved in helping children get outdoors by creating jobs for these 20-30 year olds.

Is there an opportunity to model after the "This is your brain on drugs" program? The urban parks and recreation recovery programs are failing, because of no funding. They haven't had funding for years

Many GoCo trails are full of signs that recognize who takes care of them. It is important for agencies to also participate in education programs when structures are built.

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Set aside cultural landscapes, in order to teach people about how our land has shaped our history. This will help connect children to the great outdoors, which will create greater health and appreciation. How about getting entertainment (bands, actors) that peaks youth interest out into nature and talking about it?

There needs to be a rationalization for all various government funding programs in order for this money to be spent as wisely as possible. It is important to acknowledge that government programs do not always produce results. This idea needs to be planned out thoroughly, and all the best ideas need to be gathered. Let's create competition of ideas in order to have a well thought out program. There are many problems with the forest, other than the bark pine beetle, that need to be addressed. I think Colorado is a candidate for another national park! The landscapes here need more protection.

Conservation- Wise use, not just protection; conservation is key, conservation is the new protection, good responsible wise use of land. Getting more ppl outdoors, when you develop a partnership, all voices are at the table (voices from one end of spectrum to the other). Opposing ideas get pushed to side, must work best for everybody. Forest Health Issues, giant fences around our land may mean less protection, President to reach out to broad community.

bring disparate groups together under one umbrella, and let's start working together. We made many recommendations, but there is no way to get those recommendations going because of funding and other challenges. There is a lack of awareness about the benefits of getting outside. The government should provide answers to questions: What is there to do? Where will I find it? And how do I do it?

There is a link with getting outside + preventative health care! Our insurance companies are facing obesity and mental stresses (war trauma), so they should also get together with the government

There is a lack of awareness about the benefits of getting outside. The government should provide answers to questions: What is there to do? Where will I find it? And how do I do it?

In this area, we actually work on a one-to-one basis with BLM and forest service; work around federal government because their rules don't work. Allow more control locally

Push down and empower local agencies with decision making

opposite point of view, federal lands belong to every American, putting them in local hands lends itself to manipulation, fears endangerment of lands, nations treasures, federal policies there for a reason

Not saying to ignore national monuments.. just how we work with federal service

Discussion Question 3

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Some county commissioners would love to control their lands, bad idea

Takes different perspective as well.. good opportunity for agencies; Opportunities for more guidance from Federal Gov. help with navigability, help with rivers

Administration needs to come back to center again.. some leeway.. need to find a balance between Federal and local levels

I agree, no one cares most about local areas than natives.

Discussion Question 3

Grand Island, NE

Tri-Basin NRD and Phelps County Weed Control Association, works. CCPI Nebraska being one of the few states where the cooperative landowner owns the land up to the rivers edge. Nebraska was been hit with influx of invasive vegetation. CCPI put into last farm bill and funds were set aside to encourage landowners to utilize those funds to cost share management of this vegetation..Concerns about CCPI program because it is not continually funded because we know even though Nebraska was granted \$4.5 million, it may not continue to come. We need to see that because there is a learning curve, that landowners don't jump into things until they see what their neighbor does. We need to see this continue because we know that those that don't sign up now will sign-up in a couple of years. They put in money of their own. There is over \$86,000 committed to CCPI. Landowners do understand it and it helps control these invasive plants. This is somewhat limited in Nebraska because it is only for fully appropriated land areas. Over half of state doesn't fall into this area. We need latitude to get it used in other areas in the state in the next farm bill.

Something we talk about as outdoor education . Once they're educated they need access. They need opportunity. When alone they won't have access. They need local opportunities. One thing to help with this stems federal government land and water conservation fund. There is movement to get this to full funding \$9.5 million. One key element left out now is that most money will wind up going to federal programs and parks. We need at least half to go to smaller towns so they can provide to local families. Lots of families won't have opportunity to get to national parks. Needs to go to smaller or any town in Nebraska so once the kids are educated they can get access to do. What kids learn in school, if there is not an opportunity to do it, it is gone.

Saw the tour this morning, there's an incredible partnership between landowners. 3600 miles, 700 landowners. Missouri River has Wetland Reserve Innovation Program. First state in the nation to have this. Common resources can be targeted to land scale initiatives. Common landscape scale objectives is hugely important. We are lucky in Nebraska to have Steve Chick. He is a good listener. He's open minded enough to listen to ideas from the field. Then he sets that tone with his staff to also be good listeners and try new things. We need that kind of leadership. With 97% of land privately owned you have got to have cooperation. Forcing realization, working partnerships and targeted collaborations that have been very successful.

Every year around budget time local offices spend time and energy trying to defend their existence/budget. What isn't working: STOP trying to remove funding from RC&D's.

Discussion Question 3

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

Funding for RC&D needs to be funded. It works. You don't get something for nothing. I've been in this a long time. We are in red zone for level of funding for NRCS technicians. As talk about incentives and education, you're right. Have to have both. Who does education with landowners? The local technicians that work with NRCS. Dollars and workload and amount of time and then still be accountable to taxpayers. Absolute foolishness. Cannot keep increasing the work load and expect the techs to continue the work load. Something has to give somewhere. We are clearly in the red zone. Yet will put more cost share dollars and land into programs but cuts the technicians. We are at the point. We are doing disservice to all other tax payer dollars that has been spent and invested. Because they're not getting done. The point has to be underlined that we can't continue to rob from the local technicians there and still get the job done. Made enormous progress in conservation. Need both – adequate staff and adequate incentives. This is an investment and it's part of protecting water and soil resources for future generations. I'm sure Steve Chick will take me to task for that.

Been around about 20 years. We've worked on several projects of as part of effort to develop literacy plan. It is on the NACEE.org web site. Would welcome any last comments. Will present to Board of Education this August. Funding as part of education act to get kids and families outside. Funding goes thru Department of Education to provide more training to teachers to incorporate this in their course work. Many ways that the environment can be incorporated in all subject areas - math, social studies, reading, and the arts. Also health issue too. Increased youth obesity. Challenges: Comes down to money. No child left behind act has forced teachers to teach to test. Forced to cut physical education, recess time. No money for field trips. Unless kids can raise money to subsidize. Kids don't know what nature entails. Used to mowed lawns and game boys. No one likes taxes but maybe increase taxes on game boys type games and put money into education. What works is starting young. Teach teachers how to teach these things in their curriculum. Hands on aspect is what hooks kids. Can't teach nature by showing videos. Develop outdoor classrooms. Field trips. Funding for school to nature type areas. Liability aspect mentioned earlier. Private and public, We grew up with 10' tall slides and monkey bars but now all the regulations governs the types of playgrounds. First place that is cut is parks and rec funding. Funding for educators, person pursuing teaching degrees. All states have funding for literacy place they have to have one of these in place to qualify for funding. All states are working on this so Dept .of Ed at national needs to do more to emphasize outdoor education and opportunities. Archery, fishing programs. A lot of programs out there but need dollars to support these programs/activities. Off-shore drilling leases. Congress needs to get guts to increase, my understanding we're still charging companies what we charge back in 1800's to mine on public lands. Those fees need to be increased.

Land owners and owner operators, you know how fiercely independent those people are. You won't get anything done until you get those people on board – conservative conservation minded people. We burn 4-5000 acres of cedar invested acres every year. Until you get the farmer/rancher on board with same agenda you have, you won't get what anything done. You're not talking to the right people.

Discussion Question 3

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

I was on team of people to resurrect this nature center. It went under and lost all of its money. There were lot of federal agencies that talked about getting kids feet into the water. But when I went to them they did not commit to following thru to get the kids into the wilderness. A lot of lip service. Each raised the flag about the issue but they didn't walk the talk. If you have these portals that have a mission to get this done then fund them. If you cut a tree down in Nebraska in the name of conservation you about get lynched. You have to cut trees down in wetlands or you don't have a wetland. Planting trees is conservation but only in the right place. The Arbor Day Foundation might have a public education campaign about "get your feet in the wilderness". The Arbor Day Foundation campaign is very effective.

Challenge—land and water conservation. Offshore drilling royalties. We have developed golf courses, pools, and parks, using land/water conservation funds. Most are matched 75-25. There used to be tremendous monies allocated across the country. Now I feel guilty for even applying for some of those funds as a larger community because smaller communities struggle to get the funds. This has been a huge process that matched dollars that is no longer available that allowed us to do a lot of these projects. The recent history with different highway bills, the trails programs have become 80/20 matching and are very popular. This year the state is not accepting any applications for trails because there has been a free-for-all between federal highway and Department of Roads when it comes to administering these programs. Struggling and making Nebraska jump thru hoops with charges to apply for these grants. Someone's feet got stepped on at national level that have caused a responsible charge. Need to have an engineering background. Must pass many tests, many hours of study. As Parks and Recreation Director, I can no longer manage this program because, for example, of a program that struck a chord with local people. Senator Nelson has been contacted to try and get past the roadblock. More of state/federal issue in Nebraska.

We have the largest reservoir in Nebraska. Lake McConaughy in Keith County, series of 29 lakes and reservoir. Stated purpose is irrigation and hydro-electric generation. The problem I have in working with the farmers and it needs to be stated here on a base level. Ag is Nebraska's base economy. If farmer's get more efficient there is more water for the river, and wetlands. They need to be more efficient at moving from pipe irrigation to center pivots and subsurface irrigation . In a large way they are priced out of the market. Pivots have gone from \$25,000 to \$50,000 in over 10 years. Need NRCS cost share. About 60 percent gated pipe in our system. Would like to be 100% for pivots or subsurface. Ag Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) proposal where we can group our producers together and affect the entire system. Fully funded in 2009 and partially funded in 2010. We would like to see that put in Farm Bill and be fully funded and increased so that we have some water to work with in Nebraska. I appreciated _____'s comments earlier about large water bodies. If we have large water body, people will come. We have visitor days where people will come. What I hear that you don't know we would love to have school kids and instructors come to our lakes. Anything we can do to provide free public access, probably need a park permit. Anything is possible at the big lakes. Would love to partner with anyone that has a bunch of kids come with an instructor. Maybe that's something that might work for all of us.

Discussion Question 3

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

The funding availability to do education whether it is to build a web page or to put techs on the ground is just not out there. I know money is tight everywhere but I have personally been surprised to find out how few dollars are out there. This has to start with the next generation.

Access issue that was raised .Game and parks does have a long standing program of paying farmers for access but that funding has plummeted and that has suffered. We're more immigrants and more urban dwellers now so fewer and fewer people in state have ties to land. #2 in the country for lowest public lands.. Huge lack of public lands for people to get onto the land. Needs to reinvigorate programs to get public lands for access for people. Need to address fundamental issue.

Back to some education things. There's some great education Project Learning Tree, Project Wet, Project Wild, H2O, etc. They stand alone. They haven't been correlated to national teaching standards. The Department of Education should create a curriculum that addresses environmental education themes across the entire curriculum. Math lessons could have environmental conservation themes.

As a parent, I know a lot of parents of young children. We keep our kids so busy so they'll stay out of trouble mainly. Between home work, athletics, playing with friends. Only time to get into nature are those close to home. Let's take care of green spaces in neighborhood. Come up with an 8 week long nature type thing or something for kids to do something beside soccer, tee ball.

College students are doing far more volunteer service then they used to because there is not enough money. How can we organize college students, high school students, and senior citizens to volunteer?

The UNL Extension Office uses a facility in Hastings at the old Regional Center. This center for outdoor and agricultural learning, Prairie Loft, is using grant monies and private donations to operate. Most of the work is done by volunteers and privately funded. I want all these agencies to work with schools more.

My family has been here 140 years. We are involved with center pivots. We have water running out of our ears. We cannot put down another well. The government needs to leave us alone. The farmer is the dog that keeps getting whipped.

What does a hike and bike trail have to do with water quality. Is this an area the government can fund? There are various states where you cannot hunt and trap anymore. Beavers are overpopulated. We need to revisit some of these laws. Hike & bike trail are a real bonus.

The Platte River Recovery is being forced on the state. The US Fish and Wildlife Service needs more water in the rivers for the piping plover, etc. Farmer should not be required to quit irrigating. Why don't we try to replicate some of the dry years when the rivers were dry, then the invasive species can die out. We are creating designer habitats on the river. Enhance habitats on the river by getting rid of trees ... not increasing the water level. A hundred years ago before developed irrigation in the state there was large blue stem grass, so basically years ago we were fully appropriated. Some of these changes make no sense.

Discussion Question 3

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

The federal government could fund more Game and Parks activities? More and more pivots are being used statewide utilizing less water. From Grand Island to Omaha you can get by without irrigating, but if you go west the farmers need to irrigate. The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program requires we go back to water usage of 1977.

We need more tax incentives. Give people tax incentives if they volunteer. NRCS does need more money. They are understaffed.

Nebraska NRD's own and operate facilities that are free to the public. It would be nice if we could have access to more federal dollars to promote NE. The gov cannot be everything to everyone. We can be a resource to a volunteer organizations and public schools. I am a farmer, not at it actively. We started a program with Gothenburg High School and worked with FFA/biology/science for outdoor education. We obtained materials from NRCS and NRD. My family ran this program for 20 plus years. We passed the program on to our neighbor and it is still running today. It is a lot easier to run a program like this in a small town. We targeted 4th & 5th grade students and showed them how to husk corn in the fall, milk cows, etc., and exposed them to the environment. It is up to us to take the initiative to expose them locally. Another project one of the NRDs is working on is an educational trail. We are working with the local ag organization to promote the trail and place signs with points of interest, i.e., who it was settled by, heritage, history, culture, etc.

Has been interested in the conservation taking place. He has had school children to his place and taught them to identify different plants, roots, shown them corn, earth worms, bugs, etc. We need to pay farmers not to irrigate. Farmers are using way to much water. Use the water appropriately; they need education on this issue. How do we get the kids to the farm? We need to make the parents be there. We fed the kids by roasting hotdogs on a stick. The kids had never done this before.

We need to prioritize. Five acres in the middle of Omaha does not cost as much as land in Los Angeles. We do not have the Congressional support that larger states may have. We would like the money allocated more fairly. Our cities may not be considered urban.

I disagree with this comment about getting parents involved. When I was a kid we built a tree house high up in a tree and wandered a creek nearby. In cities, how do you get kids in an unstructured area? A playground with plastic slides is not what I am taking about.

Agencies could get a list out to the schools of what services they have.

We need to get NRCS out in the field instead of shuffling paper. People have gotten away from getting into the field. They are filling the reports out to get money to farmers.

American Heritage River. The federal government was here to take over the river. Fortunately there were enough farmers to take this back. What rights do you want to take away from us?

Discussion Question 3

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

Landowners reluctant to get involved because of bureaucratic nightmare. Private landowners are reluctant to get involved. Stewardship program was so simple - the land owner appreciated that. In comparison, EQIP is very complicated and confusing. Bureaucracy is a negative for people. KISS methods.

Spend too much time planning and not getting any more done. Value of woodlands/ environmental services. Future will be in conservation. Biased likes CRP need for Ag cropland, woodlands and the service they provide. Need to have Forest Reserve Program.

Questions cap and trade issue – implications. How to keep balance - carbon sequestration.

Need to teach children about outdoors – just have to go outside. Frustrating to say Federal Government has no role in schools. Teachers say federal regulation don't allow them to do that. Suppose to be educated in school, but they aren't learning anything and then we try to do it with afterschool programs. Kindergarteners get 15 minutes of recess because it is a Federal regulation. Federal government can help us.

There are more and more layers of bureaucracy; Need to reduce this. How can we do what works. More flexibility.

Continue partnerships - Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever..., etc. More freedom with Pittman-Robertson money (federal excise money given to state through Dept of Interior, that comes from individuals buying guns, ammo). There should be some avenue for passing money to partners. No child left inside - connect to literacy program. Kudos to put biologists out in the field. PF QF help with the Federal programs. Access to office and resources and help you get through the red tape. Need to get rid of OMB. Hunters and anglers would be supportive of excise tax to be used for other things. Pass it through to other programs if they (Feds) would be allowed.

Hire teachers for the summer. Invite teachers to work with your organization and use resources from your agency and they can then take back to the schools. Teachers can be hired non-competitively to be part ranger. They work on teaching plans but have to involve the program. Let them do their own lesson plan and use your resources.

Incorporate more community volunteerism and outreach. Relationship-building. Must give relationship time and energy. Relationship has to grow. Allow for employees to do more volunteering/outreach on company time.

Be more effective with existing funding. Look at streamlining - how to get current funding. Level playing field with the rural area. Village of 300 shouldn't have the same rules/paperwork (to receive a few thousand) as Omaha (does for a quarter million project). Recreation lawsuits. One size fits all for federal projects is not the best approach.

Eliminate the office of OMB. Federal employees, i.e., NRCS, etc need to get out in the field and see where their money is being used. We do more on administration and paperwork than we do on the program. (OMB) needs to get out in field and see what the money is going for.

Discussion Question 3

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

Need to have more groups discussing these problems and issues and conduct programs like we are doing today. "There is no wheel that has not been invented". Need to collaborate rather than butt heads. Need action to go with talk. Look at a lot of programs, initiatives and studies - reduces ADD, Obesity and seeing better. What works with you and your barriers. Don't need to reinvent the wheel. The bureaucracy gets in the way.

Recognize that government has a role but cannot solve all the problems – use where most effective. Concept of supporting conservation - getting back to nature. School curriculum is avoid litigation. States created statutes. Feds can't solve all the problems. Focus on effective role. Positive on things Feds can do.

Need to coordinate messages that come out of the government. Food pyramid - exercise by going outside. See how it all fits together.

Needs to be some type of movement - society needs to see issue as important and value it. But...do not need more regulations. Needs to be seen, movement within organizations before there will be real change. If Federal Government could back without regulations.

I hope McKenzie Barry's suggestion to form a Got Nature campaign didn't fly over everyone's head.

It's not only with grants, but with budgets for the federal government. There is a functional part of this that has been broken. The responsibility lies at the feet of the administration and the feet of congress.

The importance of farm bill conservation dollars are really critical, it is the biggest pot of money. It is the right decision to rethink how much program dollars can be used for technical assistance.

The No Child Left Behind Act is a good place for government to get involved if change is to take place in the schools.

Discussion Question 3

Grand Junction, CO

FUNDING - we get GOCO, USFWS, NRCS, etc to purchase easements. Another way we operate is by providing tax deductions - federal government should facilitate those deductions

federal government can recognize state's rights in terms of fishing and hunting mgmt;

encourage states to utilize state DOWs - project wild/wet; federal gov't should put in place a federal conservation stamp

limit lawsuits to federal government - to reduce time that land management agencies spend on dealing with lawsuits

streamline federal permitting processes

feds can help facilitate process of developing partnerships

revisit the way feds deal with split estate

federal government should play a greater role in partnering at a landscape level for conservation

federal role- ensure connectivity on federal lands and establish energy policy on public lands which creates incentives for renewables

put money into education foundations at the grade school level

work with land trusts/ranchers to prevent development in open areas

more funding for state parks/federal land mgmt agencies; game wardens are way understaffed; government needs to get out of bed with energy companies and enforce current laws

throw more money at parks - most kids have first experience in parks

tools - quit cutting money for land management , tools for advancing interagency agreements, restore clean water act

eliminate Mining act of 1872; should not be giving away public land for low price for energy development

Discussion Question 3

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

Disconnect between the agency messages and the local kitchen table conversation. The feds can work within their own means (no new programs or money) to bridge between existing programs and the kitchen table. Feds need to expand the existing information

Federal government is very inefficient at getting money to local organizations or businesses. The best way to get money on the ground is through local contracts, independent businesses.

different agencies often have competing (or at least different) values that make it a significant challenge to pursue multiple grants for a local initiative. Land owners stay away from federal programs for these reasons.

what works is connecting children with nature and giving them opportunities to go places, would like to see a national program that mirrors local efforts to take kids outdoors

Feds should support and promote land trust organizations. Feds should recognize that private sector is capable of policing itself and should remove some of the restrictions/requirements that are too invasive on the private interests.

Need an evaluation of grant programs to assess their effectiveness.

Ask “how complicated is the grant application process compared to the benefit and return”. Feds also have control of tax incentives to local land owners. Promote state tax, conservation credits, etc. Feds can help promote a directed and guided tax poli

agencies can ensure that partnerships don't lose key partners or key expertise (such as a fisheries biologist). Money and people always seem to be the limiting factors – particularly younger staff. Agencies continue to be the lasting partner

emphasized the benefits of Vista program. Feds could provide more money to allow small community organizations to take advantage of the Vistas

can the feds proclaim they support these type of partnerships by doing away with “matching grants” and promote “Donations in kind”

Federal gov could help with their programs – help protect what we have and minimize fragmentation, help reconnect to what we have

the federal government can look to existing partnerships and programs at the local level to serve as an “interface” or a facilitator. For example: CFLRP program through USDA – focused on large-scale forest health partnerships

feds should focus on preservation of a “great outdoors” above all else. There needs to be an intact, healthy “outdoors” to connect with

Discussion Question 3

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

feds can ensure adequate instream flows

would like to see greater spending at the federal level on environmental/outdoor education.

II. Land Use Planning is a local responsibility. Need more input from the community in land use hearings. During campaigns, ask local officials where they stand and what you want them to do.

IV. Retain and improv

Land mgmt entities need to use motorized users to educate folks when they see things going wrong. Land managers need to educate users so they give out right messages.

A lot of change has occurred over last 5 years. Federal agencies are working much closer with local constituencies in the last 5 years and they should continue to do that. Build on 3 C's from previous administration. We have a lot of infrastructure in t

Colorado State Parks has outstanding relationship with local middle school. They come out and do service projects. Colorado State Parks provides access and fee waiver. Funding for bussing is a problem. Teachers are focused on math and reading. Fed g

Private land conservation in Gunnison has been a great program. GOCO Colorado has been instrumental in funding the program. Successful because it's been a non-federal program. Been hard to get support for conservation on working ranches. Important for

Federal Govt is doing well and should continue to focus on specific areas such as new NLCS units that have been designated. Special interest groups need to work together. Need a structure for folks to work together such as the Dominguez-Escalante Nation

BLM should quantify economic benefits to NLCS units for the public. BLM should put people in touch with each other.

Got funding from gas companies to take kids on school trips. Would be helpful for fed govt to put together trip ideas on public lands and provide those ideas to schools so teachers can take kids out on public lands.

I'm an angler. Would like to push for easements through private property so that we can access the rivers. Would like to have riparian area along all rivers so that we can legally touch the bottom of the river. Do not have access to Roaring Fork. Our w

II. It is great that there are lots of organizations with good relationships with the fed agencies in CO. In other places local organizations are less supportive of public agencies and local governments have too much control over fed land management and

I. Challenges. Land use planning. Feds and local government need to work together to get something in place to help keep the city in the city - stop urban sprawl. IV. In tight budget, spending a little money on recruiting volunteers could provide lar

Discussion Question 3

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

II. Ecoregional perspective is helpful for BLM and publics to have basis for conservation dialogue. Traditional uses are very important - as important as newer recreation interests. Only by incorporating those interests do we get long term stewardship.

II. His group has working relationships with several agencies (coalition built). IV. Resources, ready to go, land bought, easements in place but need the resources to complete the projects (to build trail)

III. BLM office in GJ needs more employees to help coordinate volunteer activities (need a dedicated volunteer coordinator). Plenty of groups interested in volunteering, but need coordination.

I. Challenge is gaining acceptance and consensus on conservation. People used to be willing to compromise - less likely now. II. Got past that for D&E designation III. Federal role working with private landowners to allow them to make a living on pr

Off road people would say it is ok to get their only by horse and foot. Challenge that people want trails. See poor planning of trails and overuse such as 9 illegal splits -- federal government has no idea of condition of trails. Connecting people to outd

Very familiar with being out on public lands and balancing uses. Department of Energy not interacting as much as they should. What happens with energy and environmental protection. Pull all agencies together and discuss impacts on public lands. Slag piles

Challenges for use - 1) timeframe to build new trails (have expertise available but bogged down by buracracy) -- funding and budget (EA as an example - willing to pay archeologist to do evaluation), one most obvious being free lunch (5 years before constr

Been around a long time, cabins, all over the country, handle on what goes on. Answer people about wilderness issue (designate and leave along - no chain saws). Wilderness camper. Would say what we need is less development, less money, just need a place

Over the last year asked constiutents what they need -- 1) Education of youth about the outdoors, having them have access to lands, understanding ecosystems regardless of how they want to use 2) EPA, BLM, USFS requirements to seek grants some many differe

Conserved about 164 transaction, help leverage local and federal dollars, example on Pinion Mesa Conservation Easement -- utilized USFWS grant thru CDOW and great outdoors stamp money to make easement happen. Abuts FS and BLM land on other side and protec

Get kids involved *** BLM should get more funding to get kids and parents outdoors. Not all volunteer work is difficult - kids can do a lot of it.

City get to collect fees government collects to keep in community, collaboration continue to work with local communities initially affected first because 80% of land is public, please talk to people who work in government for future development, effective

Discussion Question 3

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

BLM making decisions that spectacular locations are protected *** BLM is going to protect the Vermillion Basin (80,000 acres). Bold decisions like this are critical for connecting people to the outdoors by making sure that some of the last places that are

Oil and gas development a potential for contamination, government should act in the public welfare (best interest), global warming as an example of the last 40 years, government should act *** Its important for govt to listen, also important for it to ac

Chevron had monitoring in Gulf oil spill detectors did not work, more government regulation , leaks not detected in Utah, energy leases that the BLM had 14 positions for monitoring but 9 positions were vacant *** Need for more regulation in preventing oil

Reaffirmation of existing tool, BLM authority to establish and protect wilderness areas -- believe is valid in 1976. Fulfillment of BLM responsibility to implement and use this tool. Creates partnership to look at unique landscapes and team up with *** Rea

80% of our forest held by private individuals, Mesa Land Trust helps conserve private lands, acquiring enough funding to pay staff and projects. Government to help provide funding to go forward with work we are doing. Make permanent federal tax deductio

BLM book and provide meeting space as needed, Pull together website that lists various groups that could be contacted or interested in a issue. Research group developed to better prepared for clean up oil spills - frac fluids also. *** Friends of Northern

Close down energy loopholes *** NO one is monitoring what is going into fracking. The government should monitor and regulate that. Close down energy loopholes.

One size does not fit all, need decisions made locally not front range, listen to elected officials from colorado *** The federal gov. needs to understand that one size doesn't fit all. We need our representatives from the West slope to be listened too.

Reconnecting what works. Organized an event partnering with BLM. We had stations set-up on BLM land. Kids went around from stations to station. This was a great way to get kids involved. We are planning to do it again.

Funding: When funding is available, people are more likely to collaborate in working together. Taxes are important to acquire critical linking habitats, protect summer range. Private lands provide winter range. Need to buy property or conservation ea

Lots of good things are happening due to the efforts of good people. Wants to hear more about what problems exist and what caused them. What can be done to provide assistance? What authorities exist or are needed for agencies to get kids to outdoor site

Agencies have a "don't touch" attitude. Can't turn all public lands into museums. I am a hiker and four-wheeler. As a retired BLM employee my job was to make land available to all user groups and to protect my motorcycle access. The most effective way

Discussion Question 3

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

A role of government is the careful balancing between oil and gas development and resource protection and recreation use. The BP oil spill points to the need to develop more protection for onshore water, land and recreation protection. Encourage federal

Funding shorages can be addressed by redirecting money we use today. Agencies can figure out how to get kids involved, need to work with school districts. Need to get youth involved in natureal resources. People will not see the need for wilderness are

More thought and emphasis is needed on maintaining large core areas and connectivity between them. Government could fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other funding sources. Funding needs to be used strategically. Same standards for both pub

Important to standby managers positions when they make decisison. It is important for managers to say there are limits, can't be all things to all people. Managers have to set limits on uses and activities, otherwise we will reach the lowest common denom

Notes that in Costa Rica the government pays landowers to let things go natural to provide biological/wildkife corridors. What is the government doing in this country to keep lands natural? Are there incentives for private land owner not to develop natu

Her organization is working on bike parks for kids. It is beneficial to provide more sites/things for kids outdoors. Land managers need to provide more areas for children. Create more bike parks.

NPS is focused on education, BLM and USFS do not have the same commitement to education, and don't take getting people into the outdoors as seriously. Agenices do their best, but need more education folks. Agencies need to be more consistent, more empha

Federal government is the only entity that has resources and can work across agencies to protect "ecosystem services", e.g., clean water processes, climate control, things that work across landscapes. Federal government needs to take a role in protectin

Lack of funding for outdoor education, no money for field trips, can't train and certify teachers. Concerned about sustainability for various programs. Intitiatives result from individual efforts. Not much help from government. Grassroots efforts, inte

Oil and gas standards need to be outcome-based and quantitative for reclamation, similar to the standards required of coal mining.

Challenge is that this administration needs to replace some political people in high-level positions with science- minded people. The public thinks high-level employees are secientists, so there is no oversight. We need scientist not politicians.

Sportsman's education: The Colorado Division of Wildlife is the only agency getting kids involved in the outdoors through sportsman's education. Need to get federal agencies involved in similar efforts. Hunting and fishing will foster interest in outdo

Discussion Question 3

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

Turn over is not a bad thing in agencies. New employees not afraid of change and are supportive of collaboration.

Change NLCS to "national conservation lands". This will reduce confusion with public and BLM.

Compliment to BLM, USFS. BLM and FS working with focus groups, providing meeting places and assistance, etc., works well.

One of the best tools is NEPA. Agencies do not apply the same NEPA standards for themselves as they do for industry. Agencies are stringent in applying rules to extraction activities, but agencies don't apply the rules to themselves. That detracts from

Encourage congress to listen to what the people said today. Communicate a thanks for organizing the meetings. They should listen and act. They need to think long-term. Think of the tremendous resource they can take advantage of. Agencies need to work

Strengthen management of BLMs wilderness study areas and USFS wilderness. Outside impacts identified in NEPA but are not being addressed on the ground level.

NEPA identifies offsite impacts but they are not realistically addressed on the ground. Agencies need to mitigate them instead of having local communities deal with them. Fire policies will become a growing concern. Fire management education programs

Discussion Question 3

Helena, MT

Missed opportunities for fed, state, and local government agencies to work together across boundaries to create comprehensive heritage and recreation areas. Further support and promotion of NPS- National Heritage Areas.

Contract with NPS- turnover 3500 acers free and clear to Little Big Horn National Mon.

Move as swiftly as possible away from oil and coal use, encourage thoughtful development of renewable energy. Encourage individuals home use do solar and or wind energy. Avoid transporting electricity long distances- use and generate it locally. Focus on healthy wildlife population and distributions- "A healthy environment for man is a a livable environment for wildlife" Keep as much wild land WILD as possible- even reclaim areas back to wild state (good wildlife, habitats) truly road less areas don't contribute to water quality problems or habitat fragmentation, or attribute wildlife species or noxious spray. Apply presidential executive orders to maintain and protect soils and vegetation set up to the plate and apply protective measures to assure that we have functional and healthy ecosystems- they must not be compromised for the sake of pushing people into the outdoors. Introducing people to the outdoors must be orderly and educational so the landscape we are introducing people to are not ultimately sacrificed though our use or abuse. Stop "out" sourcing efforts that should be taken cared by dedicating knowledge, federal scientist/ employees. Take pride in the agencies, encourage them to take action to restore watershed and landscapes. Listen to people and communities but when even more importantly, please listen to the earth and its needs.

Clean Alternative Energies Now- Not 50 years in the future. We have the technology but not the political will!

Use the good will, motivation and concern for the environment and our public lands on the part of American citizens, especially youth/ children, to overcome some of the work that they long to do and that needs to be done to protect these resources. National Parks Forest Rangers can help facilitate this by partnering with local, non-profit and other groups to get Americans out in the land. Imagine that you could go to a National Park or forest or state park and on any given ay find a program, sanction by the par, where you and your family could help preserve the park (e.g. paint a picnic shelter, pick up trash, pull weeds, build a trail, ect). Our parks are underfunded and in need of repair. if we can budget the money to get the work done then ask citizens to help. This will get people involved, give them a since of ownership and accomplishment and ensure that future generations grow up learning how to care for our national treasures.

Thank you for your commitment to conserving open and working lands, wild and agricultural lands. I appreciate your seekng local and fresh ideas. I would encourage you to also recommit to programs and policies that are already proven effective. Voluntary conservation on a local level relies on LWCF funding ass an engine to spur local investment like the bond funds in this county. It spurs other private and state funding. Please consider making this permanent. Tax incentives are an essential piece and the third-leg strong partnerships with private conservation groups.

Discussion Question 3

Helena, MT

(cont.)

Get programs in the schools, more funding for conservation programs, Government working with grassroots organizations, listening

1) Keep good agency partners in rural communities to facilitate conservation practices and transactions. 2) make conservation funding consistent/dependable/permanent (land& water conservation fund, farm bill programs- GRP, FRPP, WRP, WREP, etc.)

This comment is from me as an educated, concerned, owing citizen of this great nation, and of Madison County, Montana. Our environment and our health. Put money into researching all of those points. There is potential for jobs, food, fuel. For clothing, tools, nourishment and it medical properties are proven. Changing this antiqued, racially driven law would allow ranchers to add diversity to their crops for industrial use and would create a cooperatively beneficial situation in so many ways/ Please consider this solution to many problems in our nation.

We must address the education of our resources professionals. We must include: conservation history, public trust, responsibility and ethics.

Modify the budget process. Resource utilization (example logging) and site reclamation (road removal) must be in a single appropriation process.

Provide the regulators and custodians insulation form political interference and the dogmatic beliefs held by transient office holders.

The mission statement of the Ruby Valley Conservation District is "protect the land and preserve our heritage"- I believe this is the role of the federal government as well. A tool to make this initiative work is to remove funding from things that are nor working- like the war on drugs, the wars in the middle east, and subsidies for wall street. Put that money into funding the agencies, people and programs that scientists employed. Replace retirees with apprentices rather than "saving money" by not hiring another biologist for a period of time, for instance.

Work more at watershed level

Fund senators Tester's watershed assistance project

MT. has enough wilderness area- also against federal ownership. Need our forest "open" and mud "closed" Leave historical buildings and cabins standing on Pouhand. Important to have access to forest service roads and trails- a hiking b. snowmobiling c. 4 wheel divers d. ATV use e. horses f. hunting g. lakes. Recently joined an ATV club and have enjoyed seeing clean up of the trails- keeping the trails open and working with the forest service on hand, it works

The U.S. Government needs to be a leader! A leader nourishes everyone and everything.

Discussion Question 3

Helena, MT

(cont.)

Reinstate the tax legislation which benefits use of conservation easements, expired 6 years ago.
•Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), it allows for MT working ranches to be compensated, keeps open space, USDA should change restrictions on Rocky Mountain Front, not all private owners want to partner with the feds (USFWS) so make changes where conservation easement holders could be non-governmental [private land trusts]

Use collaborative efforts in travel management planning, bring all parties to the table to work out compromises, variety of users: walk, horse ,ATV, fly, wheelchairs

Red trees not due to mismanagement, due to climate change – winters are not cold enough to kill the beetles, global warming is impacting our environment. •Consider climate change as the number one issue, it impacts people, wildlife, watersheds, native vegetation is dying. •Local control in the abstract is good and is also the “Tragedy of the Commons” from overuse, exploitation by locals, an example is Haiti deforestation. •Get local scientists into the environments for best ways to make functional, on-the-ground, enlightened decisions. •Public lands are owned by all Americans, not just locals. •Protect Montana for all generations, help ecosystems to survive

Wants recreational opportunities for his 5 year old daughter, she is recycling in preschool, interested in conservation, wants programs for a 5 year old to do: help build trail, pull weeds, nail one nail on a bridge, something with a conservation flavor. •Too few park rangers any more.
•Hard to find the opportunities at national and state parks, national forests. •Too expensive for a family to stay at Yellowstone NP at \$200/night there is something wrong with that, camping not for all families with babies or grandparents

Partners with USFWS in weed management, wildlife habitat, establishing trust •Grassland reserve is chronically underfunded, the demand is great but only able to work in 3 counties

Need an Act of Congress to transfer privately acquired lands to NPS, Congress must extend the boundaries of the Monument [Custer National Battlefield near Harding, Montana, ?Little Bighorn Battlefield NM] •Threatened lands have been purchased using \$6 million from 3000 donors, 3500 acres purchased, and have been trying to donate to NPS for 10 years, also \$1million in the bank that can only be used to conserve the area

Suggested night/after work listening sessions. •Pollution in the Gulf of Mexico, make the responsible parties responsible, clean up, understands balancing the economy and the environment, the little shrimping operations are no more. •Pursue renewable energy here in MT, collaborate . •Climate change. •Social norm change, move into the future. •Government agencies are accountable to the public, commends the Obama Administration for going beyond rhetoric

Advocates full funding of the state-side Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) appropriations; current funding for communities and schools is down to \$150,000-200,000/yr, funding has dropped to almost nothing; recent projects included Lewis & Clark Caverns, Pictograph Cave, Billings School District; desires equitable funding of LWCF

Discussion Question 3

Helena, MT

(cont.)

Fund the maintenance/taking care of the national forests, parks, and refuges; need help politically with the Administration and Congress; campgrounds; tremendous issue that it costs \$1000/visit to Yellowstone NP, everyone to have the opportunity. •As a rancher he is “sitting with the enemy” at this session; representatives from oil, gas, coal, and minerals need to be here; need to find how to discourse. •looks forward to the report, thank you

Preserve native grassland. Grassland sodbusting is occurring because of incentive programs that are mis-incentives in the Farm Bill, allowing 10,000 year old soils to be plowed

Local folks are ignored in energy policy and public lands. •Energy corridors on private lands break up ranches and local communities, what are you doing about it, why can't transmission lines go on public lands, it's easier to squash the little people, bury the lines if concerned about the viewscape; put pressure on the President and Governor, conserve and bury. •Local access issues, local management won't let us on the lands say impact land too much - mountain bikes are too much impact; Gallatin trails are closed; not everyone can hike, older people want to be able to use the public lands; think of everyone - of the “little people”

The funding source is threatened for making multipurpose transportation corridors (SAFETEALU) we need multimodal transportation corridors....bikes, walking, etc. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A legacy For Users – provided funding for multimodal transportation corridors – this legislation has expired though it is being renewed on a year by year basis.

We have a lot of intellectual capital....need a survey of the intellectual capital in natural resources work....to see what the thinking is....need federal money to design a survey. No academic program in MT for historic preservation matters...has to go out of state for academic training in this field – expand natural resources studies to include historic preservation matters too

Wants small farmers recognized for their conservation efforts,thinks we should have more wilderness in Montana...especially in Rocky Mountain Front... Need to have more conservation education and also need to maintain virtues...honesty, integrity and passion for what we believe....government is not the enemy...need to make government more effective

Need to preserve native grassland...why is so much sod busting going on relative to native prairie? Gov't needs to stop offering incentives to do such things

Embrace the challenge to connect young people to the land

Wants three proposals considered: We have Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans...but they have not been synthesized into a national outdoor rec plan; 2) create a pilot program for best practices for outdoor rec planning; 3) needs more Fed assistance and staff to help with outdoor rec planning

Discussion Question 3

Helena, MT

(cont.)

Reconnect families to outdoors...insurance, permits parents need to get more involved...to create more users and empathy for outdoor causes....wants to help state parks create programs to reconnect families to outdoors and make it affordable

Discussion Question 3

Hyde Park, NY

What are you doing to prevent hydrofracking in NYS because of the potential for it to do equal damage as the oil spill? Answer: There's a jurisdictional issue with hydrofracking. The federal role is unclear here. There's a potential EPA role with drinking water but it doesn't feel very satisfying. We're trying to figure out what we can do. Because there's some hydrofracking on public lands out west they may be able to lead the way in how to do this properly. I was just discussing this issue at White House. I worry about it.

At travel shows she attends, NPS promotes big parks out west. How much are you promoting parks here in East? We have a lot of great sites and great railroads. There's a lack of transportation to these sites. There are millions of international visitors in NYC, but not many coming to the Hudson Valley. It would be great for NPS to come to the table with additional marketing and promotion; remember parks in the east; look at partnerships (cross market with state parks and national parks); and make it interesting and interactive for youth. Answer: This is where we need you – for marketing and advertising. Our funding has been challenged. We have to put every dollar we can into operations and maintenance and it's a real struggle. NPS has done a great job at being a brand. A lot of what parks rely on is partnerships with local communities and business partners. Congress doesn't like to see us advertise. Transportation – same category. It's been a struggle to get funding for special transportation in parks themselves let alone transportation to the parks. How can we help bring people to the park? If they're not accessible to youth, then they won't come. NPS is trying to put resources into bus systems in a number of urban areas to get people to parks – need partnerships and need to get creative and get outside our comfort zones.

Comments concern green jobs and sustainable economic development. With all the attention on green jobs in the energy sector there's a whole other area of green conservation and landscape conservation. We need to see how this provides business opportunities. Are there any efforts from the feds on this kind of job training? Parks could potentially be a laboratory for training and pilot projects. We have to change from doing things the old fashioned way. Answer: We don't do a lot of that at Dept of Interior, but we should partner with Dept of Labor. Green jobs has been a focus of the Administration, but it's been more green/renewable energy. But this is important point. Climate change is the elephant in the room in many issues. Conservation is complicated greatly by climate change – all being affected by cc. One important lesson of cc is that natural landscapes have a hugely important role in cc. Land resources are critically important carbon sinks. At DOI we are close to having a scientific approach to calculating carbon storage. Some day we'll have a cap on carbon and an economic value to that.

We've been very successful at protecting rural landscapes, but we realized we weren't serving urban communities so we established community gardens and they needed funding. We had to cobble together funding from many partners and grants and state agencies and many stepped up to fund this. It was encouraging how many people supported this, but this process could be streamlined. We shouldn't have had to reinvent the wheel finding funding sources for this kind of project. At the federal level could there be ways to streamline this? Answer: Department of Agriculture would be a logical source. It's a great idea. Land Trust is great example of how to share resources and partner.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

have employment opportunities for young people in the outdoors, like the old CCC....easily accessible areas....connected recreation opportunities....more play grounds and parks

need requirements that with each new development builders must leave open space, build parks, pools....schools should provide pools, recreation opportunities

have the President walk the walk, he should go camping

find a way to break the computer connection

give class credits for working or volunteering in the outdoors....physical education classes that require kids be outdoors.... engage kids at a younger age....show parents that the outdoors is OK (they won't be eaten by a bear)....

Biggest challenge for achieving conservation goals is trying to balance the built environment with conservation. State buys lands for conservation and as the economy tanked, there became a huge opportunity for governments to buy lands. But what happened was that Florida cut out the Florida Forever land buying program to balance the state budget. Obstacle is making state legislators understand that conservation is important and now is the time to buy land. Second obstacle is when we buy conservation land and human recreation is the first thing that is allowed on the refuge/park. Before allowing recreation, need to study carrying capacity for animals, etc, before deciding to open to recreation. Need to do scientific study to determine if the animals will be impacted by the human use, especially consumptive use of wildlife/fish resources. Not getting answers from the agencies about impacts. Let flora and fauna survive first, and then consider if recreation is compatible. Need to keep ORV and Jeeps out of conservation land. There are Jeep people that stay on trail, but once someone goes off, then you have everyone else follows. When managing conservation lands, government needs to consider recreation vs protection.

A hotline for the public to report apparent counter-productive efforts by the federal government. We restore part of the watershed with federal money, while spending money to develop land in the watershed. The developers claim that overlays are not a Development of Regional Impact (DRI), but create a sustainable community.

We have an economic model in Florida where construction fuels our economy. Need to change this model or else we will over develop the state. Highest foreclosure rate in the US, yet we are still proposing to build ten of thousands of unneeded houses. We need more aggressive oversight from Federals for land use planning in the earliest stages of planning at the local level.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Heartland Expressway is proposed with all the ranchers impacted supporting this massive project through the central part of the state. Federal government gave these ranchers 93 million dollars to protect 26,000 acres (WRP), yet the Heartland Expressway is proposed in the same area. Ranchers are planning to make money from development and make money from the conservation easements

But development will still occur in this area where the WRP easements (26,000 acres) are going. Ten individuals (large private landowners) will make a decision for millions of people (with regard to developing a large undeveloped and environmentally sensitive area). Government biologists from Dept of Environmental Protection and FL Fish and Wildlife Commission are forced to back down on decisions by their bosses. Federal govt needs to come in with outside, objective view and take a look at all sides of the issue, and then make a decision. We can't fight it ourselves all the time. No way for private people to easily conserve their land. Need a government to come in and offer economic reason to conserve land through easements for private property. This will protect it into the future

Need to have federal government help the various public groups/individuals to get involved with local planning of developments

Do not need additional development in areas where there is a high level of approved/permitted development already on the books. Federal government needs to lead this mandate to develop a new economic model where construction and development do not fuel the economy. This is one of the most important ideas to get to the president.

Tools: partnerships work very well. Migratory species – we need tools that work for these species. Prairie potholes is where many of our migratory birds come from. This area is facing a lot of change, especially the changes caused by ethanol use. Ducks Unlimited would like to see more tools like the Federal Duck Stamp to put more land under protection. Since 1932 duck stamps have protected 5.2 million acres. Buy more duck stamps to save more lands. This tool helps this area because it protects the area where ducks breed in the prairie pothole area, consequently, more ducks are protected and return to Florida.

Keep the promise to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This program has the ability to allow all Americans access to public lands for outdoor recreation for many years to come. Help landowners, farmers, and ranchers use their land for conservation purposes, by funding already existing conservation programs in the Interior Dept and U.S.D.A. through the Farm Bill programs. Increase not only land acquisition for federal and state lands (national parks, refuges, state forests, etc.) but also adequately fund the operations and maintenance of these lands.

mandate Environmental Education in schools!

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Fed. State/ LE seizure costs – usually invested in equipment after crime has been committed. How about 50% be set aside for more education and engagement in the environment. Thought processes have been in place so long. Does Pres. Obama change this? Not a grassroots effort yet. But could be. Thank you, drug lords.

not only full funding of LWCF, but maintaining full funding for state program for land acquisition.

Take incarcerated folks and put them to work - have Federal Gov. use this program.

We could not do it without partnerships - need more incentives for private landowners - tax credits.

it all goes back to funding. IF you build it, they will come. FWCC already has the 6 youth centers, so just need funding to get them up and running.

President put \$40 million towards AGO this in April 2010.

There are a lot of good models out there for partnerships for providing trails, for example. Look at these with private partnerships with Fed Gov. that involve the public to be stewards of their public lands. More than just trails. Agencies – look to further existing partnerships and develop new ones to get the kids out. Need to come out with their families and organized groups.

that is the strength of the Federal government – providing great materials.

maybe Fed. Gov. doesn't need to create new youth program. Maybe Federal government should support existing state and local programs.

The Florida Trail partners with the agencies. IF there were resources so we could more effectively partner, those are the types of opportunities that the Federal agencies could get involved in overseeing the funding at some level. Federal agencies are not in delivery system. Local agencies are in the delivery system. Fund what works. Way too few Federal agencies to get it done.

For example, you (USFWS) could fund Environmental Education center at the refuge, we could bring the Boy Scouts down there if there was funding to lead activities and coordinate projects.

\$900 million for LWCF was real money then – it's not now.

want this is the FY 12 budget to support America's Great Outdoors and the President needs to make it an agency budget priority. We all know where the rubber meets the road.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Manley Fuller – several years ago, Gov. Crist established “Serve to Preserve” and the idea was to link retired people with volunteer opportunities outdoors. Not sure where this is today. Texas similar program. Look and see what different states have done, what would be compatible for this activity.

we really want the LWCF to get full funding for: 1) significant acquisition of land for the St. Marks NWR – we have willing sellers and anxious to sell and will help Gulf ecosystem ; 2) great opportunities for the Florida Panther NWR – willing sellers and expansion in existing conservation corridors; 3) connect corridors for Florida Trail, as well as bears and panthers – all provide great recreational opportunities. Florida has made advances in building conservation linkages. Kissimmee Valley opportunities with TNC are out there .

where there is state and local government. Willing to help, should be incentive to get Federal \$. Should be favored over those who do not have local support.

same applies to National Forests, campgrounds. Bring back the CCC or YCC and restore these places.

– there is a tendency to put \$ for an impressive facility and it’s a big too-do. But follow-up maintenance funds don’t seem to be there. Big deal 20 years ago, but now Fed. Gov. can’t support. Need to figure out what you need for the public, and maintain it.

an example that this work force (inmates) would be good for – we have tremendous exotic/invasive problems and inmates could be doing this work.

– USFS earn some income from direct harvesting and should we look at whether they sell these leases too cheaply. Alaska – cutting down magnificent sitka spruce and shipping them to Japan.

would be good to hear from ranchers that don’t want lands split up, so should have tax breaks for large landowners. Sen . Baucus has had tax legislation for permanent conservation for a long time. Rationale is conservation easements will provide other public services – groundwater recharge, etc.

got to get points on the board. I’ve been impressed with the level of what I believe is increased Fed. Gov. activity on Everglades restoration. Million of problems to deal with, but action has begun. Did the Tamiami Bridge – that’s a start, but it’s an example. This stuff needs to be totally non-partisan. Shouldn’t matter if you’re are a Republican or Democrat, should be non-partisan.

met with (name deleted) in FWS/WO in July and others and was talking about 600,000 acres coastal conservation areas, which should help save \$. Sell this as an investment. President needs to look at existing programs and look for duplication and not just saying, we need this much more money. Consolidate programs. This should not be partisan. More efficient. Cooked the program down and will partner more with the states, who will partner more with local communities.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

part of the theme from DVD was to get kids involved. Best thing would be for kids to sell kids about the outdoors. Need kids to be more vocal. Show some pride and knowledge that all snakes are not poisonous – kids – all ages, involved. Need them to be ambassadors for conservation and recreation. We can lecture them forever, but get one of those kids (like our speaker) and you get our next generation.

several years ago, heard this comment about teachers and their load. The teachers at Circle B Bar have designed a curriculum to fulfill FCAT as well as support outdoor exposure. If people take the time to work this out correctly, should improve. Federal Government maybe needs to help field trip funding.

Federal Government needs to help with field trip funding.

Fed. Gov. has tremendous responsibility to take care of NPs. Everglades NP – first thing that strikes you is damage from hurricanes that has never been repaired. We are not taking care of physical plant of one of our “crown jewels.” Foreign visitors ask locals what is going on? Not a state responsibility.

We will all try to work better together and make recommendations to President. A budget section will come out of this and will help prioritize resources. Need full funding for land and conservation and the President needs to get behind it. Maybe some new things may come out of this.

Make all teachers take/know/use environmental education curriculum. Require environment education and take kids outside.

Provide monetary incentive to schools that provide viable EE outside programs.

Money incentives to schools with environmental education programs. Not millions of dollars, but some to pay for their outdoor science programs.

Mandatory from federal govt to have environmental education programs in schools.

Great example of program: Pelican Elem School kids raised money for Florida Scrub Jay habitat and the govt matched. Grant programs to match schools help buy habitat near schools add trails etc.

Use/promote volunteers groups give grants to share outdoors with youth.

Look to organizations to help get kids into outdoors; like 4h program. Go back look at org that prove help make change, provide more funds.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Pay more rangers to conduct environmental education lesson and get kids outdoors.

Government owns manages 1/3 land in FL is public for conservation. Group conservation and recreational activities together and get funding from private sources.

Expand the Panther NWR expand recreation.

Buy lands now when prices are good.

Fund Panther refuge coordinator make sure we complete what we start. Panther is a listed species and we need to connect corridors.

Buy more land for conservation get kids out, building inside cities so accessible inside city.

When was the last time Federal government created new refuges? Do new refuges throughout state put more out, this will create more jobs, more sites around for people to go. Keep doing it

Buy lands along Wayka river basin and make more accessible to schools in Orlando area

Need to provide field trips in schools, but not enough money. There is a fear of nature, media puts out all negative news.

Achieve funding, this is the key. Get lands that complete connections of green lands. Cut through bureaucracy. Mini-grants for schools to transport kids to nature and feel safe.

Land has private liability issues, help private provide with liability issues.

Mini-grants needed to go to schools and local orgs to fund projects. This will help to make it (projects) happen quickly.

Fund YCC and Americorps programs. This is key to connecting youth into nature.

Must fund Gulf of Mexico Be Wet programs. Can reach more kids quickly.

Not enough young generation in agencies. Need college students more opportunities to speak and give feedback within agency.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

generation see x-games on tv. Can government embrace extreme sports and bridge what they see on tv? Embrace and market outdoors on tv. Embrace and promote together.

Manadate local No Child Left Inside Act with (Dept Of Education) to get kids outside more.

Mandate Environment Education in schools, make requirement in schools. Make EE programs in school REQUIREMENT.

Need more federal funds.

An example of what not to do with money, Core Of Engineers (COE) Cornel needs to be in the position for more than two years, they move faster than we can educate them. Lengthen the tenure of the Coronel at the COE.

Feds need to start prioritizing the regulatory program.

Fully fund the LWCF, Provide leveraging for the states.

Create additional incentives to create private corporations.

Need more grants for land acquisition, conservation and the management, an example the land acquisition of Collier County panther refuge plus 20,000 in Henry County. Re-Introduce pond apple and other restoration efforts, better control invasive, and publ

Environmental Education cut backs will cause us to lose youth, need to mandate environment education K-12

Prioritize policy objectives, initiatives, could use some legislative work on clean water and threatened endangers species act.

NCRS requires state conservation agencies to set aside equip dollars which provides cost share money for water management service to retain water management, that requirement was not favorably implemented and may or may not see the funding, second issue w

Federal Government needs to be more flexible and adaptable to deal with the unique Florida ecosystem.

State and Local government lack of common sense, act faster to spend the money, act faster rather than letting the legal morass inhibit conservation and restoration efforts.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Let the local government manage programs, not looking for federal government to take over.

construction of the skyway to maintain the water trail through the Taimiami Trail.

funding and more realistic priorities. If US Govt is going to restore Everglades that includes US Sugar.

government is not good steward of the land. Conservation easements were a better partnership. Instead of buying land-like wetlands mitigation bank. Kept in panther habitat and gave private land owner benefits. More creative opportunities. Involve not spending so much tax dollars, cared for by someone else.

many situations where we need to purchase the land, not just conservation easement. Federal government can manage the land. Both are necessary. More federal funding might be needed.

rescind expansion of off shore oil drilling within 30 miles of Dry Tortogas. USFWS critical habitat for the florida panther

The most critical need is a ban on drilling. Wipe out fishing, tourism, industry. Sooner we excelerate moving to alternative energy. Wipe out security problems, million other ways to produce energy. Cheaper to give money to USDA to give incentivizes to farmers to grow energy cane or switch grass and build plants. Infrastructure is not there and the market will not put it there are long as we are still drilling for oil.

Federal government action on fertilizers and pesticides on my yard. Need to teach Florida heritage, land conservation, ecosystems, make it required to be better educated about Florida.

Fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund

general management plans –climate change should be addressed as how it effects those areas of land.

cutting funding on these outdoor activities-need to have them to have PE. Federal government needs to chime in. Put a school next to a park so they partner and combine the two to work together.

Up the standard of education

Administration needs to step in where necessary especially Everglades Restoration-stop bad projects that the Army Corp builds. EPA had opportunity to step in Miami Dade County and they didn't.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

believe the experts and take action. Lot of people damage the environment-need to slow it down at every opportunity. President can tell everyone to go outside-more promotion.

Use the Florida Forever program as a model for an America Forever Program.

Continue the Youth Initiative initiated in 2010 by the Bureau of Land Management.

A cohesive program that all Americans can buy into, fully funded, working with non-profits and other organizations to leverage funds. A national volunteer program with incentives.

Television commercials can have a national template plus local information to air at the local level.

Department of Education assist with funding field trips to outdoor classroom areas.

Use the Disney "Volunteer for a Day" model on the national level. Free/reduced admission to national parks, tax incentives, etc.

Renew the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Enact numeric nutrient loading criteria for all water bodies.

Financial assistance programs to private landowners that operate recreation businesses and properties. Assistance with liability coverage for landowners that provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

Allow publicly owned to participate in easement and restoration programs such as WRP.

Revamp the inheritance tax so people don't have to sell land due to pay taxes. Debt for Nature. Liaison positions to assist landowners navigate the variety of programs and paperwork.

The federal government needs to work with other agencies and build on the work private ranchers are doing, they need to see the full picture.

I signed up for wetland preserve program earlier and I was assure it would not pan out that way, I felt that I could not trust the government and didn't want a perpetual easement because I did not trust the government, that is a challenge. A big challenge government has is that they need to be a trusted partnership to work with ranchers.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

What works are grants that help coastal communities so people can bring their kids out. Federal government can help fund some of these type programs

The government should live by example, rebuild urban area, so people can stay there and not start building in suburban areas. A lot of public lands are fragmented; they may need to build wildlife underpasses, bike trails, etc.

The idea of best practices is a great idea to have a central place where people can find things. If the feds could work on that across the board there would be better sharing of info.

When we were kids, there was the President's Physical Fitness program. The president needs to come up with a national conservation agenda.

All schools must be concerned with conservation and the president needs to talk about it on a regular basis. If he does not talk about it, the county will forget.

The federal could provide great maps to schools. Kids love maps, they would be a great tool.

The federal government could provide support in talking to the Dept of Education. The FCAT stops kids from doing anything but preparing FCAT. Other organizations are having to help out. Fishing funds go to help school kids and I would like federal funds to match so we could get more money for education.

No one wants to go anywhere that they can't wash hands, go to bathroom, or get water, people are afraid of nature.

FWC does pretty hard core work with its volunteers. An issue that we come up with is incomplete acquisitions with property still in private ownership. It makes it very difficult to manage the property and the bigger problem is they can't do prescribed burns. Agencies and non profits need to complete their acquisition projects. When you're out there working, you can't tell what is publically owned and what's not

Federal funding to implement what we know what works – 1) expansion of FL Panther NWR, 2) protect water programs of the Kissimmee Valley and work with cattle ranchers to conserve water. There exists fear on behalf of landowners that by making their property attractive to endangered species that they would be hampering their ranching management. Need to have working partnerships with ranchers and government to conserve wildlife and habitat and restore water for Everglades habitat.

Intergovernmental regulations on manatees. Local USFWS staff make their own regulations and create inconsistencies. There needs to be an understanding of realities of microenvironment vs government making broad regulations.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Lead by example. If the President would do things outside he could help get others involved because people emulate our leaders. Most people who go outdoors are hunters and fishers and white which equates to 20%. President Obama could help make minorities more comfortable with the outdoors if he spends time outdoors.

Be more cooperative with state and local agencies. Trail issues exist. Not enough deer and hogs in Everglades and we are losing food sources for panthers.

Land conservation is important. Regulations come down. Reality creates impediments to access. For example, they are closing roads in national forests. We have a car based society and road closures are creating barriers to access. Takes many miles to get there and there are safety issues to deal with. We are good at conserving, but at the same time, we are impeding access. Road closures are bad for wildlife too. Roads provide good habitat for wildlife.

Youth Conservation Corps. Federal government should have more of a role in bringing back the YCC and getting people back out into the resource.

There is a lack of role models for minority groups. TV role models are mainly Anglo Saxon American. Latino population and women are minorities. Use social science to connect with minority groups. What do they expect from us in conservation? Find baseline data on where we are and make decisions based on science to understand the demographic.

Need more funding, but instead there is reduced access.

We need a New Deal with the Economic Recovery Effort. Recreate a National Conservation Corp by the Obama Administration. Make it a \$100 billion dollar national conservation work program building visitor centers, maintaining facilities. This should be part of the economic recovery plan.

Create business partnerships. Business partners help support the program. Get partners involved that are going to have direct benefit. Increase budgets but do creative funding with tax credits and other incentives. Expand Pittman-Robertson Act, in which sporting goods, and hunting and fishing license fees go back to states.

Environmental Protection Agency should stop all lead based ammunition. They did it for duck hunting but stopped there.

AGO Listening Sessions need to be publicized more to get more people behind it.

Recommend more access and availability - that could make the difference.

instead of one 10,000 acre place make 10 - 1,000 acre places.

Discussion Question 3

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

how about making the outdoors an educational priority?

After elementary school, don't hear much about environment, etc. Might have a recycling club. Not stressed.

environmental ethics – tie it together with all connections. What are consequences.

Using recycling bins is first step. But needs to be followed up.

steps to regulate exotic species

Discussion Question 3

Lawrence, KS

Respect nation to nation talks- each nation has own respect for the land and interests for sustainable land and state laws often diminish the rights of people so government needs to respect native treaties and acts- land is often striped from underneath the natives feet and it is slowly going away.

Executive order to protect the wetlands next to the University

Discussion Question 3

Los Angeles, CA

We need a national resourced Area designated to include the San Gabriel Mountains URBAN River Corridors. To achieve this, I strongly believe that the Emerald Necklace will be able to transform the densely gray and urbanized San Gabriel Valley Region into a vibrant green landscape. The Interconnectivity of parks and trails have the ability to improve communities and will give residents greater accessibility to local and regional resources. Here are the many benefits the Emerald Necklace can bring to the San Gabriel Valley: it will bring green infrastructure jobs to local communities (water resource protection, urban forestry, sustainable landscaping careers) Emerald Necklace can be a valuable public asset it serves as a public park space and many youth adolescents in the San Gabriel Valley, It will help expand and preserve natural habitats and wildlife, It will also establish a more efficient transportation corridor for humans and native animals. Connecting with the San Gabriel Mtns. to the beach via natural and urbanized waterways. We have the following support: 25 cities, 3 HOAs, 3 school districts, 1 environmental group, 1 trail group, 1 state conservancy group and 1 county board of supervisors

Bicycles: Green transportation: Benefits of cycling are enormous. Healthy, less consumption of oil. Reallocate space for bikes in LA. Not taking away but sharing roads with Bikes. Increase 3% for Transportation bill to extend bike trails. Provisions to include bikes, give space, National complete Street Policy.

Allow the USACE to use credit and funding from different funding sources to be used on the same projects ei: Flood control vs. ecosystem restoration. The USACE prioritizes projects in part on a \$ per acre criteria. Due to the cost of urban development this puts urban projects at a disadvantage compared to projects in areas where land is less available. The USACE typically requires a 35% total match which does not allow the match to be met from another federal funding sources. This local match requirement should be modified to facilitate collaboration between federal agencies. Funding for land acquisition should be available. Increase funding for the Land Water Conservation Fund for urban projects.

Please allow more funding for outdoor education for children. Currently grant have been hard to come by in California. I know first lady Michelle Obama has made it her goal to decrease childhood obesity. In Santa Clarita, CA our local Community Hiking Club has included inner-city children who have never seen some of our local parks. We could solve obesity nationwide & also address the lack of our youth deciding to focus on science & math academics. Encourage the youth to be excited about nature & treasure the landscape, wildlife, and surrounding beauties. Also, I know we need to all come together. I personally would love to be a park ranger with CA State Parks, however the money has been funding projects of OHV use. Please allocate funding to interpretive programs with all parks. There are many parks you visit where there is no soul in sight to answer visitor questions. Please allow people to have an opportunity to share our knowledge to the next generation and families. Thank you for your support.

Discussion Question 3

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Challenges: Getting all of every groups ideas and efforts coordinated (shen possible) and eomminicated well. The sharing of information is a key! If we can work with toher groups that we didn't know about before, we may help each other solve some of our own challenges. Get the kids outside!!! if they are in school all day, they think (are taught) that it is normal existance. What works? Get kids outside!!! Not only will they enjoy it but they will want to retun outside. Getting thme out and involved also will create a new generation of concerned activie citizens. 3) Federal Government Role: Require cooperations that have land leases on public land, to give bakc in a way that benefits the public (in the long term). Repair the damage caused, not take us out for a Latte! 4) Tools: Funding of course!! But getting the funding to each groups pet project isn't feasible so get into the schools to get the kids involved, have them go on field trips and camp outs and "day projects" to work on some of these grass roots organizations. They want to get their hands dirty.

Scale of Parks: Redefine Park system. Fund Non Point Source for Urban Park system. Developers should incorporate Parks, maintenance of parks is an issue. Maintanance for parks.

Landscape Architect: JPA-Joint Power Authority, we have in CA. A way to facilitate Government. JPA can't access funding, compromise the mission. Don put transportation in the open bill spaces- Empowerment zone % of land used for kind of open space. Need to expand, bike pads, bike paths, usage of combining trails not a good idea.

Public trail use has fallen off. Please preserve the historic hiking/equestrian trails without any vehicular users. "Multi-use" concept of stuffing all users on the same trail has had a negative effect on trail use. When wheeled vehicles are added to trails, traditional uses abandon the trails due to safety and guilty life issues. Bikes and ORVs need their own separate areas. Moutain Biking is an extreme sport and does not belon on trails with slower moving traditional users.

Engage the individual: sustainalbe landscape@home/local activities neighborhood parks 2) Redirect current funding away from "old" thinking projects like expanding mass transit, rail systems. Will work to alleviate port traffic our of the LA urban area. Rail the cargo-expand the metro rail for commuters. Look to other urban areas for creative solutions to urban sprawl and pubic transportation.

Create funding sources for multi-benefit projects and funding sources for urban parks in low-income urban areas.

Increase and fund urban park programs in the National Park Service. Funding showed prioritize low-income urban areas.

Discussion Question 3

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

"No Child Left Behind" in taking away opportunities for children to learn in their classrooms about environmental issues. There needs to be a federal mandate that would require students to have environment/conservation training including hands on, field trips, community service, to visit wild spaces, mountains, beaches, deserts, parks. Environmental Science camps should be a regular part of curriculum, once in elementary once in middle school, once in high school. Working on an environmental project and reporting on it should be requirement for graduation. Children need to be educated because they are going to carry on our passion. 2) Federal Government needs to fully fund the land and water conservation fund. Have a common sense, methodical plan for renewable energy that involves a variety of stakeholders. Plan renewable energy closer to urban centers where it is needed most. Get developers to NOT BUILD or develop - give them incentives to develop urban areas already built-rehab houses empty or up for rent. Fund community gardens, school gardens-kids need to know where their food comes from. More collaboration between grass roots agencies to work together-user friendly websites, kids' sites, that they will want to go to learn about environmental issues. More youth involvement.

Citizenship Classes and Civic Education: The values of nature, not polluting & being a prudent user of resources are not universal values shared by all. Therefore I suggest that in addition to school curricula, adult immigrants should also be educated instead of memorizing the pledge of allegiance, immigrants seeking citizenship should know conservation principles, and more useful and important aspects of citizenship and stewardship

I would like to see public lands remain open for multi use: Mt. Biking, Hiking, Off Highway Vehicle Use, Legal use of vehicle access to back country. Much of the land is being closed at a high rate. I would like to see that what is available today to remain open for future generations. Also that the federal government would not recognize ignore those who enjoy using motorized travel to explore the public lands...

NPS Service: Fund Urban Park Program, Prioritize low-income areas, land water conservation fund and increase funding for urban projects, school gardens and community gardens. NEPA/CEQA are required allow CEQA to suffice for 2 reports, as CEQA is the more stringent and includes NEPA requirements. Interagency Strategy Coordinate EPA, HUD, USDA, Task Force in LA

For future listening sessions, I think it would be very important to spend less time on introductions and the move and more time on dialogue. It was very frustrating to me that most of the time was spent on repeating comments that had nothing to do with discussing concrete problem solutions. I would like to see greater emphasis on attention to and incentive for not only community parks but also community gardens. I feel like gardens really address the intersection of environmental and racial concerns. Community garden not only help support cleaner air, soil, and water in Urban Areas, they also support food security and community security. In general an education and policy it truly needs to be a greater emphasis on the interconnectedness of racial concerns and environmental conservations.

Discussion Question 3

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Hunters and Anglers have historically passed on their love of the outdoors to their children and others-However today they find more and more restrictions on the areas where they may hunt and fish. We need to make public lands public-Open them up to multiple use. Lack of access is primary reason hunters and anglers stop participating in these traditional sports. We need to provide grea or access to public land. Hunting and Angling grounds have many programs to connect peopel to the Great Outdoors. The San Diego Chapter of the Safari club hosts youth hunts interested youth hunt for the fun time each year. Continue to fund numerous conservation programs through one of our fundraising.

Trash in Our Parks is a huge issue. We need more Park Rangers and Volunteers

As secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar mentioned early this afternoon, "Historic Preservation" is part of telling America's story and getting people into the great outdoors". We need to embrace our national as well as our historic and cultural resources as part of this initiative. A big challenge to conserving our historic and cultural resources is the lack of full funding of the national historic preservation fund, which is the sister fund to the land and water conservation fund this gentleman in the audience just mentioned. The Federal govt can more effective by fully funding the historic preservation fund and increasing the capacity of local agencies to preserve and protect our historic sties through technical assistance and federal incentives

Work with NGOs, Land Water Conservation Plan we are very interested in what Mr. Salazar is proposing on funding programs. How do we improve effectiveness of fund program. How do we increase ceiling of program fund. Message to Fed Reps: Failure to look at local success stories, Humbolt County resident, phone call to BLM-CA Office to know about successful stories OHV Community, Road decommissioning-not exclude OHV Community.

Challenge: Involving DOT and local transit agencies in increasingly the amount of bikeways and their safety in urban areas. The Federal Government could be ore effective by changing some of their procurement processes to allow organizations to work with the Federal Government to implement programs (rather than implementing it themselves)

Please help students and families reach us (nature preserves). As an environmental educator in 20 years I have noticed a steady loss of both environmental literacy outdoor skills. Schools do not have the funds for transportation and often they cannot take the time to participate in field study programs due to testing and other educational mandates. I encourage a Govt. emphasis on the funds for environmental education and funds for field trips.

Discussion Question 3

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Challenges-support for responsive renewable energy development in the CA desert. It needs to happen on private disturbed lands closer to urban load centers, NOT in the treasured, pristine, untouched public lands in the core of the Mojave Desert. 2) The Federal Gov't needs to take the pressure off the BLM public lands in the CA Desert for renewable energy development by looking at ways to make it easy for cities and counties to have solar/wind development on private disturbed lands&solar panels on commercial buildings. 3) Fully fund LWCF and AB811 program funding 4) Whats working: Private, local, non-profit land trusts. We are able to purchase & protect & then manage large landscape level chunks of land that the federal gov't doesn't have the tools/resources to save. We (TWC) through private donations and grants are able to save critical habitat "islands" between already protected lands National Parks to protect ecological corridors so we dont end with islands of biodiversity and unhealthy ecosystems. Help us to get funding so we can continue our jobs & mission. (ie: UCF stakeholders in federal process,

Global Action Research-Pro: Huge grant awarded to address water pollution to UCSD. We must look at watersheds. I am coordinating a bike ride from Vancouver, Canada to Tijuana to promote sustainability ideas and connections. Watershed Urban Research! Go with it!

Federal Govt: Needs to support new technologies to sustain communities and therefore result in less impacts to nearby open space and water courses. Example: Drinking water from sewer water, potable reclaimed water for local communities means less water drained from sensitive ecosystems. Fed education: policy mandating environmental awareness and literacy for school age students and training for teachers. Federal Govt: needs to continue to seek respect from multicultural leadership groups that may have different perspective of outdoor space and used them as ambassadors use them to open space to their constituents

High Desert multiple use-Drove to be part of this licensing session process. Others have not forgotten, should not be forgotten -OHV/Wilderness/Equestrian users. Motorized sports, local astronomy club need access. Land Management-over 25 years. Now they want a Solar Plant for Ridge Crest? Don't Want It!!! Will use too much water to provide energy for LA! When does it stop!!

Solar Desert issue: Build Coalition, wilderness, recreational groups-S2921 provides to stakeholders. Heritage of story telling, use websites to disburse.

Discussion Question 3

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

In order to ensure that the connections we help people make to the outdoors are lifelong and life-changing education must be a core component of how we make that connection. Getting youth out to our National Parks as part of residential environmental education programs, such as nature bridge field science programs will build a generation of environmental stewards who will make responsible decisions and take actions to protect and preserve our environment. The connections to nature young people make through residential environmental education programs such as NatureBridge Field Science Programs often light a spark in students that turns into a lasting love of the outdoors and lifelong stewardship. The Federal Government should work to spur growth of NatureBridge and similar programs to increase the scale of these programs and number of youth that they reach. Invest dollars and resources. The Federal Government could be more effective partner by having more flexibility in the kinds of partners it works with and should work to remove obstacles to partnership or growth or partnership for nonprofit organizations. Provide resources to nonprofit partners to allow them to house and educate students in national parks.

1) Stop closing land to people who wish to use the trails and roads 2) Less Federal involvement 3) Cutting the Fed. Gov't 4) Tools-Chain Gangs use to work Fed trails and lands.

Need assistance from federal gov't integrating curriculum and physical education standards so teachers can justify getting children outdoors in parks and exposed to nature. Need outdoor education programs

People are interested in recreation. Laws focus more on conservation. Regulatory focus should include motorized vehicle access. People need off pavement access – fishermen, off road vehicle enthusiasts. These type of people are often stigmatized. Many are willing to volunteer. These folks are a large untapped resource. They feel that some gov't employees are hostile. The federal gov't should allow more back country access to unpaved road systems and existing systems should be allowed to continue. Such roads can also be used by bicyclists and pedestrians.

Trash in public areas is horrendous. Hopes teachers and others taking children outdoors will teach them not to leave trash. Fires – wants to know who is responsible for fires. How many millions of dollars does the USFS spend on predator control? Feels that predator control only benefits ranchers. The money could be better used, especially when we are talking about getting children outdoors.

National parks are a tremendous success. They have a great program for hiring college interns. She has been involved in examining a renewable energy initiative in the Mojave Desert. The desert is a tremendous biodiversity hotspot. Renewable energy could ruin it. Build renewable energy projects in brownfields. Federal gov't intervention is needed.

The room for listening session does not reflect the Los Angeles population. Get more inner city people.

Discussion Question 3

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Transitioning now. Wants to know if there is place to call to learn how to partner with others in the future. Suggested a hotline to answer questions like where to get money, who to partner with. It would be a very good tool.

The Station Fire consumed forest and funds. Parts of the forest are closed for an indefinite time. They have an office in lower Azusa. Their office helps guide visitors – more than a million per year. The forest is severely underfunded. More visitors per year than Yosemite.

Would like to see more federal funds reallocated to recreation.

Works with LA Mayor's million tree program. Link kids to nature by turning concrete in front of their homes into trees. She talked about urban forests. She related a story about a young man who didn't conform to neighborhood mores. Neighbors worked together to plant trees. They included the nonconforming young man who became part of neighborhood. The experience changed the dynamic of the neighborhood. Tree planting helps connect and reconnect people. It is good for kids that can't get to parks. They need money for the maintenance of trees. Could employ kids if there is money – from federal gov't? Urban forestry is too expendable in public budgets.

Challenges/what works. Provide money for internships for college students to do more stream restoration and outdoor work.

Long Beach, working with the feds to bring back waves to the beach. Working with ACOE will take ten years. Need feds to get more streamlined and get projects done quickly.

Feds have money and we need them to help with preserving land (such as in Idaho, Alaska, etc).

Feds good at counting and collecting data on air and water quality. Difficult to access this info. Feds need to share info more, be more open and transparent. How can the federal government work with the private sector to make this info available.

"One size fits all" Regulations do not work. Trail management on trails not working. Litigation doesn't work.

Feds need to do better at coordinating . Bureau of Health Statistics = National Parks.

LA Basin has poor public transportation- Federal government has a role to play in helping solve the transportation issue. In LA National Heritage River under Clinton should be restored.

Use Clean Air Act as a tool. Air is not cleaner just because visibility is better. Deal with shipping industrials (bunker fuel, rail roads using diesel fuels) Government can address these not locals.

Discussion Question 3

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

LA transportation center: Largest piece of real-estate in the central city. Piggy back yard study. Huge opportunity for looking at parkland for flood control. • Missing piece of conversation is role of railroads. How can we work with railroads? How can the Dept. of Transpo. work as a park agency? • Example: The 6th st Bridge replacement. Dept. of Transpo gave LA \$200M to rebuild the iconic bridge. Should have a design competition to have an iconic new bridge for aesthetics. Dept. of Transpo is not geared toward dealing with aesthetics. EPA and Dept. of Transpo need to work more closely.

Lack of integration in agencies for offstream amenities. Risk management vs. recreation needs. Recreation and access opportunities are not recognized by federal partners as a mission because of risk issues. Need to provide a method to allow for outdoor experience and accept risk at the same time. ACOE does not have money to provide for recreation near the flood control projects. Federal agencies need to look at watershed management approaches. ACOE does not have granting authority or the authority to enter into agreements with local jurisdictions for maintenance agreements/joint powers of agreement to allow their projects to provide access and recreation beyond flood control.

Whitewater Preserve/Palm Springs Public cannot access lower portion of the Whitewater River ½ of the year because of fire closure. • Federal Role: No staffing is available by the BLM, so no public access. Upper part is staffed by the Wildlands Conservancy. Lower part should be staffed by BLM. • Challenge: Spent > \$40M to partner with Feds to purchase 650K acres in the Mojave and gave it back to the Feds for preservation. The same land is now under threat of development. CA Desert Protection Act is supported by the WC. We need to protect lands first before we can restore them. • Tools: Push for solar energy in the desert. Legislation brought different stakeholders together for protecting the Mojave Desert. CDPA 2010.

Tools/Fed Role: Need more maps and kiosks for responsible OHV operators to see where to go.

Federal Role: Need to give a higher tax break for personal use vehicles for volunteers rather than the current. \$0.14/mile!

better safety standards and regulation

make EE part of the curriculum

advertise parks and make them accessible (media)

more information about parks

Discussion Question 3

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Park

Shuttles should go to schools, shuttles shut down due to lack of use

Handicap accessibility

Stated permitting process is a challenge, gave Yosemite as an example.

give states tax breaks to donate land, funding is a challenge.

Natl Parks work in system contracts; and that brings legal issues and potential for partnerships to solve the issue.

rivers, for planning purposes, need to be expanded to watersheds. Our nation's shoreline dialogue needs to be expanded to protect our environments.

move funding support to the colleges. They'll put it to good use.

we need an accurate grant program.

interagency cooperation - should include science with physiological impacts.

Angeles National Forest should be made into a National Park.

bird species in LA County can be better protected with a urban wildlife refuge system.

the Army Corps of Engineers role in river navigation (LA River) needs help, especially integration (reform the Corps movement).

national monument status can bring added protection.

Trail loss is eminent, improve trail maintenance program.

Discussion Question 3

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

the federal role should be to help other outdoor agencies tackle issues (partner for solutions).

the federal role should be to speed up the NEPA/CEQA environmental compliance process

LA National Park is a good idea, protect the Santa Monica Mountains, and added: river trails powers the people.

river project, enforcement of clean water act, and our focus should be on maintain, restore, and enforce to protect open space for future generations.

Discussion Question 3

Minneapolis, MN

I would encourage president Obama to lead the example of his wife who has encouraged gardening, healthy eating, getting outdoors. If the president invited people out with him that would encourage people to go out too. They need a role model and he could be that role model.

What if we encouraged each elected official to go out to a park?

I am an environmental educator, schooled a few years after Earth Day. Today my alma mater, Cornell University, no longer offers an environmental education major. Even as we as a society face global warming and the destruction of the Gulf ecosystem, there is no environmental education program offered at one of America's top schools. I believe the major problem in connecting people to the outdoors is education of citizens. It will be crucial to affirm universities in offering environmental education majors. Because this field crosses academic disciplines in an effort to problem solve, it does not attract research money which continues to fund academic institutions. Yet this field is vital to the 21st century. Funding from the Federal Government is imperative to support this academic discipline.

Last fall, I accompanied a flotilla of canoes filled with urban junior high students down the Mississippi River with the non-profit organization Wilderness Inquiry. This was part of their UWCA (Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures) program. Most of the students had never been on a boat on any river, let alone the Mississippi River in their backyards. Creating and supporting programs such as these which create an outdoor comfort level for students is a role of the Federal Government.

I believe that environmental education needs to be the focus for this nation immediately. The environment lies waiting; we need people to encourage others to come out to enjoy these free treasures. At the same time, the traditional environmental education profession needs to be upgraded. It needs to be infused not only with today's electronics, but bolstered with excited young people eager to bring the next generation into the outdoors. To do this, funding has to be available at the college level for training future environmental educators. In this recession especially, a program created by the Federal government and modeled after the Peace Corps could help supply the teachers necessary to connect people to the outdoors by training current graduates.

Federal funding needs to support nature centers to augment funding provided by city, county or state. A grant program could be set up to allow for conservation/nature non-profit organizations to apply for support of their existing local environmental education programs. This would create a large ripple effect, as one teacher multiplies the experiences of many students.

The Federal government could simultaneously begin an advertisement program on TV and through YouTube videos showing the fun of being outside. We need to make it cool to be outdoors. Reaching young people through their electronics may be successful. At the same time, we need to fund the people who will provide the bridge to the environment for people.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

With the extreme beetle kill in our forests we need to allow logging and cleanup before the fires. Montanans need to be employed -- keep jobs available for us.

We need land management -- don't close off the forests -- they won't be here for future generations -- they will die out. There needs to be a balance -- all things in moderations. Thanks!

Beetle kill in our forests. Allow logging and cleanup. Keep jobs available for Montana workers.

Manage the land: don't just forget them. Make use of local resources and small groups available in each community.

I'll be curious to see what this actually accomplishes -- No new Nat'l Monuments

The National Debt -- the Federal Government can not afford to do this.

Turn Federal lands in Montana over to State control.

I would like to comment that any change on public lands will need to involve Congress traditionally Congressional representatives from Western States have been challenged to advance meaningful conservation legislation. Because Congress hold (sic) the purse strings for Federal land management agencies it is imperative that they act for the public interest. The other reason Congress is necessary is that agency bureaucrats are not directly accountable to the public as they are appointed not elected. If we as a nation are to take meaningful step towards conservation we must make our agencies more accountable to the people and that must be done through (?) Congress. Public land laws need to reflect the public's views and that means Congress must be involved. I hope we can conserve America's public lands for future generations.

1) I believe the Federal governments (sic) need to consider local, rural Americans before developing National Monuments. These individuals are some of the most connected to the landscape and are already working to manage the land. Instead of supporting programs that would take control away from these individuals, promote programs that provide incentives to them for conservation. In my experience, locals are conservation minded but also need to provide for themselves and their community. 2) Expand programs such as NRCS's Conservation Innovation Grants program and make them more accessible to ranchers and landowners.

This is the first time I've attended such a meeting, but it surely got me thinking about these challenges, so thank you for the opportunity. I felt it all went well.

The need to engage all children (K-12) in an understanding and appreciation of their natural environment. Schools can be designed with environmental school yards for use by the students.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

The federal withdrawal of natural resources that are vitally necessary to sustain the basic quality of life in the U.S.A.

Enact legislation that holds those who challenge industry in court to pay their own legal fees and to pay all costs when they lose in court. Loser, pay.

I am elated with the "know your farmer, know your food" -- type initiatives springing up all over the nation. I would like to see programs as well that promote local natural resources. I am active with a group called "Local Wood is Good" which is trying to promote use of locally harvested and processed wood products. It would be neat if we could replicate efforts like this, modeled after Know Your Farmer Know Your Food, around the country.

There must be a way to reduce use of fossil fuels that add greenhouse gases to the atmosphere -- best way is a carbon tax.

Climate change. Voluntary private land conservation incentives, such as making permanent the enhanced federal tax benefits associated with conservation easements. Farm Bill, specifically the Farm Ranch Protection Program.

Water quality is critical for healthy landscapes. Water quality is compromised by the 30,000+ miles of USFS roads in MT, about 1/3 of which are unmaintained, unneeded (sic), and unwanted. The legacy road and trails initiative has been funded by Congress at 40, 50 and \$90 million in the past 3 years. Yet over \$10 billion in uSFS road work is needed. Continue to fund the legacy road and trail initiative and increase annual funding to \$100 million.

What can Feds do: facilitate communities to make connections with conservation-based organizations, provide opportunities to collaborate and work together and coordinate efforts aimed at long-term sustainability.

America Highway Program: The signs of the adopted sections of the highway that are supposed to be kept clean. I find that they are majorly neglected and wonder who is in charge of any sort of accountability to those groups who have adopted these sections because if they are not held accountable the sections should be given to someone else. Recycling: It should be made one of the easiest processes available in every city/town. In most places the search for a recycling center is long and when found, they tend to have so many restrictions. And although we are making movements to conserve, there is a lot that has been wanted and recycling is the chance to make up for that. Please help make it easier .

Encourage environmental and conservation cooperation between agencies and citizens -- FUND restoration.

Provide or guide funding resources into stream restoration and watershed conservation, including support for citizen involvement in watershed groups...

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

To connect kids and people in general to nature adequate access must be present that is easy, marketed, and accessible to diverse groups. This means both urban and rural opportunities. Full funding of the land and water conservation fund will provide both rural and urban opportunities through large scale land conservation, fishing access sites and urban parks. In addition, our first lady has the "bully pulpit" to make getting kids outside a part of our national education curriculum. If we don't connect kids to conservation at a young age, they are less likely to have an affinity (sic) to keep pass along out country either better or the same that they experienced it. Lastly, private land provides some of the best wildlife habitat in this country. Particularly between federal and state governments for access promote opportunities that are win/win for landowners and recreation. MT has the block management (bm) program the (sic) voluntarily enrolls eight million access of private land for hunting. Landowners are paid for impacts to their land. The last farm bill provided additional funds for state programs like (18 million) a larger commitment would gore this program (sic).

Please consider policy changes that incentivize, regulate, and educate toward goals of preservation, sustainability, healthy built community, education curriculum supportive of the great outdoors, human powered transportation, work programs such as conservation corps for all ages. *Please stop the polarization and negative discourse of recreation is bad. Example -- no stimulus fund for park, recreation facilities.

It is fine to hold listening sessions, but where and how will this information be utilized to encourage a grassroots movement to encourage and motivate the public and agencies to focus on the "Great Outdoors"?

Private land incentives so that developers can contribute to providing/maintaining open space/parks and trail that connect with other public lands. Protect and enhance LWCF program for local use. Fund and support federal land agency conservation education programs. Re-organize the Forest Service to provide more organizational focus on recreation.

Great idea bringing this to Montana first - we appreciate and support the President's commitment to conserve working lands in a way that preserves the environment and protects local communities. Collaborative approaches work - support Senator Tester and Senator Baucus in their efforts to this idea. Can be win-win situation using existing infrastructure.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our comments/thoughts. This is an amazing venue to get citizen input. What I want to comment on is education. America's children are disconnected from nature and our own government. We need to empower our youth to want to help, by not giving a handout, but a hand up. Giving us opportunity to work or volunteer or serve nationally allows us a connection to something bigger. And allows youth to see our work truly makes a difference. Whether its in the woods or in the city the youth is in desperate need of a call to action. National service programs can be a vector to bridge the youth into the American heritage.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

1) A misperception based on political rather than scientific basis that "global warming" (changed to "climate change" because of the natural cyclic change in temperature due to natural effects is now tending to global cooling) is driving political decisions and has the potential to further drive political decisions that will adversely affect our society.

1) Open the debate and scientific study independent of politics and liberal (or conservative) agenda!

Funded projects to get families into public lands with interpreters

1) protect intact habitats and restore degraded habitats on both public and private lands, 2) make the outdoors a more integral part of school curriculum, i.e. No Child Left Inside; Ways Federal Government can help: 1) Foster more cooperative efforts like the Forest Jobs & Recreation Act that bring together diverse interests based on shared common ground, 2) Mining Law Reform that provides opportunity to restore degraded habitats, 3) Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, 4) Provide better stewardship of public lands; Secretary Salazar's oil and gas leasing reforms are a good start for BLM lands, need something similar for the Forest Service. It is easier not to degrade important habitats than to have to try and restore them after they are degraded.

I suppose a multi-pronged approach with federal agencies, educational systems, non-profits, religious organizations, philanthropists, everyone promoting knowledge and stewardship; My state (Montana) is known for its Great Outdoors. As a young adult, I made a conscious decision to live here, next to nature. Native or transplant, I think a lot of people here appreciate nature, although their ideas of stewardship may vary. In recent years, people with different points of view have gotten together, recognizing their similarities; Good starts are Michelle Obama's war against obesity and White House garden. Promoting the national parks even more (?). Education is huge (the oil spill is one heckuva educational experience.) Encouraging gardening and eating fresh food; Promote local sustainability!! garden plots, small farms who sell locally. Make this a part of every new development. How about walking clubs or routes, with places to stay at night-- a day's walk between them. Thank you!

1) pass laws that encourage and not inhibit cooperation, 2) Provide incentives that reward developers for conservation practices

Collaboration is key but the most important thing is creating public awareness of conservation

increased education/information/access/advocacy for conservation; contribute to increased collaboration fed-local; restructure fed agencies; limit (mal)development

construct a natural sciences curriculum that lasts through education; incentivize voluntary public service for higher education financial assistance; mandate a minimum standard of community service

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Define the legal parameters and stick with them. Too many people are afraid to make decisions/move because of the legal unknowns.

Citizen Science Monitoring; User group involvement in monitoring/restoration

Education; "Made in America" sustainable wood products given priority in government projects; Biomass from sustainable family-owned forests

1. Educational programs funded; 2. Fund trails (alternate transportation); 3. Subsidize volunteer programs; 4. Support awareness; 5. Provide successful samples (&workshops) for public/private interactions; 6. Continue similar meeting & require political reps to attend!

1. Develop & teach the concept of stewardship & responsible active management; 2. Look to Private landowners for examples of successful multiple use stewardship

1. Increase awareness through heavy advertising online and on T.V. Let people know conservation jobs exist and you can help w/things like global climate change. 2. Cut down on car usage in parks by offering shuttle services for tours and transport bicycle rentals. You can charge for them as well to help raise money for parks. For example, a \$2,000 mountain bike rented out at \$25 a day would only take 80 rentals to pay off. Maintenance would run at roughly \$10 per rental, so after the bike is paid off, the parks would make \$15 profit per rental day. This may not be ideal for smaller parks, but Glacier Park and Yellowstone could make lots of money which could help relieve their funding from the Federal gov't and that money could be distributed elsewhere.; 3. The federal government is already doing a good job through AmeriCorps by offering the education award which can be used to pay for part of school or pay off school loans. By offering this to high schoolers, it may entice them to study environmental concepts in post-secondary education.

Gov communication with people - miscommunication has cost money

When the federal gov't acquires new lands, keep them open for hunting, fishing, & management. Utilize LWCF to purchase land including access. Access to public lands that are land locked by private land.

Funding for non-profit organizations that focus on youth development environmental stewardship and civic engagements. Winter works. The seasonal labor is conducive to relying on Federal Handouts (I.E. unemployment)

Offer or increase education awards for service. Establish a relationship with land owners and agencies to ensure you land labor

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Support the NCLI Act - HR 2054 & S866 to bring funding into the field of environmental education to bring more programs into the schools. Funding for programs that seek to reconnect kids with their environment with an emphasis on direct action on experience.

Stop zoning or taking by subdivision regulations. Crown point case citizens must be paid for taking if hurt by an environmental law.

More education and access. In schools, trails and parks funding for internships and outdoor programs in the wilderness

Actively managing our federal forest lands at the landscapes level.

Large long term goods for Services Stewardship Contracts available to both BLM and FS which are allowed to be up to 10 years. Streamline NEPA process

Change the tax structure concerning agriculture grounds (ranchers and farmers) In times of drought face reality, use the streams and rivers less.

Let us please encourage/support more education that is place based & experiential to support our future generations

Let's have a national educational campaign to take care of - take pride in - this great heritage. And also educate about wilderness and its keep it wild management.

Prioritize educating youth about value of nature to their mental well being

Fundamentally change our education system & the focus of our agency

Good way to focus education is start a garden at every school. Everyone has to eat. It's a good way to get everyone involved on many different levels.

Increased funding for FRPP, Land & Water Conservation Program. Maintain/extend laws which provide tax incentives for donation of conservation easements.

Providing federal funding/initiatives to public schools!

Integrate outdoor classrooms/science in our schools K-12.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Utilize what's been done and building on it through partnership.

Farm to school!! (Thanks to Mrs. Obama efforts) Creating local growth policies that work collaboratively and house growing population and facilitate working farms.

Collaborate efforts at the local level. More thoughtful and strict rural planning measures that protect communities from the negative impacts of amenity migration.

Need permanent extension of Conservation Easement tax incentives to assist in private land conservation. Need full funding for the LWC Fund including a portion dedicated to obtaining access (linear) to land-locked public lands

Finally a collaboration of ideas from multiple agencies. What you need now is more site visits: People on the ground offer realistic solutions that people in offices tend to overlook. People on the ground prescribe better than people in offices. People in offices describe better than people on the ground. too often we play the role of opposite.

One of our largest obstacles to getting kids outside and into their local natural areas (National Forest) is the outfitters permit process, as an educational non profit we are placed into a category with other for profit outfitter groups. However our goal is to connects kids and people with nature, teach stewardship ethics and explore the natural world. the permit process limits our ability to use national forest. Honoraries have to be specific, planned a full year in advance are inflexible (regardless of weather or condition) and limit what we can do. We'd accomplish so much more if we had more specific permit process or new designation.

Programs that work- Teachers are the key to increasing kids interest and comfort with the forest - Existing Natural Programs- USFS kids in the forest, Project Learning Tree sponsored by American Forest Foundation. Mt. Natural Resources Youth Camp at U of M school forest can be replicated across the country for 1 week lands exposure to all natural resources discipline, discovery days in Missoula for 5th graders sponsored by Chamber of Commerce.

we need to make it as easy for people to get outdoors as it is to turn on the TV. Access and communication is an obstacle. There are several non-profits out there organizing and doing great things, but they have limited funds for adverting or new media communication to get volunteers involved or youth active we need a told for communication and funds to get our message out. Partnerships with the state, local and federal governments could help communication efforts. also partnering with private sectors would be beneficial. How do we connect parents as well? we cant rely on education to do it all.

I suggest facilitating the break out session little differently. Allow everyone at each table to address the 4 questions at their table with a note taker at each table, in order to get everyone's voice heard while managing time limits.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Equipment loan programs with checks and balances. Equipment I necessary. Equipment is expensive. You are targeting, largely, middle and upper class- This is bad. Try to target lower class.

Addressing all questions; restoration where it's at. Trout conservancy working w/ many landowners and partners at long term restoration; applying science (how streams work). We have plenty of biologists, need people that can put it to use on the ground. Knowledge has increased, but problems are same – collapse of habitat and land relationships. Best strategy is volunteer work – planting native plants, hands on projects; satisfaction of long term benefits; Obstacles – Restoration is where it's at. List of work goes on and on – mines, roads maintenance, culvert replacement, roads put to bed; agricultural impacts. People want to know what they can do to help – need projects & money to be ready (e.g. Clark Fork project). Need more of these types of projects. Interest will wain w/o restoration activities. Need more than one-shot stimulus – need longer term commitment of resources. Make sure environment will be there through stewardship.

Working on oil and gas issues. Friend has son that was affected by air pollution. Their group has had conversations with over 7500 people across the country. Oil drilling affecting many parks in the NPS; public needs to know this, and we need to pass strong legislation to protect these areas.

Resources for action – there are many foundations and grant sources for available to the community for projects at local to national level. Also at federal level – need more incentives: how to give tax benefits to landowners for supporting this work; also land use planning (e.g. setbacks) important to coordinate federal & State land use management.

Real opportunity for international cooperation to complete Waterton Glacier NP expansion.

Need parents and families to be involved – They have a pilot program reconnecting children w/ nature (Park Service) to get adults comfortable in nature. Federal govt can be involved in getting parents connected and over their fear of the outdoors, and enabling them to pass on to children.

We all have similar messages. We all like the same things, but we have different ways to recreate and use the outdoors on private and public lands. I've found if I'm working with opposing viewpoints to keep in mind that we are all out to enjoy the forests and being outdoors. This is the common theme to start from: the Federal Gov't needs to recognize that common value. Starting from there we can work from there. The USFS and the gov't need to be flexible to develop rules to allow people from diff. User groups to use to they don't damage land or ecosystem. Having a flexible federal gov't is important and having people in the gov't who understand that common value.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

On topic of how federal government can be better partners – one of things is to use appeals process more effectively. Don't let the process go until we force them to go to court. Instead force stake holders to come together before go to court. Other idea – FS needs to create forums that feel safe for public discourse – lots of polarity on issue. In this polarizing climate it's intimidating for average citizen to come in and speak. So atmosphere needs to be better controlled so everyone feels comfortable to come to microphone. People should not feel intimidated in democratic setting. As to strategies for conservation that worked and enhances conservation and makes feel connected, road and dam removal is working. Some of collaborative models work well – but encourage to be cautious because collaboration is at local level – but lands are owned by all folks across nation not just local folks – people care as much about Big Bend NP as Glacier NP even though he or others don't live there – so caution to local collaboration.

DNRC and Blackfoot challenge – successful because it is led from the ground. And then the fed and state have been there to support the efforts. If the agencies had come in and led it – it wouldn't have worked. It's the partnership with locals and fed and state agencies that makes it work.

He's 29 and he finds it weird to be called a youth. Since not a govt agency can move quickly and give youth opportunity to make decision and be empowered. They can make decisions that make a difference on the landscape. Changes lifes a lot – getting emotional. Give young people an opportunity a chance to have responsibility. Young folks dug a trail on Mt Sentinal and every day they can look up there and say – wow I did that – and everyone uses it and likes it.

Success – Travelers Rest State Park. Mt Conservation Fund initiated the beginning of the park. Needed someone to take on ownership of the park to use the Conservation Funds. They formed a non-profit organization to run a State park and the non-profit manages the park. Have grown from 15 to 50 acres. Challenges – needed to acquire additional parcels. Were able to use the stateside LCF funds but they have run out. The Non-profit is continuously challenged with getting operational money – how to continually fund the site. Have successfully used stimulus money but they don't know how they will manage with the stimulus funds go away.

I have a thought on how the federal government can help. We need some kind of censorship on advertisement. The aesthetics of location: there is almost nothing uglier than a highway billboard. They go against every notion of nature. Nature provides beauty at every single angle. People are inspired by nature – the trees are just right, the clouds are just so. Once they discover a sentiment for nature, they don't regress; it's probably a lifelong sentiment. He is big on aesthetics

Groups working to protect NLCS. Bringing kids at risk out to natural areas. BLM Restoration projects. Contributing thousands of hours. Because NLCS is so new; inconsistencies in partnerships. NLCS has not been solidified. Salazar needs to better define what NLCS is & build in accountability with the managers of NLCS units.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Mountain biking is growing in numbers nationally. A gateway sport for kids-encourages them to get outside - 494 miles have been closed to mountain bikes, potential to close 2000 more miles; single track trails that have been in place for decades. At the federal level, bikes are considered "mechanized"... Defined- powered by non-human source. Mountain bikes should NOT be considered mechanized. At the national level, would be good to consider mountain bikes as non-mechanized. There should be distinction between bicycles and motorized bikes.

LWCF is an investment to conservation & landscapes. Headwaters Economic group in Bozeman-work on environmental economics. Current model does not value clean air and water. Commission on Environmental Economics needs to be commissioned to tie this all together- President should commission this.

Chair of Park Conservation District. We need to expedite process with ACOE. 310 permitting is done but ACOE permitting takes a very long time. If we could expedite that it would help. Pine Beetle-would like to see funding for biomass plants – would thin out dead timber & minimize fire danger & would help high schools/ public buildings go to good use. Bad when forest burns

There are regions within the state but have oversight in Montana. At FVCC we have a volunteer garden for the community and picking up trash along rivers. Use a local location like a fairground with booths where people could learn more about programs like Montana Conservation Corp. or you can maintain a local trail as a family. Need a bigger media splash about opportunities to do work on public lands.

Don't forget outfitters. We provide the skills to help people get access to places to Bob Marshall.

Role of the Federal Govt- Effects of global warming- Glacier National Park- climate change. Fed Govt- EPA regulates greenhouse gases, but there is no legislation. Proposal by Dr. Hansen- free end dividend- carbon tax- taxed at point of entry but revenue neutral. Urge carbon tax. British Columbia is using this system.

Key to making all of this work is top down leadership/ effective policy/ . Huge development pressure/ increased population. Need strategic planning to knit all of this together. Would like to see Administration develop a National Strategic Plan for Development and Conservation. Need to address what we are actually intending to do with development so we can make decisions. Resurrect old 701 Planning Grant for councils of government. The greatest challenge we face. Federal Gov't used to have a program for planning for area wide systems in the 1970's. Then there was grant money. We should go back to the Federal Government encouraging joint planning

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Local working groups are the future-the model for the future. The Federal Government needs to get behind this & provide federal funds to support. Help preserve & sustain what we have now. Genuine working landscapes- sustain these-buffers & supports rural working communities. Conservation stewardship program –NRCS- voluntary incentives needs to be expanded. Term easements need to be considered (versus perpetual). These may be more palatable than perpetual. Sustaining genuine working landscapes- need tax relief. Administration needs to get behind this

The public is suspicious of lands being removed from the local economy. There isn't good input from those areas who are also interested in conservation as well as resource development. The Feds need to consider involvement at local level. Resident of Philips County. New national monument. But no meetings like this have been scheduled in that area. It has happened before with Upper Missouri river Breaks. Need meetings in Miles City, Glasgow, and Billings. 2/3 of the state doesn't have the population but they have the land mass.

Encourages Federal & State Agencies to tap into network of non-profits- conservation corps- MOSS-. Find ways to develop more partnerships rather than reinvent the wheel. Tap into those organizations that already exist and can engage local youth. Authorities for partnerships- DOI agencies has issues- when is it a contract vs when can we use a cooperative agreement. Much benefit from tapping into these organizations. They are supporting the Public Land Service Corps- has been introduced in the House. Would like to see this pass. Americor engages young people as volunteers. RecreationalTrails program- leverages federal dollars. RTCA program is great resource-needs more dollars. MCC is involved with all of these.

I agree, we need to have as many as possible. Comment on the website that you want a local meeting.

There is no agenda or conspiracy. There are places where we need gas, more energy etc...These have to go hand in hand with conservation.

Org helps create trails & do conservation projects on private land. Enhanced tax incentives for conservation easements doubles the work they can do. Without the tax incentives, it won't work. These tax incentives expired in 2009 and she would like to see these incentives made permanent. GVLTP preserves working ranches/ wildlife habitat. Keeps ranchers doing the good work.

There is a role for Federal government to plan in Environmental Education. Her kids are not interested in Yellowstone/ visitation is dropping. Need to connect kids. MOSS- gets kids outside. Government can play a role in the schools in E Ed. National Park should promote technology/ learning/ merge new technology

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Northern Great Plains. We have overlooked the grasslands, as evidence by decline in grassland birds & species. We are focusing on North Central area of Montana. CCPI program with farm bill is effective; working with ranchers on conservation measures to protect grassland birds. Need regional NRCS people to deliver these programs on the ground. Meet with ranchers and discuss opportunities. Science based organization that works with BLM/ FWP on research related to grassland birds. Leveraging of public/private dollars is effective. CMR-largest grassland reservation. Better integration between DOI agencies needs to occur. CMR managing for ferret. Not effective. BLM trying to find incentives for landowners to allow ferrets. DOI agencies need to do better at working multi-jurisdictionally.

Would like to see local solutions to big problems with the federal government incentivizing. In Montana what's important is our own autonomy. In Montana it's important the Federal Government using a light hand. Use incentives (we're creative people) and get local people together to make choices. For instance with energy: small diameter trees/biomass – utilize them to solve local energy problems. Do on a smaller scale so we can get our hands on it. It creates local jobs too.

I just retired as Forest Archeologist on Lolo National Forest here in Montana. There is a little known program called Passport in Time that allows public to participate on archeology projects throughout the National Forest system. However, there is no incentive for Forests to participate, no specific funding available, and the Forest doesn't get any recognition or points for doing this. Very positive program for cultural resource preservation but more importantly is what it does for education of the public on cultural resources as well as other resource issues such as wildlife, wolf reintroduction, fire and role of fire. It is a very successful program, but very small and not well known. But the payoff is tremendous for support for conservation and public education. I had couple from Manhattan New York who came to Montana to work in this program. On their first trip they took a bus all the way from the east coast to participate. They come back every year, but now they fly. The pay off for such a program is tremendous for conservation and education.

Stewardship ethic. Connecting kids to outdoors-Fed Gov't can continue with fee free days including in winter. Make the park more accessible by increasing fee free days & public outreach related to those days. Bring the parks to the local communities; bring the resources to the kids to encourage visitation. Resume matching program (like the Centennial Challenge) to incentivize donors. Although the Centennial Challenge was cumbersome, encourage it to resume.

Congress does have role to play through the appropriations process. Congress has an accountability to focus on public lands. Need greater Congressional accountability.

We do have sprawl & no mechanisms to deal with. No land use planning mechanism in Gallatin County. Climate change will affect all public lands, until congress acts. Poor public policies from previous administration- no new wilderness- can be overturned by new administration. Don't be afraid to use Antiques Act.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Feds need to support small farmers. Need a comprehensive strategy to support small farmers.

Balance. We need to find the balance between working landscapes and protected landscapes. We need to develop collaborative efforts that find a balance between the two.

Appreciates everyone protecting land. Interested in protecting water. Primary concern is with global warming. Unless we get a handle on this issue, all our efforts at land protection will be in vain; get warmer/ forests burn up/ biodiversity down the tubes...if we don't change our ways. Federal government should not do cap & trade; we need to focus on cap & dividend or carbon tax- return the profit to the public.

Federal govt. needs to lead in interagency teams to provide outreach into community working circles. These feds could work together on planning how to do outreach to communities. Bitterroot constitutionals are saying all govt. is bad. We can't let this defeat a good democratic trust. It takes guts to be a good progressive government official. Need good interagency cooperation and integrate the best of the citizens and the good bureaucracy. Need to support the Superintendent in Glacier NP in his efforts to establish wilderness in Glacier and Yellowstone.

Flood plain & wetland conservation. Work in Madison river valley on floodplain restoration. USDA- Conservation Reserve Program & NRCS- wetland program are working. WRP programs in Montana. 2008 Farm bill allow grazing pilot programs. Challenge in conserving these areas with various funding sources –once protected by conservation easements, the wetlands are not restored. Legacy we leave should be the ability of the lands to store water. Restoration projects we need to fund, we have money for easements but not conservation work. No money appropriated. Need funding through agencies to do cooperative restoration projects. Greatest hedge against climate change

I grew up outside DC and am here as an MCC crew leader. I grew up going to museums and not to parks. We need to tie the service learning approach and focus it on doing outdoor service learning, rather than in the urban population centers. Montana is doing a good job of getting local school kids outside and connecting them with local landscapes. We need to convince schools that we need to take time from teaching for state/fed standardized tests and get kids outdoors. Time spent studying for these tests are keeping kids inside. Need to apply scholastic tests to knowledge of outdoors and conservation as well. The administration should pass the No Child Left Inside Act. This bill would provide funding to get kids outside and teach them about the outdoors. We have a fantastic Children in Nature Network that involves many partners and has been very successful in getting kids outdoors. The Federal government should have a bigger role in coordinating more children and nature programs. Land agencies should have staff committed to these programs.

Where do we stand in having environments that have hurt the economy of Montana? A new monument proposal has hurt the economy.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

There are so many people in this nation that don't know what agencies do. The Forest Service is a huge agency. Posters for this session listed the "Forestry Service." This would be a good civics lesson for schools. Have agency people go to schools and give civics lessons about the work that land conservation agencies perform.

Working aspect of Forests, many people make a lively hood. In the video at the start of this session there were only a couple clips of people working in woods. Livelihoods made by working in the woods is important to recognize.

Public land should continue to be multi-use managed but energy development needs to be better scrutinized. Montana is a very energy intensive state. She doesn't want to see things similar to the Gulf spill happen or the mining deaths in West Virginia. The administration should look into what kind of energy development can be done here as well as alternative energy. We need a solid energy plan. Public lands will be looked at for solar, wind, coal, and natural gas. Look at the pros and cons of each. We need a 20-year plan along with multi-use planning.

Mentioned youth who live in Los Angeles who have never been to the ocean even though it's just a few miles away. He grew up in Boston and there are kids there who haven't been to the woods there, even though they aren't far away. There was a Sierra club program that tried to help with this. His 'in to' working with the Forest Service and was working for the YCC. He really hopes the Obama Administration will establish a national service framework to bring back the CCC – the New Deal. We could reach out to new student high school graduates. Could make parents realize this is a great experience before college – to do work for the government and perhaps get education awards like having tuition waived. This is a huge opportunity in our country.

Regarding the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and other associations who outreach to young people and have partnerships with the Forest Service: I hope agencies will fund these associations more. These are ways to connect youth to ground.

2 things that keep people from coming to the outdoors. Facade (not Disneyworld) or fear. Govt needs to provide a mentoring program to conservation groups to reach out to publics and get them interested in the outdoors. Teach them that risk is ok, and could actually be fun. Yes, there is risk in going to the outdoors, but it's worth the experience.

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I have a wish list, 1. better planning strategies across the board, 2. Incentive to save conservation areas, 3. More information and advocacy, 4. Increased collaboration between local and federal agencies. More gets done by the locals than the feds.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Forest Service having native grass around buildings. Where I work now, I'm told to water the lawn. It uses tons of water to water grass around buildings. There is prairie all around. If you use the right grass you don't need to water. Nobody would care that it was prairie instead. I stopped at a FS rest stop yesterday. It was so warm in bathroom and it was at night. Why are the heaters on in these facilities? Practice sustainable ways. Fund advertising use of green practices and local land. Put word out so people get interested.

Agencies should adopt things like when the health craze health started and agencies funded people to take walks at lunch to get healthy. Agencies can adopt outdoor activities so white collar can see blue collar people work like farms, trails, and farm communities.

Create more federal incentives and funds to public schools to implement outdoor learning programs. We do it with reading and math. Like "Project Wild" on a more regular basis. More than bring the trunk to school once or twice a year.

I get to work with all four land management agencies. There is a lack of internal communication between agencies. Facebook and you-tube are blocked from agency computers, so agency people can't communicate with young people. Need to look at that before you can reach out to young people.

Looking at conservation strategies. 80% of open lands are private. Conservation easements are used to conserve private lands. People donate the conservation easement. The incentive is tax breaks. From personal experience, I entered an easement 13 years ago. I talked to my neighbor about it. When congress passed an increased incentive for easement, spreading tax break over 15 years, then my neighbor also did an easement. Encourage congress to do the incentive again. For some it takes the added incentive. On other hand, there are those who want the land that they lived on and their parents lived on protected for their kids, but they don't make enough money to take advantage of a tax break. A purchased easement would help. Need a federal program to meet this. The video said that private land should be looked at for protection. The Farm and Ranch Protection Program has a minimum size. Congress should look at that to include larger and smaller acreages in the program. But that program needs matching funds, which are hard to come by. One thing that works well is the passage of a law like the Missoula open space law. Bozeman passed a second open space law. The local program provides the local funds to match the federal matching requirement for the easement program.

FED AS BETTER PARTNER

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

In previous comments someone asked the feds to continue to provide incentive for easements. Land and water conservation funds needs to be fully funded. If funds were available more conservation projects could be funded. The Community Food and Ag Coalition in Missoula has been requested to examine subdivision requests and assess possible impact on agriculture by subdivisions. Even when the planning board is convinced that agriculture values are so important, more important than the subdivision the planning board will override the recommendation because of the emphasis on individual property rights. How do we instill responsibility for common good and common value of agriculture and forest lands? Missoula is creating the "Place Project" where cornerstone properties will stand out. How do we implement protection for these "Place Project" lands?

Getting people connected and kids outdoors is important. Federal agencies were created under a different paradigm. A paradigm where congress allocated funds and agency went and did work. With people being more involved there needs to be a change in the federal agency organization. We won't be the doers anymore. We need to be reinvented.

The agencies are good at inventory and monitoring on public lands. Extend inventory and monitoring onto private lands in the large scale conservation model. With that in mind we need public access. Access is based on consumptive uses. Focus on non consumptive uses. Would be more palatable to public.

Climate change— there is no greater environmental effect. Land management agencies can effect not just on ground but can influence others. DOI can have an impact on others.

The 3 predominate means for conserving private lands has been: • Acquisition by public land manager or Conservation organization (e.g. USFS, NPS, BLM purchase of private in-holdings, County or City purchase for open space or park with bond funds and LWCF funds), a private land trust purchase for wildlife habitat using combo of private donations and federal, state, and/or local funds etc). • Conservation easements (again, a mixture of private, state, local & federal funds are often used to purchase easements) • Land use regulations (some states have been much more successful than others with this approach)

Fully fund LWCF – This program has been so under-funded for so long. It is one of the main sources of federal funding that can be used on such a wide variety of land acquisition – from a much needed inner-city park to protection of critical wildlife habitat. Full funding of \$900,000,000/yr would significantly increase land preservation all across the US. Passage of the Land and Water Conservation Authorization and Funding Act of 2009 (S. 2747) would achieve this goal.

Continue Tax Incentives & Increase federal conservation funding – Restore permanently the tax incentives for landowners who grant a conservation easement and increase funding of federal programs that help fund the purchase of C.E. (e.g. The Forest Legacy Program, The Farm & Ranch Land Protection Program)

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Assist Local Govt with Land Use Planning – Many rural cities and counties do not have the money or expertise to plan for growth in a more sustainable way. Many of these local govts are located in areas with large amounts of public land that is impacted by the rural growth. The USDA publication "Cooperating Across Boundaries" (FS-861 August 2006) began by stating that USFS Chief Bosworth identified the loss of open space as one of the 4 threats facing our Nation's forests and grasslands.

Pass the Livable Communities Act (S.1619), which would help communities develop comprehensive regional plans that incorporate transportation, housing, community and economic development, and environmental needs.

Set up offices in each Regional Office of the FS that assist local govts with planning for conservation of sensitive lands (e.g. lands w/in Wildland Urban Interface, critical habitat, wildlife corridors). Provide funding and expertise to this FS staff to implement the FS Open Space Conservation Strategy published in Nov. 2007 (FS-889), including the identified Priority Actions of "convening partners to identify and protect priority open space" and "participating in community growth planning to reduce ecological impacts and wildfire risks." (FS-889 page 5)

Assist with expanding efforts like Collier County Florida's Stewardship Credits program (explained on page 23 of FS-861 publication mentioned above)

Re-authorization of the Federal Transportation Bill – Groups such as Transportation for American and the Smart Growth America have been working hard to reform the next T-Bill to increase public and active transportation funding so that citizens have more choices for getting to work, school, shopping etc. Their strategies include many ways to reduce the need to further expand the already millions of acres devoted to roads. • Land Use Planning – Again, there are many opportunities for the Federal govts to assist local govts to reduce sprawl from continuing to consume our rural farm and ranches.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Getting more Children Outdoors – This is one of the biggest and most important challenges for this generation of children who have the highest rates of obesity and health problems related to being over-weight, such as diabetes. - Pass the No Child Left Inside Act (HR 2054 & S. 866) – This Act would provide funding for expanding environmental education in schools in order to get kids outdoors to learn and care about their environment and have the opportunity to be active and enjoy the outdoors. - Children in Nature – Many local, state and federal agencies are working separately and together to develop programs to get kids outdoors to connect with nature and be physically active after school or on weekends. Greater coordination and funding from the Federal govt could substantially increase these efforts. - Increase funding for the Recreational Trails Program – The majority of this funding goes to construct trails that connect city residents with parks and open space, providing more opportunities for children to be active and enjoy the outdoors. - Increase funding for Safe Routes to School – This is one of the best ways to reduce children being driven to school each day – provide a safe route so that they can walk or ride their bikes instead. - Help create more opportunities for both volunteer programs and paid work – 1000's of young folks are connected to the outdoors by volunteering for local, state and public parks, but many local govts don't have the resources to either create or expand upon volunteer programs. Assistance from NPS or the USFS could make a big difference. Also, help increase programs that assist college students with paid internships or paying back college loans in exchange for working outdoors.

Getting more Adults Outdoors - Support Social Marketing and Social Norming – This is one of the best ways to inform leaders, parents and children that getting outdoors is healthy and positive. Social marketing has changed the way we think about litter, forest fires, seatbelts, recycling and more. - Increase CTEP Funding – This is one of the major funding sources for constructing bike/ped trails that are used for commuting and recreation by adults of all ages and abilities and children. Such funding is often used to build bike/ped trails that are completely separate from roads in beautiful greenways, which encourages more adults to ride and exercise when they feel safely separated from auto traffic.

EFFECTIVE FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL PUBLIC & PRIVATE RECREATION ADVOCATES a. Interagency Planning as areas relate to watersheds, urban areas, and planning zones. Planning should involve various public and private parties and emphasize overall goals of healthy built communities and supporting children (and adults) connecting with the outdoors. b. Funding based on partnerships and ability to impact the overall goals.

He's from Illinois where we don't have prairies any longer. It is now urbanized land – farms that have fertilizers and pesticides. In an ideal world the Federal government would introduce more of the native land that used to be there. Not every place is like Montana with native lands.

It would have a huge impact to move the Forest Service out from under Department of Agriculture because when you view trees as a crop it makes a big difference in how they are managed. The way to set policies should be based on watershed health as the basis for all management because, for example, drinking water will be one of the primary problems of the next century.

Discussion Question 3

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Has been an environmentalist for years; he's never seen an effort like this listening session. He's asked the government agencies to follow up by creating an interagency working group combined with local participants to work together on local issues. There are a lot of people who don't want to do anything different than the way they do things now – coal, oil, etc – and when you are making a lot of money you don't want anyone to break up your game. The state legislature follows the money so it's hard to get things done through that route. But here there are progressive agency people. Let's bring them together with the local citizens to get out from under the money game. Get all outfits to the table and work together to solve the local problems. He asks the top government agencies heads to leave in place a process for the locals to have follow-up to this session. He's very appreciative of our Agency heads coming here and taking this leadership and listening to all of these great ideas. He's inspired by all the great ideas he's heard here and very invigorated by it.

The government can be a better partner by stop hiding the grant opportunities – web sites to find this information. Need to have simpler application processes.

Discussion Question 3

Nashville, TN

We are writing to request that the State of Tennessee be host to a listening and learning session as part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Tennessee Parks and Greenway Foundation success using property transfer funds, used in 4 ways, 16 Million dollars goes back to TN, however those funds can be taken by legislature to balance the budget, it is a fight they will have to fight every year, even though it is dedicated fund, never fully funded, there should be more federal incentive to states to have this type of forward thinking approach to take money when developed and preserve the land, this would be good incentive to state legislatures if the feds would match the money they might set aside. Match all money set aside for conservation.

1. government to government consultation requirements with tribes could help feds hear things from tribes they need to hear. 2. support legislative fix for Carcieri decision which keeps tribes from having lands put into trust for them. 3. encourage Salazar to consider the precedent set for the role of stakeholders by his decision in Cape Wind projects 4. support extension service through land grant universities (especially in Indian country). 5. through Rural Development, look at unintended consequences of SUTA and the problem is that it is only trust areas (fee simple doesn't qualify).

Poor areas is a problem. Suggest Urban hubs through public transportation. Driving is getting very expensive. Camping equipment is now considered a luxury. Develop a tax incentive for people to donate their camping equipment or canoe to find homes for people that will use them.

Challenges: TN # 8 in tourism. Preserving America Program: no \$\$ in budget for this program in 2011. Sustainable tourism will suffer if this stands

Challenges: State Mandate for State Wildlife conservation plan, federal agency use same tools to set up consistency btw states. EX no net loss policy for wildlife conservation

Challenges: Consistent and full funding for the USDA's Resource Conservation and D... Fund (RC&D)

challenges: recreation in forested areas is threatened by insects and diseases (trees) Threats to forest health on public and private lands. Land use change loss of forested lands. Work with our policy makers to make them aware of the importance of our forested areas.

Challenges: Trouble for private sector to meet matches for federally funded programs. Prioritize or coordinate the funding programs.

No child left indoors program needs to be implemented similar to no child left behind

More monuments to designate areas. To show people what is special or set aside so they can appreciate it more.

Discussion Question 3

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Pass No child left inside act, Budget that has been cut. Provide more funding. Federal Children's Bill of Right all kids should have the right to do these 12 things. Govt could communicate this to everyone

Land HOH conservation funds. State side components federal hwy admin. State self funding gas tax. Continue this program.

Protecting large landscapes only Federal govt can do this

Legislature for large businesses will have to put out lots of money for clean air and water act etc. . If this is not achievable or realistic could this \$\$ be used for conservation and recreation.

Let the government communication folks have more freedom to spread the message of the benefits of getting people outdoors.

Create a comprehensive plan that last longer than one presidential/congressional term.

Have the President create an America's Great Outdoors day in which all NGOs, state parks, nat. parks, battlefields could concentrate on to make a large public event.

Fully fund the LWC Fund, approve and fund the TN Wilderness Act., Administration to draft a National Heritage Organic Act.

Use the current Antiquities Act to protect cultural sites

Public service announcement for AGO message. People do not know about the program.

Amendment to fund and encourage field trips

Need more marketing dollars to advertise greenways and trails initiatives. Promote people getting outdoors.

Funding to market natural/wild areas and parks.

Fully fund the Federal historic conservation act. Preserve America save america's treasures. Fund school field trips somewhere else other than the school room.

Discussion Question 3

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Mandate schools to create programs that requires kids to get outside, ie. 100 hrs. of volunteer services before the child can advance to the next grade.

All states developed SWAP TN has 700 species rank as greatest conservation need. Documents are done but not widespread throughout other agencies and groups to use proactive approach. These documents provide that help. Need to utilize more. Marketing needs to be expanded.

promoting small sustainable farms to protect private lands. 2007 Organic Bill provided more funds for this type of farming. Small sustainable farms are helped by this funding. EQUIP opened up funds for farmers to get started.

Young and minorities, connect them to the parks. Working with DOI is a nightmare, very difficult to get suggestions thru. No access to authority people, better corr with programs with the youth.

take children and work into jobs, projects. Wpa format to give everyone a boost to do.

harder to get out doors. Make a challenge, to stop schools mow the grass, gov to have native gardens in schools, Stop using pesticides.

con easements 06 07, easement enhanced. Extended 08 + 09, 2yrs success, want perm tax code(revisions). Chattn cons farm land Farm to school program good benefits, child nutrition act hard to serve food, had more funding and buy from the local farmer.

Climate change- wildlife corridors for animals. Bring people together and provide wildlife viewing, someone to step up to make it work.

young people reconnection minorities. Working with Dept. of Interior is a nightmare vs NOAA. NPS superintendant are too hands off, better coordination of youth programs.

challenge in relation to climate change developing wildlife N/S corridors need coordination with feds and state to create wildlife corridors which could provide obvious needs. Need lead on leading all partners to solution.

Grant criteria need to be looked at Small parking lots need to be built to federal standards huge waste of \$

Works with organizations that volunteers to maintain trails, such as Back Country Horse of America, Leave No Trace program. Want access and open relationship with park rangers, superintendents, etc.—government agencies assist local organizations.

Need Federal money to help buy land before developers buy it up.

Discussion Question 3

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Special use permit process is dependent on whoever is in that job. When it takes one year to be heard, isn't there something wrong with process?

Can Americorp be of assistance to some of these staffing issues discussed earlier?

Government should provide central/interstate level of information. Not asking for funds or regulation, but who do I go to for this?

Needs to be strong Federal effort to reach all communities minorities?

Government needs to advertise programs (Smoky Bear, pollution) to children

Government should take on issue of public transportation, finding ways to increase long distance mass transportation.

Continue support for National Heritage Areas.

Issue executive order to revise policies on wilderness review.

Collaboration of Dept. of Education. Add Water Quality Act, Pollution, Ecosystem, etc. into curriculum.

Take advantage of university systems. Reduce student loans for involvement in civic activities?

Tort reform to relieve liability issues.

Discussion Question 3

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Tennessee Department of Tourist Development—approach to sustainable tourism has been a holistic approach inclusive of business development and communities—sustainable tourism summit was successful because it was designed for those who realize the importance of protecting our destinations while maintaining economic growth through tourism—sustainable tourism sustains the environment, culture and heritage of a region while at the same time sustaining the economic growth through tourism—the tourism industry has the potential of increasing public awareness and appreciation of environmental and sustainability issues—the implementation of sustainable tourism practices can preserve and protect a region’s sense of place for future generations—the states initiative was not a top down program, but a grassroots initiative which has grown from community to community (Must be a regional local based program, i.e., Gatlinburg green, Ripley From Red to Green, Ruby Falls, Chattanooga Green Lodging)—Make sure there is a WIN in the program for all stakeholders including businesses, community leaders, developers, preservationists, and environmentalists—The very same resources you are developing allow citizens, visitors, and children to be involved in sporting events, nature and outdoors, preservation of land, agritourism, development of sustainable cities, and will ultimately lower the state’s obesity rates—to get kids involved it has to be fun!—create sustainable strategies recreational stories that allow kids to learn while experiencing nature, i.e., geocaching which utilizes the latest technology while experiencing the states national parks, battlefields, and recreation areas—Tennessee’s greatest outdoor classrooms, such as the partnership between the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Tremont School, provide our children and visitors with opportunities for life-long, place-based sustainable tourism experiences—the economic piece is Key to the success of the program as it will bring additional resources to the table, and for businesses the program has to positively impact their bottom line—create recreation resources at the state and local level to move citizens and visitors to the rural areas of the state—These new tourism based businesses will increase recreation and education opportunities across the state—important to remember and recognize that the groundwork has been laid by many others before us Land Trust of TN, TN Civil War National Heritage Area—These partnerships work because the focus is on conservation, preservation, and education creating a WIN for all stakeholders involved—State and federal agencies can provide resources and best practices, however program must not be top down but local driven in order for stakeholders to embrace all facets of the program (business, schools, churches, communities, environmentalists, preservationists)—Remember the best ideas come from the local communities and businesses—The implementation of sustainable tourism practices allows communities to develop their economic, cultural, and natural resources while at the same time enabling them to keep their natural resources beautiful—sustainable funding opportunities for land conservation—historic hermitage hotel in Nashville encourages visitors to donate \$1.00 per day—They partner with Land Trust of TN and will create \$1 million for land conservation—What would happen if all historic hotels in U.S. did this

Discussion Question 3

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Conserve at least 5% of TN farms and greenways to set aside—add prime farm lines and working corridors to set aside to protect trees, air quality, etc.—connectivity is key—NEED cash incentives from federal government to support management and maintenance so efforts can continue—the job program produces pay and a good quality of life—support and incentive is crucial to adding more land

Funding for federal agencies with a line item budget dedicated to conservation and recreation—Park flow program in state of TN is needed for land trust foundation to establish additional area for bridge sites—no water trail system—scenic river program can protect the scenic quality and recreational qualities need to be in another category—no sustainable way to protect those rivers and trails

Can we help private sector/retail groups? Get tax cuts, breaks, incentives to help private sector? Family Adventure Journal—passport program that has been successful to get kids engaged in outdoors. Could engage more people if there weren't so many liability issues with transportation. There are regulations that are not being enforced (hunting/fishing).

collaboration with local clubs and organization along with national because people are willing to work hand in hand and need to partner with off road groups—local groups are willing to do the work but they need the guidance of the national groups

Identify particular land resources in TN that need to be protected—working to protect the largest known waterfall—have private organizations identify key resources—need access to sustainable funding to ensure targeted acquisitions are funded—benefit of the knowledge that can identify some of things that federal organization

areas are closing down due to not having sufficient money to keep the areas trimmed and open—farmers were willing to go in and maintain the park—Need better cooperation from the federal agencies to allow public to help maintain areas—people are willing to follow the law and build necessary items, but federal restrictions on using local people to work on federal land—need some easing up on locals—need more understanding to allow the local community to assist with projects on federal lands—Need more people involved in volunteerism

partnerships work—enjoy relationships with local parks—DOES NOT WORK—federal partners and federal managers do not work well together—All agencies are not on the same board—more communication between federal agencies

Discussion Question 3

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Conservation district and conservation district movements—sole conservation district by state law in TN—works of improvement on privately owned agriculture land—local people or volunteers that are elected to their conservation district that work with the federal entity or state entity to help make the decision on how that money can be spent—involve locals WORKS—lagging support though—increasing the amount of available funds but fewer employees—struggling to get the work done and help from federal agencies lacks—look at better ways for cost share programs—shift some of those cost share funds to the other side—conservation is a conversation—it takes private conversation for the conservation to be preserved—look at rededication to provide assistance to the public in natural resource—farmland protection—how to figure out how we make agriculture profitable?—how do we look at things?—regulations impeded people staying on the lands—the age of farming is becoming a thing of the past—no local mentoring programs—need to look at the inheritance tax so the farmers can pass down to youngsters so they can continue to farm—need farmland protection programs—what are the hindrances to people staying on the land—person cannot bake biscuit in their home and sell it—hurts helping people stay—younger people are not farming—how can federal help older couples find a younger helper to farm

Department of defense is one of the largest federal land owners in the country and we need to adopt the green movement—bring DOD into the system such as taking a look at Fort Carson who utilizes the solar panels and utilize the veterans because A. they are returning service men B. they are knowledgeable C. make military bases more user friendly to the community—land is well preserved

partnership in TN with federal agencies enjoy—find ourselves that each federal agency has its own specific reason for being there—public doesn't know how to comply with management schemes or regulations—put together multi jurisdictional agencies to take the lead and figure out problems—federal agencies need to not have conflicting interests

DOI embraced landscape conservation cooperative—USDA needs to look into it

There is not a lot of incentives to combine different funding mechanisms—combine those programs to make big projects happen

NPS needs to spend as much on programming and interpretation as LE—need outdoor recreation specialists but need people to show how to camp and go on hikes without putting themselves in danger—have community coordinators to work with federal and locals—built environment getting planners and local ordinance to have that need more openspace knowledge—need more programs

TN Tourism development like the holistic approach. Asking local communities how they can help with conservation of the landscapes that are privately managed. What are the best practices from private side. Letting the grass roots make the impact with government support. How do we make sure people know where trails (rec) areas are?

Discussion Question 3

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Partner with economic development to help conserve the landscapes that attract tourism. Not realistic to tell rural communities to stay rural with no development. Provide the incentives and work together. There are so many government agencies, TN department tourism works to designate byways, then TDOT puts rip rap along the road...not working together, government needs to be pulled together. Need balancing of environmental and economic. Hierarchy of gov't. Need economic purposes for recreation to make rural communities more viable.

Real estate land broker. Couldn't find anyone to tell him how to get land donated to public. Realtors are not at the table when conservation groups get together or when opportunities present themselves. Success would increase if real estate persons were at the table. Could government help identify the key lands that are needed for conservation? So when a farmer is ready to sell, conservation advocates are ready and responsive.

Battle of Franklin Trust We've been declined for any park service status. How do restart a process for affiliation with the parks? Need the affiliation of National Parks to get recognition to grow visitation and appreciation.

Public school access and connectivity is being lost because housing developments don't allow through traffic. Fences are going up and keeping kids out. There could be regulations that tell people to allow access and open for use. Federal government should buy key parcels to secure public access. Federal regulations on mortgages have changed in the last few years; these regs could incorporate land use to accompany better connectivity in neighborhoods (not allowing fences so kids can cut through yards). Can't use utility corridors either.

Tennessee has great species diversity and should have a higher priority for conservation. It's always California.

stop treating property as a border. Federal government should become partners with gateway communities. Work with the communities.

Obesity rates. School field trips are going away. Need to be supported at a national level through education. It is of great value. The costs are making field trips prohibited.

NGO comberland region tomorrow works with developments of lands in constructive ways and with community development. The current policy works against land conservation. We are set for sprawl in the current policy. What the Fed. Govt can do is to connect their efforts sustainable communities partnership initiative that will help communities with better development of their communities and infrastructure. The other thing you can do is work with natural resource partnerships with state agencies and provide them with ways to partner with NGO's. Fund communities to help provide comprehensive plans for these community development.

Blueways program Challenge on access points to trails. She would like that state and federal can help in getting private landowners to give access to these trails. For them to work to help educate these private landowners in their views on this. She wanted to thank (name deleted) for his wilderness program.

Discussion Question 3

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

CEO of TN Wildlife Federation from Federal standpoint, incentive based programs, but these programs are typically resource limited, even small cuts have huge effects, get on the ground working with landowners on a daily basis, ie, NRCS, FSA, PFFW, need to make the performance standards employees are graded on at a county level to give it the attention it needs to get or give money to non-profits who can do work cheaper and faster, crossing political boundaries.

Discussion Question 3

Philadelphia, PA

jobs are created through heritage tourism, goal of AGO ties to heritage tourism- What is missing is Commerce Department should be included in initiative, one item that they could is how do take the federal role and promote heritage tourism

federal government should support service learning; service learning is a real opportunity to connect education to the resources

Get funding from gov't to improve. Research & identify where the resources are -- federal role very important.

West has different problems, so few people and lots of acres, federal role is there is not enough of presence, staffing, and communication

fighting a gaming commission on Casino development in Gettysburg, inconsistent message from federal government

challenge on helping protect the battlefield - Neither NPS nor Elected Officials will take a position to stop Casino Development proposed directly adjacent to Gettysburg National Military Park

Need to have comprehensive and consistent goals at all levels of government and across initiatives –For example: Preservation is unnecessarily taking a back seat, in the name of conservation and job creation, to unthoughtful development of Solar Power Infrastructure being developed in inappropriate locations that impact cultural resources.

cultural landscapes, when federal government takes over historic structures there is not enough money to restore them, funding is always a critical item and administration has cut out historic preservation funding. Need to emphasize how Historic preservation = economic stimulus. NPS publications are invaluable.

the historic preservation message needs to come from top down to emphasize its importance at the highest levels - Administration must be about historic preservation- challenging for African American Commemorate Endeavors – If Monuments in our Nation's Capitol don't reflect the diversity of our country , then where? Efforts of non-profit organization have been under siege for years so that L'Enfant Corridor can be open to for-profit developers. Need support of government at all levels (to stave off development pressure).

Acid-Mine Drainage and Art, effort was to communicate importance of restoring river resources and do so in a compelling visual way, it was a creative and inventive way to bring an otherwise complicated (and unsexy) message to a community. Unfortunately program did not get off the ground. Administration needs to speed up path driving development of green infrastructure – Reuse first, Green First. Engage (NPS?) gateway communities

Discussion Question 3

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Stimulus \$ Concept - federal government should support community college training programs on craftsmanship trades (not enough skilled craftsman who understand historic building trades), how to repair historic structures. Learn from Tribal Cultures, all things are connected - consider big gestalt landscape. Use a "National Landscape Initiative" - natural and cultural are the same thing, should pull those two together, not separate them.

NPS at the upper level doesn't seem to take a position (on Land Development happening adjacent to parkland)

federal role needs to encourage partnerships (and coordination) and multiple objectives

Seed money would help us raise more money.

Existing federal legislation such as Section 106 must be followed by all the agencies that are affected by that legislation. Department of Energy, for example, doesn't follow.

Where in the administration is the 1930s conversation (similar recessionary period) about gov't jobs programs? Create employment for architects, historians, etc., people who want to work for the NPS. Missing an opportunity to invent programs focusing on preserving cities and national parks. Entire generation of young people knocking on the door & there is no work for them. Our heritage is as profound in urban areas as in remote parks. Opportunities all over the country but administration is not looking at how to use this crisis to deal with these issues.

Jewish community started in Pinelands in 1880s. Pinelands Commission trying to put sewer projects on this land. State says it can't help because it's federal. State laws don't cover national preserves. Create partnership between state and federal. There is more protection outside the Pinelands than in.

In Pinelands, Underground Railroad Network to Freedom was economic engine – uncovered lots more history in southern NJ. We need cross-pollination, talking between botanists, archaeologists, cross discipline. We become myopic. Federal agencies can help connect the dots, develop the connections.

put money in NPS budget to help reduce the backlog of archival & museum collections.

use Youth Conservation Corps, bring back the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Small grants leveraged big increases in participation.

Discussion Question 3

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

job and volunteer opportunities, federal government role to recognize heritage tourism, professional opportunities with historic preservation. As The Conservation and Recreation Agenda moves forward we must keep historic preservation on the agenda - as most people will not equate cultural resources with America's Great Outdoors, but they are integral and inextricable.

need a consistent message, NPS has said that historic preservation is not a core mission, inconsistency with federal governments message, actions have to follow words. Tribes want to do more historic preservation and there should be more federal money to help them.

grant structure might have to be different. Rural headwaters need to get grants, not only downstream at urban centers. Professional grantwriting staff differs. Issues at headwaters greatly impact everything downstream

Some communities are more sophisticated than others – smaller communities don't know what's there and available.

looking for national recreation designation. The designation could bring local organizations together and have more clout, bring more people to the sites, and would be a great thing for the people in the region.

reinstate incentives for performance and innovation in HPF. Make revisions to tax credit program more attractive to smaller projects- lower adjusted basis requirements

E Grants – I'm a sophisticated user for grants found it hard to use and understand. Many friends group found it very difficult to use. It's hard to find a grant or to find anything on E Grants – make E Grants more user friendly. People don't have time to search for this information. It's a waste to make it so difficult and people aren't applying because it's so difficult.

make funding available for projects through RTCA, education- create connection to outdoors for children and adults

move forward through cooperation and collaboration.

Tiger program of DOT is implementing the sust community agenda. Tiger II is more \$ for reinvestment and going into established areas ICE-TEA was successful

need legislation for national heritage area designation and program legislation.

Need financial involvement or help to preserve farmland – especially farmland around historic battlefields.

Discussion Question 3

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

If have a NP that is tied to its rural context – to help farmers sell products, if we don't do this we are going to lose something dear to this country and loose heritage tourism economy. The help the federal gov't can do would be helpful Agriculture is almost equal to our heritage tourism in the Delaware Valley and so much the public can benefit from. All of us recognize the value of preserving our heritage and recognizing there is another generation to preserve our heritage and that they share

EPA public comment process closes this wk. no information on environmental education. Submit comments to include environ educ in strategic plan

Dedicated funding for wildlife protection

rainwater recharge sharing information for urban gardening

interior & agriculture are not the problem. Places like HUD are. Need more comprehensive policies to direct federal resources back into communities and disincentives for development outside of existing infrastructure. GSA is a good example of an agency reevaluating their resources and reusing, restoring and maximizing.

tax credit projects, part 1,2,3 to different offices. Whole process needs to be online.

lean, mean program in NPS RTCA. Lots of technical assistance but gets lost in NPS. Continue to support technical assistance like RTCA and do it better. Communicate information on technical assistance including RTCA and other assistance.

need public transportation in the suburbs. Public transit lines to suburban centers.

3 Civil war protection program, range land protection program transportation enhancement program, fully funding these programs would be a big help.

battlefield preservation – having funding for battlefield preservation so more localities know that funding is available.

Suggested strengthening federal legal services available for protecting cultural resources, noting that developers often buy the best legal services in a community as the cost of doing business. Suggested more regional planning efforts so fewer preservation battles occur on a case-by-case basis.

Federal Role helped with infrastructure. It's a wonderful tool.

Discussion Question 3

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Need to put money into areas that are already developed. Need to emphasize urban and suburban redevelopment

Some communities in NJ don't trust USACE so they won't use their funds, but will use EPA funds and have had some successful projects with them.

Critical tool – designation. Urban sprawl – if there is some agricultural policy to keep people from selling land to developers to make money. Need national agriculture policy that preserves prime farmland so individuals can take action, not a political body. From a natural resource standpoint – the feds need to look at resources that cross state and governmental boundaries so we don't have these bars that hinder us from protecting areas. – i.e. Appalachian Trail

competitive factors for states if HPF over \$50M

Battle lost against casino (sugarhouse site) had more Native American artifacts than other sites in PA are now sitting in archives. At Fed. Gov't level tools like NEPA and USACE could be deployed at these sites would be helpful. Legal structure – there is a weakness in public interest law. Casino bought out law firms and no public interest firms got involved. Citizens groups had trouble finding law firms that were not being paid off by the casino developers. Campaign finance abuse – casino developers were contributors to campaign funds of the governor.

Rochambeau trail will be an incredible tool to organize heritage tourism along the trail.

Yes, there is knowledge and use of the grant programs. On the positive side of USACE, USACE provided \$ for projects that have been very successful in Philadelphia. Grants.gov is very difficult to use. It's a challenge to find the information to apply for a grant.

ULI partnered with EPA for conference on Smart growth

president's partnership for sustainable communities is different than AGO. 50 yrs of transportation funding has made numerous historic resources obsolete. Need funding for local historic preservation.

gardening and farming on empty lots in depressed urban areas like Detroit. Where is the protection against developers who might want to crowd in?

NPS and Interior is sitting on a potential showcase passive green structures. Siting, vegetation, creative systems for natural ventilation, etc.

Use the resources we have in the government to reach Native Americans and engaging tribal leaders.

Discussion Question 3

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

NPS administers LWCF, Historic Preservation Fund, National Heritage Area program and NPS can show leadership in getting partners to work together on state and local side (getting everyone to the table to collaborate). Important that NPS and NHA communities get together so that NHAs can be brought into the NPS family. NHAs don't live up to its potential – great at bringing recreation, history etc together. Unity of thought between NHAs and NPS is needed. NPS should come up with a draft idea and have NHAs respond. NPS should take the first step.

AGO should look at how to make sure these underprivileged communities and historic places are connecting. These kids need to have experiences with outside and historic places.

Keep the FRAC act within the CLEAR act. Regulate the gas industry. Advocacy. Funding.

You need everyone at the table (public and private). Having the NPS as a partner is important. Providing seed money.

Use urban parks to bring a diverse audience to understand our heritage through our historic sites.

Fully fund HPF. Support the CLEAR Act.

SHPO needs capacity to work more locally in the field b/c PA is so locally minded. Capacity is federal and state and local responsibility.

Full funding of LWCF. Extend the special provisions for tax deductions on easements.

NPS should embrace idea of making preservation important to kids. Kids need to experience history – actually be immersed in a park setting and in history. More programs like Valley Forge campfire experience.

Assisting w/ current programs that work, Technical Assistance

easy ways to approach children in school – mail NPS brochures to schools – get them involved in Webangers – send maps of parks and maps of what is in the area – some are right around the block! – materials exist that can be spread out and help people to know what is in their area and outside of it.

Use marketing to increase awareness of historic sites. Fund the UGRR Network to Freedom program.

The HPF and LWCF are funded by the oil industry – the administration should be out in front to get both fully funded.

Discussion Question 3

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

There are so many education programs at many levels – we need to have a way of inventorying them...before we launch something new, we should build on what is there. Cutting Save America's Treasures, Preserve America, and NHA funding – what does this say about the administration's commitment to preservation. These programs should have a place in the future. The Marcellus Shale in PA is a disturbing development and there are powerful forces here. The federal government needs to take a look at this.

What drives historic preservation and economic renewal through historic preservation is more active commitment at federal state and local levels to restore the economies. Education – terrific if stimulus money was used to inspire young people coming out of HS, or folks laid off in mid-career – if funds could be used to train them to perform historic preservation/construction work. Federal role could be to promote cultural resources more – greatest effect NPS can have is not to acquire more natural park land, but promoting cultural resources – cultural resources needs to be addressed w/ every publication, video (example – AGO video).

Use marketing, not just for tourism, but for other programs, too, such as adult literacy, to make connections. Get people who have no access to these places that we are preserving.

Communication - Get the word out including in mainstream media where people who are not already interested will see and perhaps become inspired. How do you get movie makers to put national parks and historic sites into movies? As a setting. Government sponsor an environmental movie or a substantial documentary in theaters. More casual, constant placement of national parks rather than one big ad campaign. Send mailings to communicate with park information on special events. Look at past successful ad campaigns.

Fund school community service programs and provide incentives for youth.

Government sponsor documentaries to be in theaters.

More funding for parks

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

FARMERS ARE ENTREPRENEURS GOING DIRECTLY TO THE CONSUMER. CREATING FOOD SOURCES FOR PEOPLE. URGE FEDERAL GOVT TO INCREASE FUNDS FOR FRPP. RENEW COMMITMENT. THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. LOOK AT REGIONAL PROCESSING FOR LOCAL FOOD SOURCES.

I'm a Hudson River navigator and through American Heritage Rivers Initiative. Also works here at Marist and represents local community groups. Bringing people out are surely things promoted by the grass roots, local community. Opportunities to partner with federal government. Every local community has different needs and it could be recreation or natural resource conservation. But we need to stress connecting people through the rich sites that we have, cultural, historical and environmental. Additional resources that would help our efforts? Coming from the American Heritage Rivers Initiative – 14 rivers that work together. Tools we need from federal government is for federal government to be engaged, but not just through one agency, but inter-agency task forces. It's not one size fits all. We worked with an interagency task force. Can be such a tremendous tool, because if I go to USDA and I'm not talking about farm, it's not a part of the USDA priority of projects, if we could crossover and USDA is partnering with the American Council of Historic Preservation or NPS is involved, then they will recognize needs of local communities are not one size fits all. We need to work across agencies. We also need to re-engage what the federal government has already invested. We constantly struggle with where we belong, because the American Heritage Rivers is not part of an overarching organization. Where do we evolve? Maybe what we do is partner with some of those local initiatives to reengage them and make them part of the project. The challenges are, of course, money. We need to see the federal investment across all agencies. The role can be great. We've seen across our history much investment and it is a golden opportunity.

What works to engage people are community gardens, school gardens, theme farms, fresh air farms, things to get kids out and experience their environment and to understand the food system. Community gardens are a fabulous way to get people even in small spaces in urban environments to connect with the outdoors, to preserve that land. Tools/resources – public land trusts, protection of land rights for community gardens, assistance of soil remediation in brownfields and urban areas, sites that exist and are neglected, mini-grants, funding to get school gardens going, efforts to bring fresh food to children. Challenges – state and local regulations that are seen as barriers right now. Lack of incentives, short term goals for development that fragments the land and takes land out of production as a green space. Green spaces or community gardens being sold. Maybe if they are sold could have some percentage of the fund be put into a coffer – when public land is sold, to put some of that money into a coffer to use for other public lands, soil remediation, etc. Food modernization act is an opportunity to amend that in certain ways not to overburden small producers. Can't be one size fits all, right now it's five hundred dollar blanket fee for every farmer that participates. We need to mitigate that and make it more flexible for small farmers or a variety of farmers.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

I'm here as a private citizen. However, I'm involved in a number of businesses and activities related to the subject. Regarding the two other areas I'm involved in, I'm the designated developer of a project called Longdock Beacon, a collaborative project in Beacon with Scenic Hudson, constructing riverfront land there in the city of Beacon into a tourist destination, a facility that will be developed according to sustainable practices. Connecting to outdoors requires a place to spend the night. That dramatically increases the chances of people spending more time there, because they have the chance to spend a second day and can take advantage of more resources. This gets into the private sector and development. I'm also on the Board of Directors of Hudson Valley Fresh and also interested in economic development to the dairy cooperative. What struck me in my various roles is that I believe that it's a mistake that the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development is not involved in this initiative. In each of these projects I've been involved in, HUD has been involved as well. Most recently, Hudson Valley Fresh has been a recipient of HUD funding for job retention at one of the oldest family-owned dairies in the state. HUD plays a very important role and since money is constantly being mentioned as a challenge, those are potential deep sources of financing. HUD loan programs can help finance many projects and any tourist association can be financed in part by HUD 108 loans, do not need congressional appropriation for the full amount of the loan. It's a wide open source of capital.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

attorney and involved in Walkway over the Hudson. Most people thought I was nuts to try to turn a railroad bridge into a walkway. It's become the 3rd biggest tourist attraction in NY State. We've had 600,000 visitors. I think it's popular because it's very simple – it's a way to get people outdoors without cars. Shared for bicycles, skaters, runners, walkers, small scooters. It takes about half hour to walk across it. Until you get out there, you can't understand the beauty of it. It's quiet, it's peaceful and people just love it. It's going to connect with 25 miles of traffic-free trails on both sides. I've been pushing for a number of years with the Dept of Transportation not just to concentrate on providing motor vehicles access, but on bikes and pedestrians. Not enough attention to sidewalks and traffic-free lanes. There's no shoulders, sidewalks, traffic free lanes. I think that's the reason for the obesity problem because there isn't a safe way to get out and walk around. We've concentrated on motor vehicles for too long. Dept of Transportation needs to take into account and consideration the impact on bicycling and pedestrian traffic. Maybe some incentives that every project they do, they take into account the impact on biking, walking, take that into consideration. Even with the project we did, we had transportation funding and it took us 3 or 4 years to use that. We had to get most of the money through other means. In the Hudson Valley in general, we are the original great outdoors. It's the most beautiful area in the world and I think the federal government should concentrate on this area by making it accessible to people not just in motor vehicles. Railroad transport—one of the problems we had, csx a new freight line, not really cooperating in helping us use old rail trails. Trying to get commercial interests to buy them, but the federal government could help. The feds could take a role in providing incentives or leaning on CSX. Senator Schumer helped with the walkway. We are working on other things. CSX owns a key piece that we need for the trails. It is all coming into fruition except for the one piece we are trying to buy from CSX. We're within close proximity of 10-15 million people in New York City. Local people can't get out West, but by protecting the Hudson Valley we helping people get outdoors in an area that's close to a concentrated population. We were overwhelmed with the success. By word of mouth we're getting people from all over the world. You just have to go talk to people to see they're coming from everywhere. We're still working on parking issues, an elevator, benches, but it's been a remarkable success. Until you get up there, you can't understand the beauty of it. With those trail connections, we could make a trail from here to NYC, but there is a lot of resistance to it. But if we could get the federal government to help us lean on the railroads.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Small grass roots group working in Putnam County. Being an advanced senior, I will read my comments. (Written comments were submitted.) The great swamp of eastern Putnam and Dutchess County is a different type of river system – 20 mile length encompasses two major river systems. The Housatonic and the Hudson. The East branch of the Croton River also is part of the NYC water system. The great swamp is known to supply about 20% of water to the Croton system. The great swamp is the 2nd largest fresh water wetland and the largest red maple swamp in the state. Many thousands of acres are included in this area, fresh water swamp habitat and critical resources that provide areas where children and adults can get out and engage in science in the field by tracking turtles or simply enjoying the joys of being outdoors. Hunting, fishing, kayaking and canoeing are possible. Many species live here, many species of birds, major breeding population of turtles, amphibians, reptiles, etc. Over 25 species of mammals, rare plants are numerous. Eight natural communities support rare plants. Success – the answer is a coalition of partners led by an entirely volunteer organization. Friends of the Great Swamp (FROG) that has been able to obtain Recovery Act funds, with 11 partners as well as local land owners have all come together to preserve over 600 acres in the swamp and more acres in conservation easement. Major challenge – funding. Potential for new homes and development in the great swamp watershed. Demand for open space has driven prices beyond which feds are willing to pay. We need more open space lands in the Hudson Valley. Land prices and taxes are exorbitant here. There are few other grants for open space preservation. What can the federal government do? Now is the time before it's gone to create unique and valuable open space. We support that creation of the Hudson Valley as a National Park. FROG would like to propose that the federal government acquire additional acreage in the Great swamp to create a national wildlife refuge to protect the habitat of the wildlife in the great swamp to protect habitat of waterfowl and songbirds and rare reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and butterflies. This refuge could also act as a biological research station as well as preserving water quality and provide public education. The addition of a north woods element is a thought. The northeast would then have a national refuge and a national forest similar to what is out west. People cannot connect to the wild world, if there is no wild world out there. Preserving the great swamp is an important first step. We look forward to partnering with the federal government.

zoning commission for town of Taughkonic, town is rewriting its zoning code and an area that the federal government could connect with. I'm reaching out to find resources to help the town's feel empowered and to understand the importance. We are the front line of conservancy with a 36-year old code where the word conservancy doesn't even appear. And of course there is funding. We have \$10,000 to get us through a three year process. Feds could reach out about these issues. We need funding for planners and helping organize. We are the front line to educating our townspeople and we are losing our population. We've had dairy farmers taking their own lives because they can't face the debt they are acquiring.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

The Hudson Valley is the birthplace of the modern environmental movement. We have partnerships and incredible collaboration through the government, organizations to help provide food to our incredible farm stands, tourism. Great opportunity to build on what we have here as a great resource and collaboration. One aspect of that collaboration is "Saving the Land that Matters Most" 17 land trusts are working together. 65,000 acres that we estimated cost about \$500 million dollars to implement. There are other estuaries around the country, but the idea that in 5 years we could preserve that green corridor of the Hudson Valley is within our grasp. We think it can be done through a number of exiting funding sources with a collaboration with USDA, DEC, etc. If we all work together to fight for full funding of existing initiatives is what we need. We have the Land Conservation Fund, the Highlands Conservation Act authorized for \$100 million, the National Estuary Program – full funding is essential for these. We've asked Governor Patterson and Mayor Bloomberg for funding. USDA farm and ranch protection program is miniscule amount of funding. I would love to work with the Dept of Ag to identify other funding sources because we have land trusts on the ground, working in our communities with the farmers and land owners. We need a federal partner here. Working with NRCS, USDA, land trust community to protect what is a great source of food for the valley and for NYC. Many of our farmers are trucking their food to NYC. If the land is lost at the rate, Hudson Valley agricultural sector is one of the 10 most threatened nationally. This is a time of real urgency and a great opportunity for collaboration.

Captain of the Clearwater. I believe in conservation. The sloop Clearwater is a large sailing vessel and part of the mission is protecting the waters of the Hudson. We do on the water education. Our standard sail is three hours, a field trip for students. The boat is a replica of the cargo vessels that would have been on the Hudson. So the kids are getting an all-encompassing experience on the Hudson – learning about the history and the environment. But these kids are 9-22 years old. Everything we're talking about in terms of conservation, recreation is going to happen in the future. If we short change a serious understanding of how to work the outdoors into the education system, especially for the kids in urban areas or in isolated rural areas, it might be the first time they've slept outdoors or been on a boat. It's a very intensive program to give these kids a place to put their enthusiasm and we must get them while they are young. We heard from the youth yesterday – one girl said that we don't think it's good to mandate what we have to learn. But I do think it makes a difference in the attitude that you have from the top. Value outdoor education, but not necessarily mandate it. Some resources that would be good would be to streamline the grant process. Many small organizations need help applying for funding. Giving those small organizations the opportunity to get money – it doesn't need to be millions of dollars. (Beczak in Yonkers, Rocking the Boat for example). It can be a local place that can't fill out 150-page grants but can handle smaller grants. Facilitating that grant process is important. And setting the example of early education is something that needs to be done.

If funds from Land and water conservation fund could be made available directly to local trusts and nonprofits rather than going through the state.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

I am a Local Farmer in Dutchess County. I just wanted to be able to bring to your attention some of my concerns as a livestock farmer in New York. I currently operate under a USDA exemption with a USDA inspected plant.

This limits me to 20,000 birds per year. I think that our numbers should be doubled. The reason being -

these numbers were arbitrarily established decades ago. All farming expenses have more than doubled since these regulations were first implemented. Even with the doubling of numbers to 40,000 it would still just be a part-time operation. You couldn't successfully operate a slaughterhouse 5 days a week with 4 employees and justify paying a full-time inspector.

Catalyze Partnerships – by supporting initiative such as the Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership and the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway

National Awareness – raise awareness of open space and preservation efforts and opportunities for support.

Capital Investment – provide grant funding for planning and capital projects that will deliver long term return on investment in terms of increased organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and capacity for responding to a fast changing world.

Transportation Enhancements – Federal support for transportation initiatives that link destinations with each other and major transportation hubs are needed while ensuring access for all ages and abilities including trail connections, transportation programs, rail trail development and improved highway design

Development of the "Smart Park" – In a world of new communications technologies, alternative energies, and integrated systems, many nature preserves lack the capital for investment in planning and design that will make them more efficient, effective, and sustainable in serving their missions. Assistance upfront can leverage investment by donors in the implementation of strategies that will reduce the bottom line while enabling organizations to provide better service to more people

Yet, while much has been accomplished, the need is still very great. As an example, in the last six years we have received more than 100 applications from communities seeking assistance with trail development through our Healthy Trails, Healthy People program that could only select less than a third of the applicants.

The federal government must provide even greater financial assistance to help New York and its communities build the parks and alternative transportation infrastructure that will make it easy for citizens of all ages and abilities, especially in underserved rural and urban environments, to access the outdoors and enjoy a park or trail or substitute trails for a car to undertake activities as part of daily life, and, as a result, improve their health. This means:

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Assistance with operational funding for our state parks to ensure they can remain open, properly operate and fully serve the public.

Support for capital investments in our state parks - more than \$650 million is needed to erase a backlog of essential infrastructure improvements in New York's state parks

Funds for conservation agencies to seize opportunities to acquire land to develop new parks in underserved areas and establish buffers and eliminate in-holdings in existing parks

Creation of bicycle and pedestrian trails that provide inter and intra community links

Complete Streets improvements that result in environments that encourage walking and biking that is attractive and safe

Establishment and promotion of Safe Routes to School programs and supporting infrastructure improvements that encourage children to walk or bike to school

Assessment of trails for accessibility and the development of signage needed to convey accessibility information at trailheads to make it easier for persons of all ages and abilities to decide which parks and trails meet their needs

Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and equalizing the federal and stateside allocations to put more dollars in the hands of state and local governments to undertake local conservation and park and trail projects, especially in underserved areas

Directing greater dollars to alternative transportation and bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the new transportation bill, including monies for construction of new resources as well as capital improvements to existing trails and paths

Increasing funding for the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program - Parks and Trails New York has enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with the RTCA program staff and have worked with them directly on several New York trail projects. We know first-hand how highly the RTCA program is regarded and how effectively it has helped communities, large and small, urban and rural, build trails all across the state. For many New York cities, towns and villages it is the only contact they ever have with the Department of the Interior. Some examples of New York trails that the RTCA staff have helped launch include the 350-mile Erie Canalway Trail, 58-mile Champlain Canalway Trail, 90-mile Genesee Valley Greenway, and the Walkway over the Hudson.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Continuing and increasing support for the National Heritage Corridor program. The grants, promotional materials, and technical assistance that the Hudson River Valley and Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridors offer to communities have made a huge impact in stimulating regional cooperation and partnerships around a common purpose. With Heritage Corridor assistance, communities are empowered to more fully interpret and promote their history and uniqueness, attract additional visitors, and improve the economy and overall quality of life for their residents.

Establishing additional local assistance programs in other federal agencies or in a completely new America's Great Outdoors Initiative that combines multi-agency efforts

In the enclosed package we have offered you brief descriptions of what is happening here in the Hudson Valley followed by proposals for action by the federal government that can boost our efforts to new heights. Here in the Hudson Valley, we have created inventories of the top priority lands that must be preserved, and we have a cadre of 17 land trusts working together with limited private and state funds to save them during this period of low real estate prices. We have an action agenda for restoring the health of our Hudson River National Estuary and connecting people with the river, reflecting broad consensus among key governmental and NGO stakeholders. To be blunt, the missing ingredient in most cases is money. We would urge you to work within existing authorizations and programs to bring funds to bear to implement these conservation initiatives.

Hudson Valley farms are the primary source of fresh produce for New York City, representing 80 percent of the vendors at its GreenMarkets. They contribute \$530 million in direct economic benefit while supporting a \$4.7-billion tourism economy. Land trusts are leading efforts to ensure permanent protection of the valley's agricultural lands - 20 percent of the region's overall landscape. Farms protect our forests, wetlands, and watersheds; they also provide scenic backdrops for many cultural and historic treasures. Despite this, the American Farmland Trust has designated the valley one of the country's 10 most threatened agricultural regions. The state loses 10 times more farmland to development than it protects annually. State support for purchasing development rights has been slashed to \$5 million a year - 16 percent of 2009's level - despite a \$70-million backlog of approved transactions. Federal funding for New York through the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) averages \$2 million to \$4 million per year, just 3.2 percent of funding over the program's history.

A major federal initiative should be launched to preserve Hudson Valley farmland as a critical food source for New York City and the metropolitan region. Modeled on the historic New York City Watershed agreement, a federal-state-NYC-NGO partnership should be established to fully characterize the food supply and fund protection of its land base within 10 years.

Dramatically increase Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) funding. The need to protect farmland in key valley agricultural communities exceeds \$100 million. Allow land trusts to receive FRPP funds for easement and non-easement costs. Reduce the requirement for a 50-percent local funding match.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Create "Debt for Nature" - like programs that allow farmers debt relief for conserving land or opening farms to passive recreation

Offer interest-free loans to young farmers to buy farmland in return for conservation easements.

Enact new tax tools, including the enhanced federal conservation easement tax incentive, to help farmers and private landowners conserve family lands. Allow landowners to deduct a larger portion of their income over a longer time period. Permanent expansion would be a tremendous boon to conservation by landowners not wealthy enough to take advantage of current reduced incentives.

Expand the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food initiative. Implement a public awareness campaign about the links between public health (including obesity and nutrition), farmland protection and the economic viability of the Northeast's agricultural community.

A strong federal financial partnership with the NGO community could achieve the goal of protecting 65,000 priority acres along this American Heritage River. The federal government should commit to a one-third share of this initiative's cost - projected at \$500 million before the real estate market's collapse - over a 10-year period.

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. In FY 2010, \$82 million in projects were determined as CECLP-eligible, yet only \$20 million was disbursed. Increase funding to \$50 million nationwide to address this shortfall.

National Estuary Program. Create a regional allocation for the Hudson Valley consistent with Gov. Paterson and NYC Mayor Bloomberg's request for \$52 million for the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program and Hudson River Estuary Program. Invest 20 percent in strategic land conservation along the Hudson River corridor.

Expedite DOI completion of the Hudson River Valley Special Resources Study. Ensure it references protecting scenic lands visible from the National Historic Sites and calls for federal funds to meet this need.

Conserving and restoring the Hudson River estuary in the 21st century requires a big-picture approach focused on measurable results and long-range planning. An enhanced partnership between federal and state agencies and the private sector can have an ecosystem-wide impact.

Expedite completion of the Hudson River Valley Special Resources Study Act. Ensure it includes plans for conserving important natural areas that buffer historic sites, contain habitat for key species and provide recreation

Enhance technical capacity available through NOAA, USGS, and FEMA. Prioritize technical support in areas where sea-level rise threatens critical habitats, recreational access and key public infrastructure.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Much more can be done to link rail stops and urban centers with the valley's magnificent but remote outdoor destinations, primarily accessible by car. Expanded rail-trail links and broader system of clean-vehicle mass transit to outdoor and cultural sites would dramatically expand tourism and recreational opportunities while enhancing public health and economic benefits.

Provide funds to support clean-fueled vans connecting mass-transit stations with outdoor recreation opportunities.

Expand "National Recreational Trail" designation beyond Walkway Over the Hudson to include other trails; accompany with funding to enhance the trail system and related recreation in trailside communities.

Federal resources and legislation will provide a mandate to connect children to the great outdoors, enabling the valley's environmental educators to broaden the reach of their place-based work into underserved communities and provide new places to engage schoolchildren with nature.

Provide funding (through the National Estuary Program) for the NYS Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda, a key player in the valley's environmental education community.

Include environmental education as a goal in the draft strategic plan for the EPA; align work on this goal with the National Environmental Education Act

The DOI should expedite completion of the Hudson River Valley Special Resources Study (Rep. Hinchey, Sen. Gillibrand sponsors). Ensure it identifies roles for agencies to support valley educators connecting youth to nationally significant natural landscapes.

Support Conservation mentoring programs and "green job" training initiatives targeting middle and high school-aged youth.

People are hungry to get outdoors in the Hudson Valley, but federal resources are needed to protect key destinations, develop public awareness of its special sites and make them accessible.

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Highlands Conservation Act (HCA). Private land trusts should be eligible to directly receive funds to conserve recreational and working landscapes and scenic lands surrounding heritage destinations.

Jumpstart the newly created National Tourism Office; fund regional events in the Hudson Valley. Federal funds will be leveraged by state investments via the Hudson River Valley Greenway and I Love NY campaign.

Retool transportation programs to support pedestrian and bicycle links to mass transit and recreational, cultural, and historic designations.

Fund professional organizers to implement recreation outings; network with the valley's recreational outfitters.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Support initiative that link destinations with each other and major transportation hubs. Fund ferries and other mass-transit to connect people to waterfront, kayaking opportunities and water trails.

Support physical trail connections that link urban areas with nearby open spaces and waterfronts; ensure access for all ages and abilities where feasible.

Federal funding for communities/municipalities to sample and report on water quality. Improving water quality must be a priority in any valley/river-wide initiative, because it implicates so many other issues - recreation, ecosystem health, public health, tourism (economic benefits). Federal funding for local governments to sample and report on water quality in their part of the river is fundamental way to engage the public on creating solutions and augment existing environmental education programs.

Protecting and restoring key Hudson River fish populations and habitats that support them. Preserving and restoring historic Hudson River fisheries, such as American shad and striped bass, depends on collaborative action to restore critical river and shoreline habitat and improving regulation of offshore commercial fisheries. On the habitat side, increased collaboration and participation from the Army Corps of Engineers, DEC and NOAA in restoring fish spawning habitat such as tidal and freshwater wetlands and Upper Hudson tributaries will reap long-term rewards. On the fisheries side, improving the capacity of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and DEC fisheries to work together on monitoring and enforcement can stem the tide of destructive overfishing, and lead to sustainable fish stock that can support recreational and possibly commercial fisheries in the future. In addition, National Park Service designations have been successful at making the link to the public between aesthetic/recreational enjoyment of the "outdoors" and the value of a healthy ecosystem.

Restore the Hudson Estuary and its shore lands. The NYS Hudson River Estuary Program has engaged more than 500 partners to restore and manage critical habitats and systems in our watershed, yet federal funding for our nationally significant estuary is virtually non-existent. Governor Paterson and NYC Mayor Bloomberg have issued a request for \$52 million in funds for the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program and NYS Hudson River Estuary Program from the National Estuary Program to save way may be the last eastern river to have viable spawning stocks of ocean-going fish. This investment will sustain the Hudson River as a vital natural resources that is appreciated by the 1 in 12 Americans who live within an hour's drive of its shores.

We'd also like to work with our transit agencies so that more bikes are allowed on buses and trains so that those, for example, who want to go biking at Minnewaska, don't have to take a car to get their bike there.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

We ask that the Administration move forward with Complete Streets legislation, which will assure that our roads are designed to be safer for all users, not just cars. This is a safety issue- New York State has the 3rd highest fatality rate in the nation for pedestrians- but it is also an economic development issue. If tourist who come to the Hudson Valley to connect to nature don't feel safe walking in our hamlets or biking on our roads, they won't get out of their cars or spend money in our communities.

Currently, the Secretary of the US Department of Transportation is not listed as a leader in this initiative. While it is clear that there will be interagency coordination, we'd like to emphasize the vital role that national, state and local DOT's must fill.

The federal government can provide greater funding opportunities for recreational type projects. One of the largest federal sources currently is the Transportation Enhancement program, but projects must have a transportation function to be eligible.

The federal government can work more aggressively to ensure that the Hudson River remediation is more comprehensive by including navigational dredging in the cleanup which would dramatically improve the public's access to the River and its resources.

In our experience, the most effective strategy for promoting conservation, recreation and connecting the public to the outdoor experiences is building partnerships. We need strong federal support for collaborative efforts between public and private agencies, as well as local, state and federal agencies. This needs to be coupled with consistent, sustainable funding for conservation programs that improve our economy while restoring our environment.

With funding from the U.S Department of Labor, our department -- working with partner agencies - could develop a youth employment program which trains workers in green job skills in conservation and stewardship, energy conservation and green construction technology. Unemployed young adults could be placed at various department facilities, such as fish hatcheries and education centers, to work on natural resource conservation projects and to assist with education, outreach and environmental studies. Participants would gain not only a greater awareness and appreciation for the environment but, as important, on-the-job experience as team members with DEC staff working trail maintenance, campground upgrades, invasive species removal, tree plantings and disability access enhancements. This program would serve as both an investment in meeting current environmental challenges and in creating a skilled workforce for the emerging green economy.

You have asked us today, as a part of this process, to tell you what works and what can be improved. One answer, to these questions, is accountability for Federal capital grants. This past spring, in the midst of a budget crisis here in New York State, state parks were placed on the chopping block. Over 50 state parks, including Schodack Island State Park, were slated to close. Many of these parks contain facilities: buildings, roads, boat launches, swimming pools, and other capital improvements that were paid for, in part, with Federal funding. There was, as you have likely heard, an outcry. Never before, even in the depths of the Great Depression, had a New York State Park been closed.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

As you move forward with the America's Great Outdoors agenda, please do your best to see that a strong capital grant compliance process is set forth in statute and regulation. Establish clear time frames for the useful life of capital improvements. Provide for detailed annual self-certifications, to be completed by capital grant recipients, verifying that facilities constructed under the grant program remain open to the public, continue to be used for the intended grant purpose, and meet other grant requirements during the useful life of the capital improvements.

Supplement annual self-certifications with periodic compliance monitoring visits and audits by representatives of the granting agency. Where grant recipients present a justifiable reason to close or cease use of a facility within the grant period, provide for a review process and require that the recipient either substitute a new and equal facility elsewhere or return a prorated portion of the grant to the U.S. Treasury. In cases of unresolved non-compliance, provide for referral to the United States Attorney for appropriate legal action.

The time has come to step up federal commitment to our estuaries as ecosystems, recreational areas, and working waters, and include national estuaries in the next big conservation initiative, America's Great Outdoors, and making NEPs and NERRs eligible for funding through LWCF.

AmeriCorps (U.S. Corporation for National and Community Service)

For the past four decades, conservation and service corps have demonstrated that young adults engaged in stewardship projects make significant contributions to their local communities and develop crucial skills and attitudes needed to become productive citizens. As pressures on our nation's land and natural resources grows and youth unemployment soars, an enhanced AmeriCorps program provides a holistic approach to addressing challenges faced by communities, natural resource agencies and families alike. Expanded funding of the AmeriCorps program will not only ensure completion of a backlog of needed conservation projects; it will help train and support the next generation of environmental leaders.

AmeriCorps support has also been provided for crews to complete much needed stewardship projects at DEC environmental education centers and on state lands. Western New York AmeriCorps crews removed invasive species and made trail safety improvements at Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve near Buffalo. The Headwaters Youth Conservation Corps provides trail maintenance and habitat improvement services to Rogers Environmental Education Center and state forests in central New York.

The state's fiscal situation has eliminated funding for these two important partners recently; federal waivers for reduction or elimination of partner matches would help restore these important stewardship collaborations on state lands.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Conservation Corps and Green Jobs (U.S. Department of Labor)

New York faces environmental a range of problems that will require a greatly expanded and diversified workforce to manage: stewardship of 4.4 million acres of state conservation land; dilapidated state and municipal parks; homes that need weatherization to conserve energy; a growing list of invasive species and damaged ecosystems. With funding from the U.S Department of Labor, NYSDEC and our sister agencies could initiate a summer youth employment program focused natural resource conservation and stewardship projects. We would envision placing unemployed young adults at as forty regional facilities such as field headquarters, fish hatcheries and education centers to where participants would work as part of existing DEC crews on projects such as trail maintenance, campground upgrades, invasive species removal, tree plantings, and ADA enhancements.

Participants would also gain jobs skills training in key construction trades such as carpentry, plumbing, electric, masonry and painting, with an emphasis on developing skills in weatherization and energy efficiency. The training would include both classroom-based and on-the-job skills development,

Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program (USFS), while currently underfunded, has proven to be an effective tool when resources are available. The Department of Environmental Conservation has used Legacy funding to acquire key working forest conservation easements that have worked extremely well to keep forest land in private ownership with sustainable management requirements and strategic public recreation rights. While New York has developed highly effective conservation easement programs for forest and farm land protection, the current fiscal crisis has diminished the ability of New York's Environmental Protection Fund, to sustain these efforts. Absent scarce state resources there is a great need for federal funding to support these critical state programs.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Land and Water Conservation Fund

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy made a pledge to the nation that, as this country exploited offshore oil and gas resources, the proceeds would be invested through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) into the outdoor recreation needs of the states and local communities. It worked, and worked well to re-connect people to the outdoors in their own communities. The state side of the LWCF has been used in the past by virtually every community in New York State to acquire and build local parks and preserves. We are encouraged that legislation is pending in Congress to fully fund the state side of the LWCF; this would address an immediate and pressing need that can quickly help the AGO meet many of its goals to reconnect Americans to nature and promote community based recreation and conservation. In New York, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation administers this program in conjunction with funding from the State Environmental Protection Fund. The infusion of new federal funding could re-invigorate this program and stimulate extensive local conservation and recreation projects.

Other Department of Interior programs that need additional funding, as well as a temporary reduction in the state match requirement in light of states' dire fiscal situations, include the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). Both programs have been instrumental in conserving valuable wetland and coastal habitats and leveraging private investments and support from not-for-profit partners.

New York Conservation Partnership Program, a partnership with land trusts

New York is proud of its work with and investment in the state's land trust community. The Conservation Partnership Program (www.dec.ny.gov/lands/48901.html), a partnership between the state and the Land Trust Alliance, is a model not-for-profit capacity building grant program for the country. Development of a nationwide grant program to provide capacity building assistance to local, regional and statewide land trusts and other conservation not-for-profit organizations could leverage substantial private conservation funding and build even more effective networks in communities across the nation. Pairing this concept with the ability of land trusts to access LWCF, NAWCA and CELCP land acquisition funds, similar to the Great Outdoors Colorado model, would yield even greater results and leverage of private conservation dollars. In addition, we support the recommendation to DOI Deputy Secretary David Hayes from Karen Roux of the Orange County Land Trust regarding federal support for establishment of urban community gardens. There is currently no central source of information free of charge to the general public that offers consistent, practical and valuable guidance on establishing and maintaining community gardens in an urban landscape. A federal program which provides technical assistance through regionally based agents specializing in community garden design and implementation would offer valuable assistance for urban communities.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Tax Incentives for Land Conservation

In 2006, New York passed and implemented a state Conservation Easement Tax Credit (CETC), which offers landowners a refundable tax credit up to \$5,000 per year to offset the property tax burden on lands for which a conservation easement was donated to a qualified conservation organization. The CETC has proved to be a benefit to both the public and landowners. Similarly, the federal conservation easement tax incentive enhancements, first enacted in 2006, have increased the rate of land conservation benefiting landowners and the public. The enhancements raise the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income in any year to 50%; allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for voluntary conservation agreements from 5 to 15 years. While initially enacted for the period of one year and extended each year, the enhancements expired at the end of the 2009 calendar year. New York enthusiastically supports the renewal of these enhancements and making them permanent.

Sustainable Food Sources and Agricultural Education

It is or should be axiomatic that the best way to learn about the environment is to experience it directly. A unique program in New York, Operation Explore, offers New York City public school students in grades four through six the opportunity to link classroom science activities with the outdoors. Three distinct but interrelated environments—aquatic, farm, and forest—are explored through hands-on day and overnight experiences. At Stony Kill Farm, a 1,000 acre environmental education center operated by NYSDEC in Dutchess County, students learn how their food is produced and discover the interdependence of urban and agricultural communities. Everyone gets to see and do things they may have never experienced before: a chance to grind corn, feed cows and chickens, and use their senses to explore plants in the greenhouse, and run or walk around the perimeter of an acre to get a sense of its dimensions. Funding from NPS and partners to continue and expand Operation Explore would enhance our opportunities to inform urban youth about the importance of agriculture and natural resource protection.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Implementation of the HREP Action Agenda relies on partnerships with federal and state agencies, as well as local municipalities, non-profits, academic and scientific institutions, businesses, trade organizations, landowners and dedicated volunteers. The Hudson River Estuary Management Advisory Committee provides guidance to the program, helps the state define goals and evaluate progress, and provides a communication bridge to a wider group of partners and stakeholders.

DEC would like to replicate this successful model in other key state watersheds, including the Mohawk Valley and the Upper Hudson River, Long Island Sound, the ocean on the south shore of Long Island, and the watersheds of the Great Lakes. Cooperation and financial support from several federal programs including the National Heritage Program, National Estuarine Research Reserve program, and support for water quality monitoring and geographic mapping has made it possible for the HREP to be effective in its mission. Similar partnerships will be integral to the successful replication of the HREP in other areas of the state.

This year, Governor Paterson and Mayor Bloomberg requested a necessary and appropriate increase in federal funds for HREP through the EPA National Estuary Program that would address issues in the Raritan River in New Jersey, the New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary and the Hudson River Estuary. The request for \$52 million for FFY 2011 (copy of letter attached) would implement the existing, consensus-based plans for the restoration of these estuaries: the Hudson-Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan (prepared by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the Army Corp of Engineers in partnership with the New York-New Jersey HEP) and the related Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda (developed by New York State in conjunction with federal, local, and not-for-profit partners).

The Hudson River Estuary Program is an excellent model that could be replicated in watersheds with additional federal funding.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Wastewater infrastructure investment and green infrastructure incentives

New York's wastewater infrastructure is in decline and needs at least \$36.2 billion in funding over the next 20 years to address the needs of aging, failing and new facilities. [See DEC's report: "A Gathering Storm" <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/42383.html>] An enhanced, consistent commitment of federal funding is absolutely essential to protect this vast and essential infrastructure whose failure will result in irreparable harm to our waters, imperil the health of our citizens and ecosystems and cause havoc to our economy. And as we work to upgrade these critical facilities, we also need to think of new approaches to protect our waters. New York has been working closely with the EPA to (1) make our state revolving fund (i.e. Clean Water SRF and/or Drinking Water SRF) more sustainable by examining how it could better support smart growth, energy efficiency, and asset management, and (2) support better wet weather controls and the need to adapt to a changing climate by encouraging the wider use of so-called "green infrastructure" projects to protect natural resources.

On the first point, DEC and the state's water financing Environmental Facilities Corporation have been working to ensure that projects funded through the SRF do not promote sprawling, unsustainable growth, setting priorities instead on repairs and enhancements of existing infrastructure and support for downtowns and historic town centers. The SRF can be an effective tool for promoting wise local land use planning, and to the extent feasible, finance projects that are consistent with existing land use plans. It also can and should promote wastewater treatment facilities that maximize energy efficiency.

New York State has encouraged the wider use of the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund provide financial support to local governments to implement comprehensive green infrastructure programs. NYSDEC's vision of an enhanced green infrastructure program includes assistance to local governments and NGO's to identify and incorporate green approaches into plans to address water infrastructure needs and to develop local programs to protect resources through landowner incentive programs, sensible land use regulations, conservation easements and best management practices. The requirement in ARRA and Federal Fiscal Year 2010 appropriation that 20% of the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund appropriations be used for the green project should become the norm in future SRF funding determinations.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Environmental Education Grants

The Environmental Education Grants Program provides seed money to support environmental education projects that increase the public's awareness about environmental issues and provides them with the skills to pursue responsible courses of actions. Smaller grants to local schools and communities have supported hands-on education programs on ecological topics and provided teacher trainings to enhance environmental literacy within schools and neighborhoods. Larger grants have fostered the development of programs with wider focus, such as online teacher trainings in environmental education. With additional funding, standards-based national environmental education curriculums such as Project WILD, Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) and Project Learning Tree could be offered to a wider range of audiences, providing educators with both skills and knowledge to infuse environmental education into the broad spectrum of their topics. Continued and enhanced support for these grants would allow states to expand existing partnerships, establish environmental literacy plans and a database of resources for educators and community members.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) applauds the administration's leadership in convening a diverse constituency to develop a sound approach to 21st-century land conservation that will protect our natural resources and keep Americans connected to the land. Community-driven conservation is most successful when it engages a wide range of interests, but it needs federal leadership to bring together stakeholders and federal resources to leverage state, local, and private dollars.

This is a critical moment for land conservation in America: projected population growth will put additional pressure on existing parks and reduce remaining open space, an entire generation's health is at risk from a sedentary lifestyle, and climate change threatens to alter many of our important natural systems. Investing now in the continuum of conservation--from the urban core to wilderness areas--will ensure a healthier and greener future for America and leave an important legacy for our children and grandchildren.

Greater investment in close-to-home parks and open space across America. Better openspace planning; creating of trails, waterfronts, and anchor parks; and protection of natural lands will help transform our urban areas, where the majority of Americans live, and address park equity issues. These investments will enhance connections to the natural world, foster a healthier lifestyle for children and adults alike, create liveable and prosperous communities, and support improved energy efficiency in transportation, land-use patterns, climate regulation, and water management. Moving forward in this direction will require multi-agency coordination and focused funding.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Increased and consistent funding to support federal, state, and local conservation, including full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF investments ensure continued protection of America's public lands and enhance public access to recreation through grants to states, counties and cities. Federal funds like the LWCF that leverage state and local investment in outdoor recreation lands are critical to a successful conservation outcome and require active partnerships among federal, state, and local governments. Increased funding for LWCF should include a competitive matching grant component to incentivize state and local investments in conservation.

Without full, dedicated funding to LWCF, critical land and water conservation needs and opportunities in New York may be lost forever.

Focused federal coordination and investment to support landscape conservation. Integrated landscape conservation that addresses both public and private working lands is the most effective strategy to achieve water security for people and fisheries; protect forest systems that provide carbon sequestration, recreational use, and filter pollutants; and establish connective corridors to ensure adaptive distribution of habitat for wildlife species most vulnerable to climate change. New public-private partnerships that leverage existing federal conservation programs and new federal resources in combination with state, local, and private funding to achieve landscape conservation objectives are integral to these efforts.

2. Renewal of the extended federal tax incentive for conservation is critical to increasing the pace of land conservation. Congress should make permanent the 2006 extended federal tax incentive for land conservation. When in effect from 2006 through 2009 the pace of land conservation by private landowners increased enormously.

3. Federal funding for the NY Conservation Partnership Program, (for capacity building, conservation programs, and transaction costs), is needed. New York's Hudson Valley land trusts and LTA's NY Conservation Partnership Program have created a very successful growth environment for New York State land trusts.

Overdevelopment in the Hudson Valley is a serious threat to: Food security in the NY Metro Area; New York State's agricultural economy; Wildlife migration corridors; Clean water; Tourism economy, both to historic and rural areas.

Please fund: NYDEC's Hudson River Estuary Program, NY Conservation Partnership Program

Habitat Restoration funding.

Education on Food Security, Climate Change, and the Eco-Function of Wetlands.

Big picture leadership and coordination of agencies, NGOs, etc. in landscape level effort.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

What can the federal Government do? The Federal Government's open space system in the northeast does not include National forests and only one major National Park, Acadia in Maine. Now is the time before it's gone for unique and valuable Open Space to be created in the Northeast. My colleagues argue for the Hudson river Valley to become a National Park. We support the creation of a National Park that would be accessible to the millions of Tri-State. With the only one large National Park in the Northeast and that so distant as to be inaccessible to the millions that live in the Tri-State area.

Friends of the Great Swamp would like to propose that the Federal Government working with local conservation groups, acquire additional acreage in the Great Swamp through expanded NAWCA funding, the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other funding sources and create a National Wildlife Refuge to protect the habitat for all the wildlife within the Great Swamp. Such a National Wildlife Refuge would create a unique area protecting not only the songbird habitat but also habitat for water fowl, rare reptiles and amphibians, mammals like the bobcat, otter and mink as well as the shy Fisher and butterflies like the Northern Metalmark. This refuge could also act as a biological research station for potential species movement northward due to climate change as well as preserving water quality and provide public education.

The addition of a "Northwoods" element through the addition of a National Forest in the Adirondacks, across Vermont and New Hampshire is a thought. The Northeast would have a national Refuge/National Forest area similar to the West. People cannot connect to the "wild" world out there if there is no "wild" to access. They need to get out "there", kayak a river, find salamanders and listen to the frogs.

Preserving the Great Swamp and its pristine two-river system is an essential first step. Friends of the Great Swamp supports additional funding to create such a National system in the Northeast. We look forward to partnering with the Federal Government and conservation organizations in achieving our mutual goals. Thank you.

Zero access to Hudson River in Town of Newburgh. The City of Newburgh has 400 ft of access. Feds bought riverfront years ago and sold it to private business. EPA bought a large parcel recently. Would like to see access to river for community, not condos or restaurants. People and kids don't get out on river and don't know about it. EPA has control of property. Make it into a park. Don't sell it to developers. Don't understand why that happens. What works. State has member items to get money to small groups that get things done.

NY/NJ Trail Conference has dealt with hiking trails for 90 years. Hiking is a low cost part of a healthy lifestyle. Walkway over the Hudson and areas in New Paltz are good examples of access to hiking areas. Public Officials should be seen outside on the trails as examples. Many afraid to go out-doors and parents can't educate when they are afraid or haven't done it. People new to hiking in nature ask us questions like "what do you do about mosquitoes"? Need Education. Urban Parks are a backyard for children. Partnerships are important. Me and my husband are working with bike riders to create trails in our town. We hope the Town will work with this.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

35000 acres of Parkland n NYC. It is the backyard to many children. Urban areas need to be included. Problem in urban areas is alienation of parkland. It is too easy for land uses to change and it is not preserved as open space. Urban areas have natural areas too. Our cities and council people are selling our historic and natural areas. Oldest part of Poughkeepsie settled by the Dutch. As mayor I acquired the property to access walkway over the Hudson. Can't make these types of areas inaccessible to people. Friends of the Upper Landing with partners hope to build a bridge (taken from Dutch technology) and help restore old buildings. Need to pursue global projects to boost tourism.

Parks and Trails and Greenways need to be treated as the "main dish" not the side as far as infrastructure. Fully fund the land trusts and heritage area programs. Communities are changing in a tourism economy. NY has a lot of history in the Hudson Valley. Heritage areas need to be connected. Create programs to allow all grass root organizations to have access to funding. River and Trails program thru NPS is only access for tech assistance for many. Needs to have continued funding. The River and Trails program is the only place to preserve, expand and continue the program.

Worked with many different groups to restore watersheds and natural areas. National Estuaries is an organization already in place to restore areas. Incentivize local action such as issuing local bonds for others to match. Many communities are raising their own money. Missing a partner in the Federal government. Federal tax credits are a great option.

Historic Preservation When your restore areas of historic sites you keep open spaces open. Funded from Fossil Fuel Resources. Need full funding for historic preservation as well. Conservation and preservation should work hand in hand.

Many grass roots agencies already work together. Need feds to join. We will have a US travel office thanks to the President. We need Federal partner help with having tourists come up river from city to see the Hudson Valley. We just got a grant but the pre-approval application alone was 115 pages. No public transportation to get from train station to farms and parks and trails. Tourism in HV is \$4.7 billion dollar business.

Have seen good and bad of conservation actions over years. NY has over 14000 public/private recreation areas. Each State has unique goals. Local needs are different than out west. National goals not only goals. They may not fit every state. Need to look at needs over the country. NE has more open space than bi areas out west. Needs across NY are all similar. Groups need to communicate across the state and the country. A lot of innovative ideas are out there. Don't re-invent the wheel.

Land and water conservation fund funded most of the parks in the 60's and 70's . It has been a long time since it had an impact. Asking Feds to fully fund this fund. Need it off budget. Need to keep it in the parks. This money gets lost or taken up in federal budget.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Making first whisky in NY since prohibition. We are a farm. The biggest disconnect between people and farms is that they don't get there. Tourism helps bring some people to the farms, but we need an education program to get more people to the farm. Farming in NY is a difficult and dangerous job. Feds need to help the state understand the importance of connection.

Purpose is to connect people to natural resources and history and culture. Please include Americas Byways as equal partners with the park service and others in this initiative. Make sure funding programs are not for just bricks and mortar. Have some for grass root organizations that bring people together. Volunteering is an American activity. These people in these groups can spend funds wisely.

Residential program that get kids to forests and farms is important. Need at least fed funding.

374 acre learning center for arts and nature. Connecting kids to nature by bringing underserved kids into the environment to give them hands on learning. We get kids there for 3-5 days. It is enlightening for them. Kids learn about history and importance of conservation and perform better on testing when outdoors. Need a stronger educational component.

Working on statewide agenda. Pass not child left inside. Make sure every kid gets outdoor education for every year they are in school. I work with little kids and see the benefit. Test scores go up, illnesses go down. Teachers aren't trained to take kids out. Transportation is a huge issue. Encourage outdoor jobs for youth.

Signs off for environmental education aid for state. Disconnect for administrators at schools. They need to be educated on value of outside hands on training. New teachers are trained on pass tests. The teachers who are retiring are the ones that had the hands on experience.

Too much emphasis on testing. College campuses are great resources for local organizations. College kids and help reach out to youth and non-profits.

All levels of government need to break-down walls and see the big picture.

We just celebrated 400 years of history in NY. We celebrated by making everything sustainable and built 3 big projects. Walkway over Hudson, Crown Point Lighthouse and Governor's Island. We have seen thousands of tourists. We had several events including River Day. We brought together every single constituent. This initiative can build on momentum of this celebration.

We discovered a revolutionary war monument. Had kids who had gotten in trouble with the law restore it and they didn't go away. They kept coming back. Convenience is needed to get people out. As a physician we need to get people out. This is a public health emergency. 40% of sophomore girls were overweight who were going out for sports 5 years ago. We need to work on this.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Land grants are recommending the wrong type of feed/chemical for cows.

Environmental movement is future to our society. Yesterday was a great event. We need to pull the youth in. Good diversity in youth. We want to become a model in the nation as we have been in the past. Include young at the table and young people with solutions. Create a CCC but on the level with kids involved.

Federal and State need to collaborate and have information and discussion forums. We need to solve problems so our volunteers can solve problems.

70 acres of historical property was going to be developed near a soldiers grave yard. His project would hopefully protect the value of a battlefield. The Hudson Valley grassroot effort is made. funding is needed

Trails, bridges need to be connected. Transportation needs fundng. Highway design should incorporate walking, biking trails for Cities and Parks. A better way to transport.

Beacon - make transportation an important part. The Hudson River is America's River. Funding needed for transportation costs and being connected to the River.

The Nature Conservancy in New York has three recommendations which can be used to achieve the program's goals, while taking advantage of existing public-private partnerships that have local government and community support and in some cases available matching funding. These programs protect habitat, create and protect jobs and enhance quality of life for millions of people.

1. Elevating our national estuaries to the same status as national rivers in this program. Here in New York they include the Hudson River, Long Island Sound, the New York/New Jersey Harbor and the Peconic Bays.

2. Maintaining the Northern Forest as a designated Treasured Landscape.

These recommendations can be best accomplished by better partnering with local governments and residents, and by investing in protected areas (waters and lands) that provide the public access to natural areas and allow communities to benefit from the value of natural areas, including clean drinking water.

Preserving and restoring nationally important habitats in our estuaries and their watershed lands and the 30 million-acre Northern Forest which stretches across new England;

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Recommendation 1: Elevating our national estuaries to the same status as national rivers to protect New York's waters and connect people with nature. Waterways in urban and suburban areas are treasured by millions of residents and tourists who use our clean and healthy estuaries. Here in New York they are the Hudson River, Long Island Sound, Peconic Bays, and New York/New Jersey Harbor. These estuaries are used for boating, swimming, fishing, shellfishing, and wildlife viewing. Their economic contribution to our state is significant. Yet, protection and restoration plans are not being implemented due to lack of funding. We urge you to give New York's contiguous national estuaries- the Long Island Sound, Peconic Bay, New York/New Jersey Harbor- the Treasured Landscape status they deserve.

We also recommend you use the AGO initiative to improve existing federal programs to prioritize national estuaries. AGO presents an opportunity to develop a cross-cutting federal initiative to leverage greater protection of recognized national priorities- estuaries of national significance- by focusing and funding existing federal programs.

Preservation of unprotected lands: Expand EPA State Revolving Fund's local land protection loan pool, with low or 0% financing.

Preservation of unprotected lands: Create "Better America Bonds" for land protection and habitat restoration where local and state governments can issue bonds whose interest is paid by a federal tax credit. Local governments only repay the principal to the bondholder. This would highly incentivize local investment in these measures.

Maximizing existing federal LWCF program: Expand federal-side LWCF's eligible project areas to include the watersheds of nationally recognized estuaries, such as those designated by the National Estuary Program and National Estuarine Research Reserves. This would give National Estuaries the same status as National Rivers, and enable accessing federal-side LWCF.

Ensuring flexibility for federal programs to allow cross-cutting work and funding for common goals: Encourage and allow federal agencies to collaborate across agency lines, connect and focus existing federal programs within project areas and make the spending of those funds more flexible to meet local needs. Several programs (EPA's NRP, NPS's LWCF, NOAA's NERR, FWS's numerous habitat programs) have common goals of estuary protection, but the programs exist in silos, with little or no ability to fund or work together to meet local needs. A National Estuary Program should have access to NPS's LWCF for watershed land protection and FWS's staff for habitat protection. Local branches of Federal agencies should have more ability to implement grants and programs, collaboratively, in ways that fit a particular place.

We urge the Administration to continue the Northern Forest's designation as a Treasured Landscape. This will help assure that the Northern Forest receives the federal resources necessary for the region's people, their economy, and the magnificent ecosystem of which they are stewards, and on which they rely, remain truly resilient and sustainable.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Recommendation 3: Investing in public and private efforts to create jobs and connect young people with nature. In today's increasingly urban and digital world, many young people are growing up disconnected from nature. This trend poses a serious threat to the future of conservation, the environmental sciences and environment-based jobs. The more disconnected today's youth are from natural areas, the less likely they are to care about nature later in life. If left unchecked, these trends could rob the conservation movement of its future leaders, and rob our future generations of experiences of our natural world.

Unlike remote parklands in the country's interior, our national estuaries--the Long Island Sound, Peconic Bay, NY/NJ Harbor--have thriving cities and suburbs of millions of people, along their shores and in their watersheds. Protecting and restoring the health of these estuaries directly benefits millions of Americans. Yet, significant federal funding has too often passed by these places for less expensive and more expansive places!

We ask you to partner with local governments and residents to correct this oversight now, since the waters we cherish are under threat, and millions of people's quality of life and businesses will be impacted by their loss. It's time for the federal government to invest in our waterways, too!

We urge you to give our contiguous national estuaries--the Long Island Sound, Peconic Bay, NY/NJ Harbor, Hudson River--the Treasured Landscape status they deserve.

We also recommend you use the AGO process to elevate and prioritize all national estuaries. AGO presents an opportunity to develop a cross-cutting federal initiative to leverage greater protection of recognized national priorities--estuaries of national significance--

focusing and funding existing federal programs, such as the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Coastal & Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP);

allowing federal agencies to work together on cross-cutting strategies regardless of agency jurisdiction or designation;

giving national estuaries the same status as national rivers and making them eligible for federal-side LWCF money.

We urge you to step-up federal commitment to our estuaries as important habitats, recreational areas, and working waters, by including national estuaries in the next big conservation initiative, America's Great Outdoors.

We are writing in support of the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative, and its potential to protect and enhance our local national estuaries and their watershed lands.

Preservation and restoration of nationally important estuaries and watershed lands

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Connecting millions of urban and suburban people to nature with new blueways and greenways

Working waters which support local tourism and outdoor recreation, as well as businesses such as fishing and clamming industries

Ensuring that nationally important waters remain clean, healthy and thriving.

The Hudson Valley offers unique opportunities to showcase collaborative conservation initiatives poised for higher orbit, if government-NGO-business partnerships can be strengthened. The region's scenic beauty and natural resources, historic and cultural assets, and pivotal role in American history have led to numerous federal accolades. Congress has designated the Hudson Valley a National Heritage Area, while the President has named the Hudson an American Heritage River. NOAA has designated four coastal areas as National Estuarine Research Reserves. The region contains working landscapes with prime agricultural soils, whose farmers represent 80 percent of the vendors selling produce at New York City's GreenMarkets. The region's rich history and natural resources have led the U.S. House of Representatives to approve a bill to study designating the Hudson Valley a unit of the National Park service. The region's role as an incubator for cutting edge conservation continues today as a consortium of land trusts implements an ambitious, science-based land and farm preservation initiative known as Saving the Land That Matters Most. We look forward to working with you to shape a broad national initiative, but also in demonstrating early action in a region with a long history that is primed to demonstrate tangible successes under your enlightened leadership.

Dramatically increase Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) funding. The need to protect farmland in key valley agricultural communities exceeds 100 Million. Allow land trusts to receive FRPP funds for easement and non-easement costs. Reduce the requirement for a 50-percent local funding match.

Create "Debt for Nature" - like programs that allow farmers debt relief for conservation easements.

Enact new tax tools, including the enhanced federal conservation easement tax incentive to help farmers and private land owners conserve family lands. Allow landowners to deduct a larger portion of their income over a longer time period. Permanent expansion would be a tremendous boon to conservation by landowners not wealthy enough to take advantage of current reduced incentives.

Offer transferable tax credits for keeping land in agriculture through easements.

Provide new farmers access to underutilized federal and state lands at affordable rates for agricultural purposes.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Expand the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food initiative. Implement a public awareness campaign about the links between public health (including obesity and nutrition), farmland protection and the economic viability of the Northeast's agricultural community.

Expedite the DOI's completion of the Hudson River Valley Special Resources Study and ensure it references the nexus between farmland easements and protecting scenic views from National Historic Sites, including Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vanderbilt Mansion and Saratoga Battlefield.

Land and Water Conservation Fund. New York has received just \$228 million of the \$3.7 billion allocated to states; the Hudson Valley, adjacent to New York City, got less than 2 percent of New York's share. Ensure equity among states receiving funds; establish criteria supporting conservation near major population centers.

Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. New York has three times the farmland acreage to protect compared to some neighboring states, yet receives half the funding. Broaden the FRPP to include support for small and mid-sized farms (typical in the Northeast) and reduce the 50-percent matching fund requirement.

Highlands Conservation Act. Authorized for a \$100-million appropriation, the fund has received only \$5.2 million since 2004. Fully funding the program would empower the four states in the Highlands region to conserve this critical urban water resource, recreational outlet and habitat.

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. In FY2010, \$82 million in projects were determined as CECLP-eligible, yet only \$20 million was disbursed. Increase funding to \$50 million nationwide to address this shortfall.

National Estuary Program. Create a regional allocation for the Hudson Valley consistent with Gov. Paterson and NYC Mayor Bloomberg's request for \$52 million for the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program and Hudson River Estuary Program. Invest 20 percent in strategic land conservation along the Hudson River corridor.

Make land trusts eligible to receive federal land conservation funds.

Increase flexibility in highway design to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

Provide funds to support clean-fueled vans connecting mass-transit stations with outdoor recreation opportunities.

Pass No Child Left Inside legislation. Dedicate funding for states to incorporate environmental learning from pre-K to 12th grade, as well as teacher development.

Support inclusion of environmental literacy language in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Provide funding (through the National Estuary Program) for the NYS Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda, a key player in the valley's environmental education community.

Support funding for the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, which offers critical support for Teaching the Hudson Valley.

Include environmental education as a goal in the draft strategic plan for the EPS; align work on this goal with the National Environmental Education Act.

Increase funding and make land trusts eligible recipients of funds through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Give special consideration to land trusts actively working to facilitate public use of protected landscapes, especially for hands-on education programs that partner with school districts and youth service providers.

Support programs such as the Student Conservation Association and AmeriCorps.

Support conservation mentoring programs and "green job" training initiatives targeting middle and high school-aged youth.

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Highlands Conservation Act (HCA). Private land trusts should be eligible to directly receive funds to conserve recreational and working landscapes and scenic lands surrounding heritage designations.

Fully fund the Historic Preservation Fund.

Jumpstart the newly created National Tourism Office; fund regional events in the Hudson Valley. Federal funds will be leveraged by state investments via the Hudson River Valley Greenway and I Love NY campaign.

Sustain funding for the National Heritage Area program, which provides important support to the Hudson River Valley Greenway to interpret the region's natural and heritage tourism destinations.

Reduce liability for large-scale public events that introduce many people to the outdoors.

Retool transportation programs to support pedestrian and bicycle links to mass transit and recreational, cultural and historic destinations.

Fund professional organizers to implement recreational outings; network with the valley's recreational outfitters.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Support initiatives that link destinations with each other and major transportation hubs. Fund ferries and other mass-transit to connect people to waterfronts, kayaking opportunities and water trails.

Support physical trail connections that link urban areas with nearby open spaces and waterfronts; ensure access for all ages and abilities where feasible.

Require that rail lines receiving federal subsidies open access to federal waterways.

If we want to be able to enjoy the Hudson, protect our wildlife and keep our drinking water safe, we've got to keep pollution out of the river and away from our water supplies. That means enforcing our environmental laws and investing in infrastructure. If we do these two things, people will be healthier, recreational opportunities will improve and communities will become more vibrant. If we don't make the investment now, it will end up costing more and achieving less as time goes on.

Protecting and restoring key Hudson River fish populations and the habitats that support them. Preserving and restoring historic Hudson River fisheries, such as American shad and striped bass, depends on collaborative action to restore critical river and shoreline habitat and improving regulation of offshore commercial fisheries. On the habitat side, increased collaboration and participation from the Army Corps of Engineers, DEC and NOAA in restoring fish spawning habitat such as tidal and freshwater wetlands and Upper Hudson tributaries will reap long-term rewards. On the fisheries side, improving the capacity of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and DEC fisheries to work together on monitoring and enforcement can stem the tide of destructive overfishing, and lead to sustainable fish stocks that can support recreational and possibly commercial fisheries in the future. In addition, National Park Service designations have been successful at making the link to the public between aesthetic/recreational enjoyment of the "outdoors" and the value of a healthy ecosystem.

Fed gov role in terms of private lands conservation and importance of tax cuts. Enhanced fed tax incentives expired this yr and effort to bring these back, conserve easement donations is cheapest way toenhancement of having allowing landowners to keep their land. Increase private lands conserve by private landowners.

Modest exception to _____ comment with regard to availability of deductions for conserve easements – major pieces of lands in Hudson valley are farmland. This is land that is not being protected by tax deductions, because help the rich, but not really farmers who don't have enough income. Feds to should support efforts to sustain farmer – even greater as you go throughout state of NY because most of upstate NY is farmland or forest land. Deductibility of land conserve should be continued and strengthened, but major fed effort should be to keep farms in production.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Looks to farms as different type of open space. It's an industry and we have to provide availability of lands and create markets. NY has tried an Interstate commerce challenge which failed to do what it needs. It required organizations in state to purchase a certain quantity of local produce. 50% of NY produced items (apple, milk, etc) have failed those attempts and limit to allow farmers to grow more who can't because there isn't a market to support them. Competition is from other states. Feds could get states together to support and encourage local buying. Can have procurement policies to buy NY food, sell it, etc.

Forests and farms on east coast being turned to sprawl. Cities and downtown villages are dying. Even though we see new developments on old farmland. Still need to address sprawl. At beginnings of downtown revitalization movement worked well in many areas large and small – taking built environment and revitalize instead of building new. This effort should be led by feds because they have national perspective and can look back in time at success; more so than state or local governments. Past results are still there. This effort was program of DOI with National Trust for Historic Preservation.

One tool that helps work of conserving landscapes is additional planning money from feds and state, but think that fed interest could provide incentives for smart growth. New EPA initiative is “sustainable communities” – would like to see that tracked and success of that understood and expanded to other fed agencies that could be more involved in smart growth. Currently Hudson River Valley doesn't qualify as region because program is based on small urban areas, but please look into allowing National Heritage Corridors to apply. Heritage areas might be good to manage mega-regions on behalf of numerous small communities. National Heritage Areas always struggle for funding each year and would like NPS to fund always.

Waterways are open working space too. Maritime Law means feds should get more involved in addressing sustainability in maritime areas especially moving goods from farms to markets.

Hudson estuary program needs to be supported because it brings people together. Immigration reform is needed in the county because lack of labor is challenge for farmers. Food justice – where is local food going and who has access. There needs to be rural to rural connection – food to people that live around farms. Understand ecological role of farms and farmlands – is landscape functioning ecologically? Hudson Valley agriculture is different than other parts of country – understand how USDA regulations affect small farmers (regs seem to be written for large farms). Relationship to ag development rights go to large farms out west because Hudson Valley farms are considered small and not high production.

A challenge is that climate change will change face of ag and climates. We are not ready at local or fed level to start to address these issues now. We need to have tools in place to address this. Haven't seen changes in NRCS field office tech guide (FOTG) to upgrade conservation practices. Not costly for feds to start this. Through Long Island RC&D and NRCS should soon be putting in field mobile pelletizer program to assist farmers and homeowners to get away from fossil fuels. These types of projects need to be looked at to get project on ground and provides new means of income to farmers.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

We hear that maybe people at local level can do things better than feds, but one problem is that identifying needs that could be addressed by fed funds, its difficult to get fed funds to state, local gov and NGO's. Not enough attention on how to get money from Washington, DC to local areas. When money does come in, there is a filter where an agency takes half to support staff and the money doesn't get to where it is going. Existing plans don't need to have funds for more staff or to create another plan; just money. No single agency, org, individual is going to solve complexity of problems. There is overlap and gaps among fed agencies so there should be some flexibility for agencies to move resources around to help resolve these issues. Sharing costs, better Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to move resources around, etc.

Local people know what they need and difficulty of funneling the funds down. It shouldn't be as hard for a small farmer to access money as it is to run their farm; but it is. We can't function without the local land conservancies. The fact is that the land conservancies, whose goals are a little divergent, have allowed us to establish the partnership. They have the connection with communities and individuals. The feds need to trust the people are going to spend the funds. If there were a way to streamline programs so funds aren't taken out for agency staffing and instead go to the local areas. It's a complicated business to spend federal funds, but to give some of the money to land trusts is good- they are nimble and have staff. They also have information. Money needs to get to the people who need it.

_____ agrees with other commentators, especially regarding the lack of funding for DEC. She is concerned with the impact of untreated sewage on streams (combined sewer overflows). There needs to be more funding for infrastructure. NYS has within its jurisdiction ways for fine money to go back into the community and that should be done. Municipalities need to be fined if there is water quality violations and have that money go back into the community.

_____ grew up in the Bronx 30 years ago and had lots of outdoor recreational opportunities. Indian Point used to be a park. There are less areas for recreation in cities currently. We have to change the political discourse so that the public language has to be more inclusive. Everyone needs to pull together with people working together regardless of political affiliation. Sea level rise is a national security issue. He would like to see an increase in EPA and NOAA budgets.

Need more real time monitoring (Beacon Institution is doing some of that). Would like to see a model of what is happening on the river. More funding is needed for real time monitoring. Science education is needed and training for teachers on how to teach kids to learn science hands on.

_____ wants to commend the federal groups for holding this session. Kids need to know how to swim. 69% of African American teens can't swim. 42% of white teens can't swim. We need to do a lot more to teach young people to swim. The CCC provided infrastructure in the 1930s that is still used today. NYS closed parks and the Feds stepped in requiring state to keep open fed. funded parks. Please build in accountability in federal grants. Write in assurance that parks using fed money require that they remain open. Build in enforcement that money is spent in compliance.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Lack of funding for DEC prevents DEC from investigating violations. Local planning boards don't take into consideration cumulative impacts which affects the Hudson River. SEQRA has no enforcement arm.

AGO is also in our back yards and ecosystem services should be a top priority. Funding and research on new education initiatives, and infrastructure.

_____ wants view shed protection for the Hudson Valley. When federal and state parks are involved there should be a way to protect viewsheds. Things that are done on a local level affects people in a region.

Would like to get federal money to improve outdoor access. Dairy farms need to be able to make more money. Implement tax credits or raise milk prices so dairy farms can stay in business.

All river and estuary programs-make all of them one program and give them elevated status. Combine federal designations to work better together. Make them all eligible for federal money. Better coordination and resources among federal agencies. If you want to connect people with nature put nature where people are. It has to be accessible to people in urban population centers. Federal money needs to go to urban center parks. Concentrate and prioritize on national estuaries.

Reconnect people with landscapes and connect landscapes with each other from headwaters and tributies to main stem. Provide additional funding to remove dams. Support legislation to increase F&W service programs. Find ways to provide federal incentives so farmers don't have to sign natural gas drilling leases.

The Hudson River estuarine research reserve is part of a little known partnership program. They have something to contribute. Use science based management practices. Get people to connect with the resources from youth to policy makers and how to plug for the program. Please fund and connect to other initiatives. We have to keep climate change and sea level rise front and center. Relates to public access, wonderful array of public access site, a lot of those will be under water with sea level rise. Keen interest in seeing energy conservation.

Wildlife Conservation Society educates Kids about the river in the Bronx, has had success. Don't forget the urban population! Need to have outdoor experiences in urban centers. So important to inner city youth. CSOs are the biggest threat to the Bronx River and stormwater runoff.

Would like people to have access to water quality information. Infrastructure investment is desperately needed. We need a water quality (sewage system) infrastructure! Needs enforcement of laws. EPA has a role. Waste-water treatment budget has plummeted in EPA. Need to have a robust presence so permits are more strict. Wants fed government to invest in infrastructure and enforcement. Hydrofracing what is EPA's jurisdiction? Leaves drinking water supplies contaminated. EPA needs to get involved otherwise the states will have conflict. EPA needs to make sure NYDEP works on infrastructure investment and economic opportunity. Send more EPA staff to more public meetings.

Discussion Question 3

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

It is worth reminding ourselves that we have globally rare freshwater wetlands in the Hudson Valley, we need to conserve the ecosystem, need big picture plan of attack (this is work here-Greenway program). This would be a great test case. We have the resources, plan and people. We are all invested in this plan and would love a federal partner. Expand NY & NJ harbor Estuary program should expand up the river. \$52 million dollars requested to President to expand funding for EPA. Combine 2 programs to combine the harbor program with the DEC program. Sea level rise will travel up the Hudson. A green ribbon of protected space along rivers is a great idea. Federal government needs to provide more science on sea level rise and more interpretation and outreach about that data.

I remember playing with my son and the water was terrible. Children need to have clean water where they are playing. Concerned about too many services because taxes go up.

Discussion Question 3

Prior Lake, MN

Greetings from Secretary Salazar who is in Houston today. There is a special role and opportunity for Interior on this initiative. Fish & Wildlife has a great connection in this area and region. This is a great opportunity to work with tribes in this region. Secretary Salazar has deep interest in America's stories being told.

Stated that he understands issues and challenges and is here to represent the department of Agriculture. He oversees US Forest Service, NRCS, Natural Resource Conservation Service, (is familiar with NCAI) Chippewa National & Superior National, (Chequamegon Nicolet Forests). Trying to extend themselves to provide input and listen in this new chapter to improve our environment. The real focus is on what can work in the future, to capture bottom up ideas and put them to use, and record these issues/ideas and take them to Washington. He will outline the recommendations and make changes to local, federal, tribal and business communities. The President expects a report in November to implement new levels of change.

The issue in 1969 was the tribe only had 260 (?) acres and not much Natural Resources. Tribal members were jammed into the reservation/community. Now we have about 2000 acres, plenty of walking trails, restored wetlands, recreated meadows and preserves. We have a watershed district, a wind generation plant and utilize recycled water for irrigation of the golf course. We will continue to improve and work on opportunities like these. (name delted), SMSC Land Manager, works with EPA to obtain grants for these opportunities. We would like to have funding maintained for these purposes. Cooperate with Prior Lake on trails policy and roads. Concern is not to cut current funding.

Role the agencies play is all hinged on funding. Likes the initiative. He feels that a kindergarten program in Europe where the classes are held outside". He referred to it as "No child left inside" Build on green space, kids outside 365 (no child left inside). Help with language and education component, creating and managing green spaces all play a role. With that comes land management. Ho-Chunk is unique in that they are spread out to 14 counties. This makes it difficult for them to put a management plan together. Joint management, working with department of WI Natural Resources, environmental water management has worked for them. Cooperative Management in (our dispersed land base) (Kickapoo is open to all). How do we protect cultural heritage in those coop areas without funding? How can tribes help? When we create these initiatives, what kinds of impact will that have on the mounds? Yet our laws are not favorable to the tribes. They impact funding, polices are not strong enough to enforce. Ho-Chunk is trying to do organic gardening and composting. He noted the climate change and a story his uncle told of a medicinal plant in Illinois. They were shocked to find this plant was (growing so close) (global warming) to where they reside. How are we enforcing the initiative?

Discussion Question 3

Prior Lake, MN

(cont.)

Thanks for coming to listen. "Long over do." When Washington policies affect his tribe he listens. Sacred teachings are important. The wish for president's initiative on the Great Outdoors is a blessing. We are losing our sacred things. We are losing our wild rice. What the heck are Asian Carp? We need to protect our natural resources. We need to do this as a group. (A 30 million \$\$ fish farming project failed due to (regulation delay), took 5 years to do and they are still waiting for return on investment.) We are the sacrificial goat. We need input on development and policy. He sees this in WI and on fed level. Need consultation with Indian tribes. Tribally driven policies versus Washington developed. Natural Resources shouldn't be regulated in DC. Lack of input from tribes is a concern. Tribes need to step up and do something in addition.

She talked about reservation boundary issues. By act of congress they were given tribal boundaries. Need long term planning. Projects don't work. They don't have infrastructure to implement. She highlighted the issue of identifying cultural resources and then the difficulty in protecting that same information. Working on IRMP, Integrated Resource Management Planning, identifying resources and defining cultural/historical resources. Need to beef up management and get business/management plan, get water resources, trying to give back to the youth. There is a concern of losing cultural and language. The goal is to start with the young, teach the language and then they gain connection to natural resources. There are water issues with the (use) (of the Aquifer) and (River) water rights. Why do they need the water, except for irrigation? They are working on zoning. Don't want their resources just taken. There is a need to identify important resources to be preserved. They have issues regarding agricultural/range leases. We need to improve our management plans with NRCS for land use.

In regards to resources, he was an electrician and was forced to leave the reservation. He knows the problems on the reservation. We all have the same problems. Talked about BP oil spill, needles washing up on shore /international dumping in our waters, preserving our Cultural Resources, and losing the language. He mentioned smog at the Grand Canyon. He highlighted that a white guy is teaching their language at UNL. Lincoln. The language is his mission. He also mentioned a museum that is in the works and that the Smithsonian is (holding some of their cultural heritage/sacred pole.)

What works? They have a New Director in Natural Resources that is working, a Green Thumb program, elders beautifying the community and they are stocking lakes with fish, they are acquiring GSA surplus equipment and work cooperatively with State and Fish and Game. They are a small reservation with a small land base. They have buildings on dumping grounds. (A Middle school and a former housing unit that was torn down 18 months ago, which is not cleaned up yet.) Since it is not cleaned up people are getting hurt, there is vandalism, and it poses a hazard to the members. There is not enough law enforcement on these sites. They must protect the aquifer on their land. They also have Chippewa Tribal Industries, which is performing home inspections and energy audits. They have Community gardens. Another challenge is they are losing the willows for basket making. Would like to see more tribal, state, governmental teamwork on these issues.

Discussion Question 3

Prior Lake, MN

(cont.)

What works? What fits this is CCC. Civilian Conservation Core with youth doing natural resources. (Rails to Trails program, projects such as trails from WI to MI., campsites and deer surveys) This got the young into the outdoors. This all ended when (name deleted) became Governor. They only receive funds to build, not to operate & maintain these parks, ball fields and trails. Doesn't want other programs to be fleeced in the process. Wants them to be 638 so tribes run the program. (MI mine to be destroyed) Get young away from crime and into traditional sites/values. Doesn't want sites open to the public. (Mention of Monuments /site where they collect pipestone where there was graffiti. He wants no graffiti on rocks.) He cited GLIFWC as an example of off reservation cooperation to protect resources. Can we purchase off reservation and close it to the public?

What works? Culture is Paramount. 1st tribal historic preservation office (THPO) program for inventory of cultural sites, prevented desecration, development. (Brian was previously a tribal preservation officer) Highlighted issue that money for THPO is cut or stays the same as participation increases. Their tribe can't subsidize/fund programs. They lobby for more funding.

Commended other tribes with the management of their lands and does not know how it happens but believes that positive management comes from the heart. Their tribe has the best second-growth forest. A sense of community may have helped. Land into trust is important. Law Enforcement, how do we keep game wardens? There are interaction difficulties with external law enforcement in a PL 280 state. In today's world could kids tell what time of day it was if they were dropped in the woods? We don't cut trees with holes in them; they are homes to small animals. Congratulations to those tribal leaders who have realized success. He felt tribes weren't always invited to the table. Tribal resource management comes "second-nature". Others need to work at it. He applauds having the listening session early in the process. Thinks the government should use the tribes as a role model for management of land resources.

Al is head of Natural Resources. Red Lake sent letter to Secretary Salazar and he won't go into that now. This initiative needs to be funded with new money. They are looking at 7% (BIA/tribe) reduction. The cut doesn't leave room for this. How can we support this? What works? They work with USDA, EPA, MN DNR and the young. They have a Water Fest every year. "They" took it away, the grant for the water Fest? Soil and water shed district, they will have to find the money somewhere else. Tree plantings with the kids/young help give back to mother earth. They are a closed reservation so it is easier for them to do things since all their land is in trust/closed. They have the sixth largest fresh water lake in the United States. Their reservation is like it was way back and people come there to take pictures. They have been bombarded by government on land issues and giving back the Angle. They have diminished land all the way to Canada. Many don't know that Red Lake owns the Northwest Angle in Canada. Red Lake has pre-settlement resources.

Discussion Question 3

Prior Lake, MN

(cont.)

Thanks to Obama for this initiative. Our economy and culture was destroyed by this government. The agencies have helped. We, as tribes, do not have the infrastructure to help with funding. He had an issue with OSHA winning administrative jurisdiction on the reservation. Issue with Unions. Many tribes are poor to begin with. Pow Wow winning are now on the 1099. The IRS and taxation/1099 take too much. IRS is a disservice to the tribes. Tribes win little money. Land into trust. Menominee feels they were ripped off. Connection to congress resulted in MIT ripped of (Legend lake) acres. Legend Lake landowners have a covenant to stop land into trust. The youth is in crisis. New law enforcement (funding) will help. Drug problems are a big issue. We need to utilize the resources available to us and the Agencies. Need assistance with infrastructure so that they can utilize the funds that they receive.

They rely on their own tribal capacity to work on natural resource issues. They have good technical advisors on their staff who works on sustainable energy. Work well with EPA in Region 5. "Thank you". They focus on protecting high quality resources instead of saving compromised natural resources. Polymet project was wholly inadequate and the tribe's input into the environmental process was reduced. Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a Federal trust responsibility and the hat stays on through the entire process. (GLIFWC helped in this effort.) Their natural resources are integrated with tribal initiatives. Iron range problems result in damage to the Great Lakes. We can't survive cuts. Keep us even. More money would be great. This is a great new initiative. She wants to know "how do tribes initiatives match what the feds are trying to do?" Let us tell you how our priorities match what you are doing.

The youth focus of America's Great outdoors is great! Our assesets are our children. The greatest gift is a world where they can sustain themselves. We are losing our moose population, seeing raccoons and wood tics, which they have not seen before. Their ceded territory saw their first Turkey hunting season last year. No one knows how to hunt turkeys. Concern: Treaty rights as they relate to subsistence which is important to the tribe. Mining is a big issue for them. Asian Carp & VHS (fish disease) is big problem for them too. Don't do enough implementing; instead they do too much studying. We did the same thing with the lamprey. Now they are managing them. We need quicker action on invasives. Partnerships are important; both sides must have total honesty. Need every one to come to the table with no hidden issues/agenda. We need more direct tribal contracts. Hopes this initiative doesn't stop.

Thank you. How do (we) keep tribes input happening? He directed everyone to the web site for continuing to make the issues known. <http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/> He asked, what does the forest of the future look like? Should we be looking to new ways? Liked the second generation forest mentioned by the Stockbridge Munsee tribe. The CCP program and youth can become the new natural resources care giver. Community gardens and USDA can be of help. The Forest Service has learned how to manage forests from studying Native American practices. They are struggling on how to manage forests to anticipate climate change.

Discussion Question 3

Prior Lake, MN

(cont.)

She would like to see the 6th largest lake in the US at Red Lake and would like to travel here again. EPA is working on strengthening tribal leaderships and relationships. They have priorities, so everyone knows what is important. Let us know what we can be doing better. Please submit suggestions on how to improve consultation. One of the agencies 7 priorities was to improve/maintain tribal partnerships.

The Cultural Resources issues were heard loud and clear. Message received to support THPO offices, Historical Preservation, assistance, partnership and the role that tribes have in overall management of parks and natural resources is the theme they are hearing around the country. Landscape scale management (needed) (park service, us agencies and Canada). Thank you and sorry they couldn't have set aside more time.

Thanked the tribes for their stewardship over all these years. This is a direct pipeline to the president with the cabinet leaders here today.

You need to listen to the children and Indian country. Appreciates the effort in them being here. He stated that they must spend a day or two here, not just a few hours. Tribe's resources are "they need the money". Tribes expect the government to live up to treaty rights, funds, and provide technical support. He noted that the president said that Indian Country has always been underfunded. We/tribes need to maintain what we have and find other financial resources. The treaties don't say "subject to budgets".

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

need a better spokesperson for the environment who can connect with broader range of rural and other people

government needs to have more bite in law to prosecute people who violate rules accessing wilderness with motorized vehicles. Also fund staffing needs to enforce law.

Fed Govt role is to make sure we have places outdoors to recreate. Needs to add [Wilderness and park lands. Should protect ranges of lands to allow wildlife to migrate, especially as global warming changes migration routes, and times.

Problem with English ivy...sale should be prohibited...

Recreation needs to be recognized as important component in the landscape. Agencies to put pressure on legislatures on funding programs

Need for shared vision – Feds can advocate shared vision that comes out of this sort of conversation but follow through. Understand the science that can preserve habitat. Include in K-12 national curriculum

Feds needs strong bold leadership at the top to look out for needs of the individual, bring people together, increase protection of other lands not otherwise protected that belong to everyone. St. Helens should be designated National Park.

Puget Sound and Hood Canal should be more effectively used. In Brent's past, created report on early uses of SF Bay. Chinese sent 100 tons of dried seaweed to China. Late 60s and 70's attempts to turn bay back to harvest resources of the bay. EPA stopped Bay Area counties from restoring resource harvest in Bay. Bay conditions would be much better condition had this been allowed to occur. Fed. Govt. is biggest barrier to improved use and economic conditions of Hood Canal and Puget Sound. Fed. Govt. Forest Plans prevent local and state oversight of management of public lands. Give back to state and local govt.

Do we want Fed to manage Mt. St. Helens. If Fed takes over, people will be restricted in ability to use areas around Mount St. Helens. Currently there is access. If Fed takes over, local pop will lose this.

Historic urban parks are important. Need funding for historic preservation. Historic American Landscape Survey., National Association for Olmsted Parks, Cultural Landscape Foundation. Use social media as a means of sharing info.

Friends of Seattle Olmsted Parks, works hard to get urban people out to parks. Coming up with GIS mapping tools in social media and smart phone applications for attraction youth to urban parks. Local group is Trying to get youth involved with this effort, which would eventually connect them with other outdoor areas. Current clientele middle age-need to attract younger age group.

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

areas managed as wilderness limit access and uses/use; counterproductive to having recreation opportunities; don't need more wilderness in the Northwest;

be more involved with the clubs...they all have organizations, have resources, and can bring ideas and good input to planning, and then a commitment to volunteer labor to actually implement;

federal government can support organizations like peace corps to get younger people out to help other countries, other cultures and people; Earth Corps (nonprofit in Seattle with national and international programs); service learning programs and sending volunteers to other countries

Access to federal lands is too restricted. An audit is needed to reevaluate those rules for access

highlight the economic value of conservation efforts – need to do a better job with this; eg cleaning up Puget Sound will have enormous economic impacts (good) for the region; healthy forests, salmon are economically important; federal government can do a better job with this and why it is economically advantageous to spend money on conservation – better than state/local efforts;

example of dams on Snake River; grossly missing from fed govt: 1: communicating a true vision of development that is consistent with environmental health; need to undo some of past actions (e.g. dams) that aren't now the right thing for this time; can't keep doing what we're doing; people understand issues with water quality; need firm legislative proposals that are consistent with that vision and then drive it; 2: western forests are in terrible shape with beetles; west is awfully dry and fire will be immense; need to break the paradigm of putting out all the fires; need to undo the way we look at these problems and come up with solutions that are closer to nature (e.g. fire management); 3. this administration wanted to adhere to good science and haven't seen it yet; need to look at science and do the right thing

Funding for NPS needs to be increased for NPS centennial in 2016; NPS and federal government can also provide matching grants and similar programs should be out there (similar to the one created for Japanese internment sites)

federal govt could make much more effective use of the clubs

Use available dollars wisely. Programs that partner (e.g., NRTP) if money is cut they can't use that money to leverage partnership with WTA to do work on their lands.

Access is an issue. Specific to schools – mass transit possibilities to get people into the outdoors. Trips to trail heads. Tie into science programs and science studies. Make trips available to parents and kids both via mass transit

Reduce hurdles or simplify process to accomplish goals.

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Climate change needs to be recognized and emphasized. Adaptation needs of wildlife should be incorporated in planning process.

seems to be a disjoint and agencies aren't using their friends groups; MORA has lots of education programs but friends groups could help engage more people; encourage agencies to work with Friends Groups

reactivate youth conservation corps in parks, similar to Vista program, peace corps; need job corps services for youth – encourage youth; need to advertise these programs

regulate. Initiate regulations that will protect environment and natural resources from large business and greed

Problem with Wilderness Act was that it prevented all logging in these areas. Selective logging took out some trees but not all. Logging put roads (access) into areas, and allowed for fighting fires. Promoted healthy growth of tree population.

partners are sometimes treated as contractors because of the organizational structure of fed agencies. Partners should truly be treated as partners.

alignment problem. Businesses have fleet of vans that are unused on weekends...could be used to get kids out to parks, public lands.

USFS could do a better job of planning and funding recreational opportunities; focused more on closing existing trails. Campgrounds and roads.

Role of Fed Govt is to be unifying force for conservation nationwide. The environmental ethic in Seattle Metro area or Washington state is not necessarily shared nationwide.

need to make it easier to find out about jobs; army and navy have tv commercials and lots of marketing, need more information for the park service – they have lots of opportunities that a lot of people would like to be involved with but don't know about it; streamline the process so people aren't overwhelmed by the paperwork

have had success incorporating projects within projects within the Seattle area; restoring habitat in open spaces; King Co. and REI grants used, with volunteer labor. Can do things on a small scale that make a difference locally

Uses The Maze area, Utah: very large area, with only 5 campsites, that could have accommodated many more people...there is a great deal of opportunity to provide much more use, without impacting resources; people get turned away; will lose support over time without use and access; population is growing...need to accommodate them. Enforce LNT, but let more people in....enforce the rules. Good trail design minimizes trail impacts. Many trails

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

If entire USFWS budget were eliminated, it would not make a dent in the Fed. Deficit. Fed needs to take a look at where budget money is going and reconsider priorities.

Feds should strike a balance. With wilderness it is "all or nothing". We have a lot of public land. We get focused on management rules. Recreate in a way that makes sense to everyone

San Fran Bay has a huge map to show all transit connections to trailheads. Feds can help coordinate this effort. Transit to Trails is a good example

Have allowed commercial interests and leasing to damage federal conservation lands too much. We need to hold accountable anyone causing damage due to the United States through commercial development, bioengineering, mining, or any other capacity. They need to be held responsible financially and should have to restore it. Any time land is leased through a federal agency, this should be part of any contract

Work together to rid Pacific Ocean of plastics gyre (huge area of plastics circulating in ocean)

Improve communication w/in agencies and w/other agencies and publics.

Full funding of Land and Water Conservation Fund

funding requests for extension service to make connections and create opportunities for young people to learn about ag; funding for extension programs

Lost forests in Rockies, temps increasing, forest fires increasing, sea level rise occurring quickly. No drilling for gas or oil; stop burning fossil fuels. Increased energy efficiency is needed. Stop subsidizing gas and coal (fossil fuels)

looking for opportunities, resources, curriculum to engage youth in outdoor areas. Teacher-Ranger-Teacher is an NPS effort to connect teachers with parks.

State run Elbe Hills attracts large numbers of users. People are able to share users. Paradise Valley (USFS) is difficult to use because lack of roads or unmaintained roads. Should study State run areas as an effective way to manage lands.

comprehensive planning for trails to connect people to parks and protected areas.

could be more focus on the environment in high schools; schools could integrate more focus on environment in the education system; never heard about national parks in the public education system; importance of the national parks and many people can miss out

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Some land use decisions seem to have slant one way or the other, but reluctant to state that reason. Favors transparency. If there's a reason for a decision it should be stated.

what gets measured in the government gets done. we do not have measures of goals for kids in these programs. CDC – what measure do we have for kids getting into the woods? What measure can we put into place to get kids on the ground. (in short: The Feds need concrete measures and targets to get kids into the woods). Set a target and a measure for getting kids into the woods

create a pipeline or means for young people to join the NPS; formal from seasonal ranger, volunteer, etc.; need to professionalize the pipeline to careers in NPS; need a clearer roadmap for young people to take; similar to an Americorps program to be a ranger for a year and bring those values to their lives; think about a ranger academy

More money and funding would be great, but we also need to be realistic. May be pressure building to sell assets including fed lands. Need to resist selling America's birthright.

there is a need to educate people how to lessen their impacts; don't like the design of the NPS campgrounds...too dense; need more dispersed opportunities.

want to see federal govt focus and respond faster to natural disasters; they affect the environment (eg. BP drilling); seems like media highlights how slow the responses are; crews seem small; assessment and response seems slow; need to ask hard questions; think about how much of money spent on BP disaster could have been redirected to parks and other issues

If you don't have access, the land becomes useless. We do need to preserve lands for everybody. People on the East Coast don't know what's best for people in Northwest

Have federal agencies work more cooperatively with small non-profits to help them with their programs. Have agencies create consortium or forum where smaller non-profits can work together to accomplish goals.

govt programs that encourage protection and support at young age. Kids need to care about it first. Consumption and population need to be addressed. Many coop agreements are 5 yr terms – difficult to sustain programs/projects.

Sustainability approach from the federal government from big picture perspective. Make the case for need, future and quality of life we all want. Encourage incentives over regulation. Incentives raise the bar for everyone. Regulations lower the bar to lowest common denominator.

Bring home the troops and provide more support to fight invasives

Subsidize from large agricultural businesses to local farms

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Army Corps of Engineers. Corps is largest water borne provider of recreation, but isn't fully engaged in the process. Need to incorporate the Corps more in the process. Promotion and visibility for Corps activities. All the federal agencies need to work together in collaborative process.

a lack of information on how to mitigate impacts of use; need to study problems to find the appropriate solutions; federal agencies need to work together and get better alignment of policies, regulations...to lesson issues. Need more attention and federal support for urban parks and open spaces. Engaging youth needs to start in their backyards....in the cities, where 80% of people live.

Fully fund LWCF. Urban parks are very important to connecting kids to nature.

Use what we already have in workforce development programs such as CCC. Focus on reintroducing CCC within both urban and rural areas to provide employment opportunities

Protected public land areas- needs to create more of these areas- Nat Monuments

Create new National Monuments. Historic Preservation Fund needs priority funding. National Heritage Areas – lets local communities connect with heritage, nat. resource, helps develop business models/economics

Think on entire region scale – rural landscapes, open spaces, urban spaces.

Science Education needs to be priority in this country. Look at what other countries are doing for obesity, and getting people out in nature.

Transportation barrier for urban kids to get to natural places and parks.

Enviro is under assault by powerful voices; pres should take q from Michele and get outdoors.

Partnership grants – diff groups working together on common goals. NOAA grants lack funding. Pres needs to understand to lack of funding in these grant programs. Urban space is island w/open space around. Fund micro parks, community gardens. Local funding is limited so need to get funding from govt. Funds schools get should be tied to getting kids outside and exercising. OSHA could build in outdoor time into employee equirements/rules.

Consistency in managing parks, public lands, forests.

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Desire for small private forest owners. Provide incentives to small private landowners for conservation.

Retain funding for Save America's Treasures, Preserve America and National Heritage Areas. Historical preservation is not separate from protecting natural environment.

Fees collected for a particular reason. When funds are collected for specific use then sometimes get used for something else its very discouraging. Collect fees and use them where they are supposed to be used.

Look at sustainability from ecosystems standpoint. Mount Rainier and Yellowstone are islands. Actions to look at large scale ecosystems. Role for park service to expand these areas.

How to work best with private landowners. Establish tools and programs for federal agencies to engage with local landowners (conservation easements, forest legacy, ranch conservation, etc).

Outreach is really valuable. Schools, teachers, and other organizations working with youth. Review permitting language to see if rules prohibit people access that should be provided.

More collaboration with Tribes. Seems inadequately represented in the system

- are we afraid to copy the CCC model? It was effective and could be replicated
- Conservation needs to occur with full spectrum of local, state, and federal agencies
- Marketing – content on WA State Ferries is pathetic. Park Service could partner with State Ferries for interpretive and education programs.
- Include private landowners in the AGO process

highschool students volunteer, this is a requirement from the school. Must participate. Most come out as volunteers afterwards. Service requirement

Figuring out how to pool resources, and coordinating funding cycles. Using grant programs in targeted areas for landscape level work.

Woodland Park Zoo-Washington State Parks- Richard Louv has

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Fed needs to do a better job of enforcing existing laws, ie 30 ft. barrier along rivers needs to remain forested—however this is not consistently enforced. Rules in place haven't been adequately enforced.

More collaboration amongst Federal agencies is needed. Public confused by Natl Forest vs. National Parks, Websites are not coordinated, Would help to provide common face to Fed protected lands. Example: New Zealand has a common face (and contact) for protected lands.

When you bring in Fed oversight of lands, you shut off land to majority of uses. Local management is important to prevent closing off large areas of land to masses.

Cooperative land management is key to having diff user groups working together to satisfy larger numbers of users.

- need to present young people with unique things in their own area that are more than just forest; initiative to expand MORA by about 400 acres with an unprotected rainforest; if more people knew about the special resource out there, and knew it was in their state would be great

Government could educate adults about the responsibilities of different agencies and responsible parties; think about the learning opportunities

Ranger academy idea – NIH, think about a National Conservation Academy to carry out research and a place all agencies could turn to for research (economy, biological, etc). there is a national academy of science; think about extension

Expansion of thinking about impacts on watersheds, not just rivers; can just conserve one small part of a river, need to think about watersheds, migratory patterns

Protection of national/federal waterways should not be delegated by federal govt to other nations, entities, or the United Nations. The lease of federal Park lands to other nations, entities, or the United Nations should not be allowed

Government should commit to programs for a long enough period so they become sustainable

A special effort is needed to reach a more diverse audience on the subject of outdoors and conservation

Support land trusts to help them do their work

Limit number of roads in federal lands, and motorized vehicle

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

A more comprehensive evaluation is needed on designation of federal lands so they are not too restrictive; wilderness is needed but open lands are too. Scrutinize land use restrictions and be more clear of what is allowed on various lands

Programs like Natural Heritage Areas need more federal support; fully support Historic Preservation Fund

Fund RecreationTrails program, fully fund

Common sense review of policies and regulations that makes it easier to get things done

Support quiet restrictions to reduce noise in parks and other natural areas

Stop oil drilling of Alaska

Change the Wilderness Act of 1964 to allow recreational access and diverse activities

Need to provide improved access to marine areas, this is a gap

Federal agencies to engage with state and local entities to better coordinate roles and improve collective effectiveness in recreation and access

Invite president to camp in a National Park

Bring the troops home and use the funds to reduce invasives

Preserve urban and suburban areas before they are gone

Put USFS out of Ag and put under Interior so all in one Department

Create an international data clearinghouse for all research and economic data and information. To improve exchange and accessibility of information

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Encourage adaptive, responsible reuse of buildings, rather than tearing down and building to achieve LEED certifications. More sustainable to reuse than replace and rebuild

Federal recognition of the Duwamish Tribe

Federal recognition of the Chinook Tribe

Please support legislation to allow non-profit organizations to sell tax free bonds on forest lands which are being sustainably logged. Community Forest Bond

Through interagency relations – level the playing field for landowners - for small landowners (carbon credits, water credits, ecological services) allowing small landowners to compete

More work between agencies to think on an ecosystem level rather than within bounds of parks/forests units – holistic – migration patterns, wildlife movement, etc

Solid waste management – recycling – develop markets and increase facilities for smaller communities – federal to help state and county to improve climate change through waste management

Take into account that the environment is not state/nation specific – work outside borders with Canada & Mexico

Different agencies to look at what they have in common – publicize it & promote collaboration to make the public aware

Include social sciences in the approach – support & fund social science research as it relates to the AGO initiative

More science-based research vs. money/partisan based research

Promote conservation by jacking up prices of mineral extraction, etc. on their large amounts of public land that is leased out

Stewardship of the bigger problems – take oversight responsibilities more seriously (Gulf spill, etc.

Focus on enabling, streamlining services to state & local landowners

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

More funding to schools and universities to lower costs to students who are the future – embrace technologies

Need new technologies and more R&D for environmental cleanup (oil spill - using same technology for BP as it did for Valdez)

Feds can bring stakeholders together in a “less charged” environment to figure things out, provide a forum for open and clear communication. Tough decisions must be made but get people to talk in an environment where they are not afraid or competition for public perception

There is a lot of tension when groups come together and especially if they are competing for funding. Bring them together and find money that could benefit all of them. Build coalition

Too often in modern political processes, they are... have more opportunities like this one – face to face – figure out answers rather than competing for budget

Apply science to ecosystems. Ecosystems know no boundaries. So often managed by jurisdiction rather than by ecosystems. Feds are in the best position to recognize the underlying science. People must understand ecosystems and the science behind them, share the information and have it shape policy to manage those lands

WPA and CCC

Inclusion of no child left inside in omnibus

Streamline bureaucracy at every level

Reduce NEPA hurdles for trails and recreation projects

LWCF – reduction of incumbrance that are placed on land owners

Include conservation in land use policies, must be federally regulated

Streamline process of permitting to allow schools into the outdoors. Teachers are not outfitters and the process should be applied differently for teachers. Make process consistent and predictable

Rehabilitation and modernization of rail system

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Trains are often empty. Put students into empty trains to Glacier NP

WPA, CCC, new transit system are all good models

More organizations that take kids out

More teenage clubs (e.g. an outdoor club for socializing)

Find funding for activities

Make jobs or internships (summer jobs

Greater awareness of organized activities to teach skills and get kids out in nature

Outreach to expand information

Outdoor field trips'

More programs for younger kids (start earlier)

Opportunities in your own neighborhood

Make outdoor activities accessible (more roads, more ways to get places)

Outdoor activity classes

Incentives to recycle

Funding for the parks

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Outdoor swimming pools

Promote/encourage/support/sustain/love more outdoor programs

Build more outdoor playgrounds

Increase volunteer opportunities

Environmental policy

Cleaning up polluted areas/ground spaces/urban areas

Preserve national parks

Preserve natural areas/zoning laws

PR events at National Parks

Continue LWCF

Make better use of NEPA. Some documents should be elevated in analysis. Adhere to NEPA regulations.

Community Forestry Legislation. Need for improving employment in conservation

Priorities of Government. Identify overarching priorities for several budget cycles provided strategic vision. Cabinet level process to set land management priorities over 15 to 20 budget cycles.

Fed Govt could follow work of WA State when it passed No Child Left Inside Act. Encouraged access through matching grant funded programs.

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

CCC achieved tremendous work, specifically in changing individual lives.

AmeriCorps program gets ppl outdoors with a conservation focus

Leveraging smart growth initiatives across the country

Bringing conservation education to younger classes

Leverage funds such as Legacy, Section 6, LWCF, with fed govt coordination to achieve landscape level work. Fed Govt needs to play role in seeing that education systems include conservation

Reappropriate funds towards programs to assist at risk youth.

Focus on 4-H style programs in schools to encourage enjoyment in outdoor activities.

Federal agencies can be a convener and facilitator. Bring people together and encourage cooperation.

Maintain the wilderness that exists. Keep federal agencies working together like they are doing today.

New federal education law includes Environmental Education.

protect and add additional new special places (NRA's, Park expansions, Wilderness, Wild & Scenic etc...)

Ensure federal funding of land trusts. Allow direct application for funding.

Government needs to stop paying lip service to issues but act. Infrastructure is good example. "fund the talk" so you can walk it. Fund programs to capacity.

Better advertise what is going on in the parks. New trails, activities, roads converted to trails. People don't know what is available.

Address on a more proactive level for species conservation

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Underfunded on ESA

WA state has some healthy salmon runs that can be better-protected with preventative

Work with landowners to protect places to be resilient

21st century in conservation: looking ahead to progressive actions

Have things done in a bi-partisan manner with a spectrum of ideas

Inner-city people don't have access to outdoors

Support public transportation, especially across state lines

Amtrak, ? Is there something federal government can do to support transcontinental, interstate transportation system? ? Getting people out of their cars to more efficient transportation

Insure that dealings with the public are transparent and in good faith - done positively

Create more access to National Parks. Need more roads and opportunities for people to use the resource.

need to figure out ways to finalize the planning process. Make it more workable.

work people in charge in agencies, fund enforcement so groups know they can't get way with pollution. Support to enforcement agencies.

Stewardship, o Use of information through electronic media about trail resources in state, o Parks, national monuments, trails

What used to be a paper newsletter mailed is now a robust online database with information on trails all over state

Huge success of trail maintenance program to do volunteer maintenance is important tool to get people and youth outdoors

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Collaborative model, ? Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust—bipartisan collaboration of government entities, non profits, private corporations, industries;

Collaborative model, ? Along I-90 corridor from Seattle to east side of Cascades, • Joins urban-rural dynamic, • Political differences on the two sides of the Cascades, • Brings divergent views together successfully for 20 years now through grants, funding, access from urban to federal lands, • Multi-agency trail coordinator paid by combination of fed-local governments

We want this to be successful

Don't see a lot coming out of this administration on environmental issues

Invest in our volunteer organizations that conserve and develop trails. Keep the opportunities available to leverage volunteer organizations' resources (time, money, networking) to do work on public lands.

Federal gov't needs to look out after our interests. Closures occur without public input, shouldn't close trails just because nobody comments.

Urban vs. Rural values with regard to the management and use of federal lands. The gov't needs to ensure that the values of those living close to public lands are considered. Shutting down of public lands to commercial uses is hitting local communities.

The role is to represent us. That's not happening. They are fighting us. The way we use public lands is being dictated to us. The gov't is not working with us but against us.

Processes are very cumbersome – language is difficult to understand.

Eliminate the ethanol mandate. It damages many engines and boat fuel tanks.

Remove No Child Left Behind and implement No Child Left Inside.

Create more access near transportation corridors and urban centers. When has a new trail been created in the local area on federal land?

We need working farms and working forests. Agriculture and conservation districts play an important role.

Insist on an agency culture that emphasizes public private partnerships. It is often an up hill battle to convince federal staff that there is a private role.

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

All the agencies need to work together in a coordinated way. Right now they are each trying to do the same thing in many ways, separately.

Be an active participant in the successful groups/endeavors mentioned above

Establish national monument status for coastal plains of ANWR

In areas where local conservation is successful, federal agencies should support, help, fund those efforts

Collect information on economic benefits of protecting watersheds, recreation businesses

Emphasize User-based fees, e.g. Duck Stamp that funded the federal refuge system, e.g. Pittman-Robertson Act, hunting and fishing licenses

Collaboration with conservation and user groups to improve funding for resources

More rigorous compliance with Sec 106 of NHPA

More and earlier consultation with affected stakeholders for protection of cultural resources

Federal government energy policy for DOI, avoid development in Arctic: no offshore drilling

Consistent funding for parks, lands – all user fees should go directly to the park or resource, NOT to the general fund

Establish youth volunteer/work program

Account for federal tax dollars – where does all the money go?

ORV tag fee increased, but WA state did not fund the ORV trails

Feds should have limited or no role in recreation, this should be local

Discussion Question 3

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

To be more effective partner with the agriculture community, Listening Sessions should be in the winter after harvest (farmers are busy in the summer)

Do a better job educating the public. Second Century Commission Report, NPS should focus on education role

National Forest Plans – revisions should look at climate change impacts, adaptation and resiliency of ecosystems, holistic view

Concessionaires contracts – should include requirements to include youth opportunities

Energy Policy should be Climate Control Policy

Common-sense remedies to impacts of climate change, e.g. capturing flood water from excess storms, regulations not set up for this now (FEMA)

Keep it simple, bypass the red tape and administrative overhead waste

Discussion Question 3

Spokane, WA

Access and Consolidation: The United States should seek to secure and restore access for Indian tribes, and their members, to areas with important cultural and natural resources. Federal protection in this area is paramount where Indian tribes have reserved such resources under a treaty with the United States.

Where practicable, federal agencies should aid tribes in the acquisition of cultural resources and culturally significant sites, as well as the consolidation of existing tribal land-bases. This principle is consistent with the overriding principle of tribal self-determination.

Management: Where tribal acquisition of such resources is not feasible or practicable, agencies should seek to ensure that relevant tribal agencies and intertribal organizations have an opportunity to participate in the management of such resources.

1. Consolidation of tribal land holdings

To facilitate comprehensive tribal land management, the United States will work toward the elimination of "checkerboard" land holding patterns on existing Indian reservations by: working to transfer to tribal trust status other tribally-owned and, where appropriate, federal lands within, and contiguous to, Indian reservations.

Indian Affairs proposes to consolidate its tribal trust land holdings as a primary objective of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Consolidation of tribal land bases will lead to a number of benefits for both tribal nations and the United States:

Checkerboard and fractionated tribal lands are problems that have vexed the United States and Indian tribes for decades. This objective will require agencies, particularly the Department of the Interior, to work closely with Congress to ensure adequate funds are appropriated for land consolidation. The Department of the Interior will also work closely with tribes to expedite the process of acquiring tribally-owned fee lands within existing reservations in trust for the benefit of tribes.

2. Preservation of cultural resources

Federal agencies should collaborate with tribal leaders on management and conservation practices relating to culturally significant resources, where those resources are located on federal lands. Where those resources are located on tribal lands, federal agencies should work to equip tribal governments and organizations with the resources they need to continue to protect and conserve these resources.

The precise location and description of culturally significant sites is a sensitive issue for tribal nations and their citizens, making it difficult to include many such sites in a public initiative. Moreover, many of these sites may be located outside of tribal lands. Federal agencies should work in consultation and collaboration with tribal leaders to ensure tribal access to, and preservation of, these sites to the greatest extent possible.

Discussion Question 3

Spokane, WA

(cont.)

As part of the Initiative, federal agencies should work with tribes to collaborate on long-term management plans, identify instances where tribes can co-manage federal lands, and support tribal efforts to build land management capacity. These efforts are consistent with the President's November 5, 2009 Executive Memorandum, tribal reserved treaty rights, and the federal trust responsibility.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established in 1965 to secure access to outdoor recreation and to strengthen the health and vitality of U.S. citizens. Since then, LWCF has been the principal fund that federal agencies use to acquire land for outdoor recreation, and to date it has protected millions of acres for future Americans. The Secretary of the Interior has discretionary authority over a large portion of the LWCF, and could potentially allocate funding to tribal governments to acquire land for outdoor recreation in and near tribal communities.

The Department of the Interior Fee-to-Trust Initiative involves the use of existing authority, under which the Department is seeking to expedite tribal applications for the United States to acquire land in trust on behalf of tribes. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar issued an internal directive on June 18, 2010 that the Department should "diligently and expeditiously exercise its responsibility and move forward with land into trust decisions." This initiative would complement the America's Great Outdoors Initiative by facilitating the consolidation of tribal landholdings, and easing tribal land management efforts.

Allow tribes to participate in recreation and conservation acquisitions under the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This will allow tribes to access funds to acquire lands for public parks, and to set aside lands for conservation purposes.

Initiate a Governmental Accountability Office (GAO) audit of the equitable distribution of tax dollars to federally recognized Indian Tribes from the Federal Aid in Sport Wildlife Restoration Act and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, also referred to as the Federal Aid Program. This country's Indian Reservations contain over 56 million acres of land, which comprises 2% of United States land base, with vast amounts of fish and wildlife resources. Although the various Tribes oversee and are responsible for management of these resources and the Federal Aid Program funding formulas count tribal lands, waters, populations for returning the tax dollars to the people being taxed and the landscape being utilized, the Indian Tribes of the United States are not receiving these very important funds. One of the primary purposes of this audit would be to determine how Indian reservation residents and visitors pursuing outdoor recreation and subsistence activities can realize their tax dollars are being returned to the fish and wildlife resources, landscape, and tribal government where they hunt, fish and recreate. Access to this funding is critical to help develop tribal fish and wildlife management programs and for the continuation of providing Indian lands for recreational pursuits for all Americans.

Support increased funding for the Indian Land Consolidation Program. This program will assist Tribes in their consolidation of individual fractional land interests resulting in the ultimate protection and management of trust lands for future generations.

Discussion Question 3

Spokane, WA

(cont.)

Dedicate adequate funding to tribes to build and maintain capacity to manage cultural and natural resources on tribal lands. This should also include funding for tribes to participate in existing programs that are designed to encourage youth participation in conservation and recreation efforts. In addition, dedicate adequate funding to tribes to build and maintain capacity to manage treaty-protected natural resources outside of tribal lands -- especially where tribes have a responsibility to manage such resources pursuant to court order or court-approved agreements.

Encourage federal agencies to enter into cooperative management agreements with tribal governments under existing authority, where appropriate, to allow for tribal co-management or management of federal lands within, or near, tribal lands. This is consistent with the collaborative process established by the President's Executive Memorandum on tribal consultation, and will foster creative management of cultural and natural resources. In addition, federal agencies should consult with tribes on identifying areas in which such agreements would be appropriate, and work with congressional leaders to expand authority to facilitate such agreements.

Federal agencies should work with tribes to enter into agreements to protect sensitive sacred sites. Where appropriate, federal agencies should work with tribes to consider appropriate federal designations that would preserve and protect such sites, or to allow tribes to place such sites in tribal trust status.

The United States should make available resources to tribes, and schools in and near tribal communities, to preserve and promote tribal languages. As many tribal commenters noted during the America's Great Outdoors listening process, tribal languages are important to identifying and establishing a connection with culturally significant sites and natural resources. Federal agencies should also consider working with tribes to establish creative means to incorporate tribal languages into conservation and recreation efforts, including the use of tribal languages on maps.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

Communities to work with all federal agencies at once, one stop shopping

Fund not just infrastructure, but demonstration projects/programs

Wants to see federal government as better partner

Make public lands public through land access

Work towards efficiency maximization by making all land management plans available online so that agencies, state, local, and federal governments, and private sector entities can view ongoing projects and coordinate efforts. Currently too much unnecessary

Make state governments equal to federal government in planning process. Agencies have to train together if they're working on the same projects; current system has all agencies training separately, which doesn't make any sense

Working at the right scale is critical in order to create a sense of community and solidarity as people are more likely to feel an emotional connection to projects that directly impact their own communities; larger scale projects can seem impersonal and I

Link youth with conservation

LWCF -- fully fund it and use it strategically

Support private lands conservation efforts -- some of the most important conservation of land is by the private land owners

When working on a conservation issue or project, government should facilitate dialogue, don't talk to groups individually, collaborate with groups collectively

Youth: make connecting with nature and the outdoors a priority when they're young

Get the private sector involved in these initiatives; coordinate agencies and groups on different projects to increase efficient use of time and resources

Restoration: Tribal/NRCS joint effort, successful stream restoration, BOR;BPA, youth engagement

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Landscape conservation: 1976 Chattahoochee Recreation Area, small land access points to H2O, engaged public in forming conservation vision, develop "grand plans", engage communities in planning proves -- deeper "outside the box", find new sources of partn

Communities of color: veer from traditional vols., long term mentoring -- start young, grade school, recruit teens as teachers/mentors, conservation big brothers/big sisters, encourage higher education -- getting children of color into sciences, not a sho

Transportation: NPS/other agencies could provide buses, require states to create envt. Literacy campaign/curricula; nature bridge -- public/private partnership, 40,000 children/year, continuum of care to involve children in the outdoors, keep listening --

Reinvigorate partnerships with urban parks and local conservation systems -- need fully integrated systems at all levels of government

Make principals of conservation less esoteric -- connect all principals

Dedicated reliable funds outside of appropriated \$ to support partnerships

Need consultation process/infrastructure with DOI.FS for concerns to be aired before decisions are made

Portion fo land and conservation fund needs to go to urban parks

Federal government to help natural resource agencies engage/develop structure for youth to bring youth to the woodlands (need partnerships in conservation education curriculum -- don't need money)

Ducks Unlimited web site -- youth activities/education. High school sponsored events -- run by kids. College chapters -- raise funds for conservation efforts

Challenge to protect larger landscapes -- need federal agencies to work better together and pooling funds successfully

American Outdoors Commission -- local governments will maintain -- city/counties will make it happen

Partnerships-policies/agreements becoming very complex -- agencies cannot process them -- nonprofits work in similar ways/simplified ways with various federal agencies

Need to protect wildlife corridors legislation (ex: National Trail Act) -- need national restoration policy -- restore landscapes

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Out of work, out of school young people need to be a part of this initiative ages 18-24, and people of color should be at the forefront

We first need to build up urban recreation in cities, where people can have a safe outdoors environment close to home

If we are going to have open spaces we also need places to live and work and conserving old homes and buildings as National Historic preservation is key

Long distance scenic trails require interagency cooperation and many partners but they are also great ways to connect communities, habitats, and people

Make sure all USDA programs are accessible to all users -- how can different groups work together to produce community food and conservation plans including rural gardens

Federal government put money out there and have organizations compete for the money, giving them incentive to follow AGO initiatives on the ground level and they receive more funding for programs that align with AGO goals

Federal government has lack of real relationships -- system is hierarchical and transient, fed government is everywhere but nowhere, federal structures need to engage local groups and people more steadily

Leverage market place; get grant money faster; web pages and transparency

"Prioritization" - work on water issues

Private working lands protection in face of increasing competition for land and increasing demands to promote food.

Re-Create the CCC and vastly broaden youth, unemployed and senior engagement in Outdoor projects, both wilderness and urban. Expand the urban greenway on trail program with "Grants for Greenways" (over and above and separate from Tea program*. Fed. Incentives to engage All school students in eco-education + outdoor projects. *Streamline grants program. Tea grants way too bureaucratic!!

Enjoyed the conference! What is follow-up mechanism to keep this assembly engaged in implementing the steps President Obama outlined? Please distribute the roster of attendees with contact info. Assemble group every 2 years to mark progress, and assign tasks to achieve goals.

Work through established community organizations, conservation organizations, park and public land support groups. Outreach, awareness and marketing campaigns. Internships within agencies and partner groups.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Working partnerships the land manager and user group education. Youth involvement.

Crate a list of conservation projects and build a website with national, regional and local organizations to adopt a project with follow up as in outcome. Make it a true collaboration with federal, state, and city govt.

Boys and Girls Club of America would officer its clubs and members across the country for focus groups/town hall meetings to discuss issues introduced at the White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors

Thank you for this invitation! It was inspiring and impressive to see the coordination and passion of the Agency secretaries, EPA, CEQ and others. Private land conservation is becoming more cost effective and successfully than ever. We strongly encourage funding and support for more of this landscape protection.

Funding for private land conservation. Estate taxes. Generational succession of landowners.

More land protection initiatives in Congress and from the administration and more partnerships with the private sector, local, and state governments, etc. We also need more funding and volunteers for these lands.

Thank you. The president's remark renewed my hope that we can conserve our cherished lands.

Engaging our underserved, minority populations in environmental stewardship.

providing robust and stable federal funding for landscape conservation. Engaging citizens, and particularly our youth, on environmental stewardship and outdoor activities to reconnect them to the outdoors. Enhancing public access to our great outdoors

1) create a treasured landscapes fund, setting aside a portion of funding for strategic land acquisitions-particularly in the Chesapeake Bay watershed-where population density is high. 2) Enact the No Child Left Inside Act to ensure that every student is environmentally literate and has the opportunity to learn in the outdoors before they graduate from high school. 3) create a new national park in Chesapeake Bay- a 21st century "string of pearls" park with strategic acquisitions of landscapes to promote public aces and conservation of the Bay's remarkable natural resources. 4) enact legislation to promote public access to rivers along Federal Aid highways and bridges. these are public rights of way which, over time, public access has been first by construction of roads and bridges. 5) create a new national forest in Maryland and Delaware which are 2 states that don't have national forests. 6) create a safe route to parks program's similar to the safe routes to schools initiative. This would link schools of our national public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

High level call to action (the president) bringing together nonprofits/private sector for the "Greatest Good" . Same as above

Use creative marketing and advertising strategies nationwide to attract attention to the many challenges we face...think, "Got Milk?" campaign.

Invest in programs that engage youth in the outdoors and teaches them about careers in Natural resources and agriculture - start kids young. Take kids fishing.

Full funding LWCF, new funding strategies in accordance with the Secretary's Treasured Landscapes vision

Educating the American people about the relevance of land conservation to their daily lives. Dramatically increasing federal and state funds and tax incentives for voluntary land conservation.

Administration should take this show on the road, frequently and long-term. Fully fund LWCF, make expanded tax incentives for donated easements permanent and find new dedicated revenue sources to purchase land and easements.

In North Carolina (and other states) the Dept of Defense has been an excellent conservation partner. They've worked with land trusts and the state to purchase lands to increase the buffer between bases and encroaching development, and to protect endangered species. Please involve DOD in the AGO initiative (they have a big budget).

1) "burrow in" long term, many administration leaders with stable funding 2) fully fund the land and water conservation fund 3) closely study the mono like program and program of tree people in LA 4) permanent protection for the article national wildlife refuge

Focus/partner with interested NGOs to put important coverage under conservation easement.

Invest in science to guide decisions, invest more in private land conservation (easements), promote nature-based tourism

Can the government help the effort with some marketing/human dimension surveys/focus groups to better understand what will "move" people (and youth as a sub-group) to view conservation the way we'd like?

The public is uninformed about the existence of our public lands system and therefore are not enjoying benefits of recreation or stewardship. Enjoying benefits of recreation or stewardship. In 2008, African American and Latinos said "lack of information" is the top reason they don't visit!!

Pass 5.2747 into Law which would provide permanent funding at \$900 million

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To connect communities of color, especially youth to the outdoors and science careers. This must be LONG-TERM, FUNDED, and reach more than just youth employment. Education must be included for youth 5-24 - EDUCATION is the priority!

Fund programs that have a proven track record, like ELK. Allow us the resources to duplicate this successful model nationally.

Must engage younger children! Not just for employment or the corps. We must engage younger children and their families. Many corps members don't even know why they are removing trees, doing the work or care. Engage kids younger!!! So when they get their first job it is with a natural resource agency or conservation.

There is a fundamental need for a conservation bank, a system, to fund everything from easements to facilitating trades of environmental services. The distribution of NRCS \$'s for conservation easements should be targeted to need. In Wyoming, for example, FRIP is in need of funds, WRP funds are not utilized. fish and Wildlife Partners program should significantly increase both in funding and mission. They are the logical delivery system based on 20 years of trust building with private land owners. In a world where endangered species issues have so polarized rural America the Partners philosophy of solving problems is uniquely successful. Reclamation of lands impacted by energy development is wastefully inadequate. An EIS cannot say, "after development there will be no wildlife or livestock" Conservation must be balanced by a thorough understanding of national and international food production needs.

1) develop and deploy programs and hubs for connecting communities with outdoor recreation and conservation. Bridge the gaps and rebuild community networks of support. Build Youth Conservation Centers. 2) reach kids and patterns, reach schools, engage private landowners. 3) build programs that will influence large numbers of people

Change from top down to bottom up approach! Hammer - turn loose - incredible potential of land trusts and local communities.

habitat loss + the need for more \$ for habitat conservation. Misaligned federal incentives that fuel, rather than.....habitat loss + Federal.....,etc.

Shared understanding of need, shared commitment, shared priority in face of other demands/emergencies. Time-pace of climate change, development, extinction of species. Cultural beliefs/values - free market dictating abysmal land use for financial purposes, e.g.

Consistent and pervasive messaging and conversation. Listen, and share. Commitment to engage communities, states, regions, individuals in conservation. Flexible partnerships with committed funding, leveraging philanthropic participation. Good science - excellent story telling. Thanks, again, to this administration's openness to discussion and commitment to protecting our environment and Great Outdoors.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1) conserving watersheds and water resources. Water sustains life. 2) disconnect of Americans to natural resources

1) developing new stewards of conservation for future generations 2) the country needs to be more inclusive of who is at the table when setting policy and agenda for our diverse communities

The United States needs to increase the scientific capacity of the Nation's natural science agencies including the U.S. Geological Survey and NOAA. Science and science education should be key components of policies and strategies regarding the environment public lands, and conservation, including the "21st Century Strategy for America's Great Outdoors".

how to protect the largest intact watersheds, acres of wildlife habitat, recreation sites, carbon sites, and other places that keep the ecosystem functioning in the face of climate change and population growth

Grass roots partnerships that are inclusive constantly reaching out and finding common ground to tackle issues big and small. These local efforts need to be supported at the Federal Level. Trust, communication and flexibility are the keys. The fundamental question that needs to be answered is what are all parties willing to compromise. Energy policy is also important as conservation and energy are on a collision course.

As the Executive Director of Greening Youth Foundation, a cooperative agreement holder with National Park Service, one thing that I see that is needed is access to fellowship opportunities with the various agencies within the DOI. A fellowship program would be the next logical step for grassroots conservation organizations to connect underserved young adults to conservation careers.

Please continue to have active forums in which we can engage and collaborate with one another. We need to be a support system for each other. Please include Gullah/Leeches as "tribal leaders" and a resource for traditional knowledge. We are willing to work on interpretive pieces that will help "bring to life" the areas we are here to protect and conserve.

Balancing rural traditional cultural continuation with modernization. Inclusion of knowledge from Gullah/Geechees and Native Americans into conservation education. Passing on conservation & land stewardship knowledge to our youth. Keeping traditional fishing practices alive.

Please continue to have active forums in which we can engage and collaborate with one another. We need to be a support system for each other. Please include Gullah/Geechees as "tribal leaders" and a resource for traditional knowledge. We are willing to work on interpretive pieces that will help "bring to life" the areas we are here to protect and conserve.

There needs to be more focus on input sessions in rural environments that are conducted by those that have lived the traditions in those areas. Also, funding needs to be available for traditional intergenerational exchange and education projects. Policy changes to allow for traditional fishing.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you! Depts of Ag & Interior working together with help of Commerce, CDC, CEQ, & others - great!

Not everyone is educated about these issues. People in cities get busier and busier with little opportunity to connect with the outdoors.

Make the federal tax incentives for conservation easements a permanent part of the tax code. Expand funding for conservation especially on private land. Move NRCS Funding to permanent easements.

Private lands conservation for fish & wildlife habitat at a landscape (functional) scale.

Federal laws on climate change; create use of regulatory programs that calls for interest to collaborate or developing solutions; increased flexibility in federal programs and coordinate and focus on specific landscapes

I am honored to be included in this important conversation about land conservation and appreciate the opportunity to address the challenges with the 500+ leaders in attendance! Thank you for organizing this event! I look forward to learning about the results and follow up field events. I commend the administration for bringing this issue to the forefront. We need strong leadership to ensure funding for local land trusts to help protect open space and working lands.

Fund and strengthen land trusts and local conservation organizations. Promote voluntary conservation easements so that landowners can then protect their land for future generations. "Help make conservation a shared value"

1) elevating the economic importance of our green infrastructure to a value level equal or greater than the level of infrastructure. We are losing out and falling behind 2) Given growing urbanization/suburbanization of country need demographic changes 3) failure to target all conservation organizations that represent the best of all conservation leaders. Continue to compartmentalize fed parks, with working lands 4) the continued march of sprawl development

1) continuing the protection, restoration and enhancement of private lands for conservation purposes 2) targeting public and private lands conservation dollars

1) extensive use of the tax code (i.e. tax credits and estate tax) to further private lands conservation 2) extensive use of land exchanges to increase the amount of high environmental value lands and reduce the amount of low environmental lands with high economic value

Protecting private lands that serve as watersheds, particularly for unbanned areas. Water, all too soon, will be a limiting resource. Tap into the local food shed enthusiasm to forge policies, incentives for local agriculture, like CSAs.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Traceable tax deductions with cap, which will protect land if landowners who can't use deductive. Competitive LWCF allocations. Farmland easements for farmers, again on exemption basis, that offer watershed protection, public access, or CSAs.

local empowerment through the providing of information, tools and regulatory flexibility to reach creative solution. Focus on watershed level planning that cuts across agencies

Environmental literacy and respect; moving from a disparate national collection of outdoor resources to a coordinate efficient national system

in your outreach efforts, I would encourage you to use technology tools like Face book and Twitter. Education of federal employee of federal resources in this area. Incentive-based programs for changes needed on working, private lands. Involve private foundations, family or regional foundations too.

Excise Tax Receipts from Hunting license sales and the sales of firearms and ammunition make up the lion's share of conservation dollars which go to the states. These funds are used to benefit all species, game + non-game alike. Regardless of one's views about hunting + the shooting sports, they need to be encouraged and expanded, both as the source of these funds and, equally, importantly, as a wholesome + traditional way for families + friends to responsibly + safely enjoy the great outdoors.

We must remove barriers to access public lands for these recreational purposes to encourage youth to get outside + go hunting under the guidance of responsible adult mentors, and to ease barriers to entry to hunting + shooting sports for our youth, the NSSF's "Families afield" is one such program.

Immediate action to drastically reduce carbon pollution, and a dedicated funding stream for natural resource restoration and adaptation is critical to the future of our lands, waters and wildlife. This will also create American jobs on American lands.

2 Fold: 1) must react out to diverse constituencies when they are young to appreciate nature, wildlife, food sources (farms, riches) b/c in 50 yrs our nation will look completely different-including our congress. 2) must have a cohesive national conservation strategy that lays a clear plan on what lands + waters should be protected in priority order-should focus on climate change, ecosystem services + ability to deliver to underserved communities.

Until now, I have never heard any discussion around a national conservation vision and without one, I believe that people will struggle to figure out where they can best play in/contribute/engage.

Before any more monument designations are made insure they will work with the ranchers who have liven on and loved the land they steward for generations. Do a cost analysis of the 18 monuments we currently have.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Keeping family farms and ranches viable. Sustainable agriculture is key to good conservation.

Eliminate the Estate Tax for family farms and ranches so they can pass their places on to their kids. Insure that BLM and Forest Grazing permits remain intact

The Eastern landscape is the most densely developed, subject to increasing fragmentation and conversion, and divided by political boundaries and jurisdiction

Providing CC type jobs to put people to work, buying rural and public spaces which can in turn support these communities. Level the playing field

Funding, Focus, Vision. The problems are many but having 1 funding, focus and vision for the administration across all agencies will ensure success.

the administration would be smart to combine programs to gain efficiency and to then take those funds and focus. Get away from random acts. Make the priorities across agencies.

Funding for local govts and acquisition of park and green space before they become brown spaces- how to have a bipartisan approach

Fund permanently land and water conservation fund- be bipartisan- recruit Teddy Roosevelt Republican - bring in Mayors- promote clean water.

Public/private partnerships to define + catalog+ promote the multiple benefits of protected place, open spaces, + human connections to nature + the outdoors. OIA is willing to work with DOI/DOA to catalog + promote America's recreation economy.

The conference brings hope for a renewal and re-energizing of the conservation and outdoors movement, with a new focus on people and urban communities. The best way to bring the many elements of this movement, and the many agency programs together is around place - i.e. treasured landscapes. As each agency and partner bring their resources together around a set of aligned interests and goals.

1)make sure we have another generation ready for waiting to take over as stewards of our lands
2) making sure we have them natural resources worth inheriting

1) get ht next generation involved-listen to them- recruit them and let them lead and be ambassadors. 2) support grassroots efforts and conservation volunteers

Local city parks are the first place and least expensive place to connect civilian kids to nature. Stop neglect of urban parks. Great conference.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

the creation of parks, tracks and open space in proximity to urban areas. Too many children don't have access to safe places to play to ride their bike or just goof around

Bipartisan efforts that recognize conservation is conservative. Alternative energy/pricing carbon. Full funding for LWCF. Expanded federal agency law enforcement to protect public lands from abuse by OHVs and other illegal activities. New mining technologies and regulations that reduce mining's environmental impact. Particularly important due to demand for rare earth metals for alt. energy. We need to address maintenance costs concerns by increasing wilderness designations, and thus having less infrastructure to maintain. Develop a land acquisition vision that prioritizes areas in greatest need of additional public lands/open space-- with an eye towards keeping development in check

Funding, trusting one another, capacity

Build trust, prioritize treasured landscapes, collaborate

To conserve large "working" landscapes that allow for the traditional productive use of the land while maintaining or restoring its conservation value of plant and animal biodiversity.

The use of public/private partnerships and conservation easements, not fee title acquisition. Funded by LWCF dollars. Offer a term easement, similar to the USDA-GRP program. Fund from CRP funds or those contracts expire.

Maintenance of forest health and protection of private forest lands; forest adaptation to climate change; reduction in catastrophic wildfire; private lands staying forested; production of forest products to mitigate climate change and create jobs

Comprehensive strategy: tax policy, partnerships to enhance forest health, reduction of administrative barriers to managing forests, creating incentives to keep private forest land forested

I heard the word "youth" spoken so many times during this conference. It is obvious that there is consensus among the leaders here about the necessity to engage youth in the great outdoor movement. Children and youth will truly value this great American land when they have opportunities to see, touch, smell, and be in environments where they can appreciate the "green" around them. Schools and community organizations need to take responsibility for the teaching of powerful values by teaching and doing. Next we need to train youth to be ready to take jobs in this field. We need to have them become part of the creative problem solving discussion. Engage immigrants who did farming and planting in their counties so that we will be using a "natural resource."

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1. Allow multi-federal agency grant programs to match each other. For example, why couldn't CELP money (NOAA) be used to match FLP grants to state agencies. 2. Expand the allocation of New Markets Tax Credits for economically distressed rural communities. These tax credits can become a huge incentive for directing private investment to help with landscape scale conservation endeavors. Get the US Treasury into Obama's Green Team.

How do human communities grow and have less impact on our natural and cultural resources? Need to find the political calculus to expand LWCF, FLP, CELP, Sect. 6 of ESA, and NAWCA!

More federal/state/local government agency partnerships with nonprofit land trust and the private investment community

Hello. Thank you for putting on this important conference. Here are a few observations you might find helpful. 1) maps given to us were helpful 2) preregistration was not very professional 3) my name was on one list, not for the reception 4) event falls very nice, cordial 5) not sufficient bathrooms/no exact time schedule 6) excellent speakers/ topics but 7) where were Republicans? Talk of bipartisanship, he should have invited a few prominent ones 8) great video - but where was call to action? 9) can pres. speech be sent to us to put on our websites? Just a thought. Excellent gathering -- thank you for all you did to plan it. As an event planner by trade, I know how hard it is!

To expand the connection between all that conserved lands have to offer and all segments of the population, so there is support for the conservation to addressing climate change.

Engage Canadian federal agencies and decision makers on joint efforts to enhance connectivity and landscape conservation in the region. Provide incentives to states to work across borders, states and provinces. Develop policy guidelines on connectivity for states and federal agencies and incentives. Embed connectivity values in the Department of Transportation.

Large landscape conservation that extends from wild core areas, through sustainably managed natural resource lands, to environmental balanced private lands. To do: names some as pilots, work collaboratively across agencies and with communities

1. Expand NRA's urban communities programs such as the NPS River, Trails and Conservation Ass't program. 2. Undertake an extensive assessment and plan to identify critical lands necessary to protect our ecosystems. 3. Establish and enhance programs in our schools, communities re: stewardship

While there are significant budget pressures, it is important to continue to build on this administration's support for key land conservation programs.

Address holdings upfront as part of the designation process by using selections for states, exchanges, buyouts, conservation easements, leases.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Conservation education will determine the future of our outdoor heritage. We must start young to make the connection to nature. By sparking the natural wonder of the outdoors in our youth we will develop stewardship. We have tools (field guides, lesson plans, etc.) as do others. Inventory and select best tools based on results. Share knowledge. Let the work begin...

Devote by land a % of revenues outside the annual appropriations process for energy development/transmission corridors on public lands, onshore and offshore, with equal shares to federal law agencies all to states with a portion set aside for a discretionary fund to spur innovation, partnerships, and special projects.

Ensuring a reliable, predictable funding stream for land/water conservation year to year to encourage better planning, public-private partnerships, multi-year projects, and the like. Overcoming the turf battles/fragmentation in Congress, among federal agencies, among state-led jurisdictions that make coordinated planning, priority setting investments on management needs impossible.

Have never seen this kind of support such a high level for sensible conservation. I appreciate what you have done so far. If there is any way I can help - please let me know.

create awareness of incentives and what's needed for better land use provide access and opportunity to correct people to the land and water resources.

We need to protect large intact ecosystems through the Wilderness Act -- perhaps a large wilderness omnibus bill -- that includes the Interior. We need to pass America's Redrock Wilderness Act in Utah... This is a strategy for survival in the wake of habitat fragmentation, biodiversity -- with the threat of climate change

Strategies: have wilderness protection and wildlife corridors -- be part of Great Outdoors Initiative. We cannot be bullied by the radical right. The majority of Americans find their own sense of democracy tied to the land. We need to honor the vision: like Stewart Udall as a great visionary and Secretary of Interior who honored conservation as a bipartisan concern.

Technical assistance, financial incentives; research & development support for ARS to address cause & effect, and develop treatment technologies

1) funding for public lands that can restore staff, construction, and maintenance budgets 2) look at policy changes that could make people feel more welcome! (work with private sector)

Omnibus bill for Public Lands and this process which is so overdue. I am very excited about the commitment of this administration.

Thanks for supporting wolf delisting and making sure USFWS supports wolf mgmt efforts by western state game and fish agencies.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1) Partner with NGO's and others to convene the listening sessions to maximize trust, constructive dialogue, and the modeling of collaborative work at national level. 2) make your grant and technical assistance programs more flexible, but improve to performance measures targets you use to evaluate how to reach your conservation or restoration objectives. 3) support more cross agency positions like creating rural Community Conservation Coordinator that is 50% economic development (rural development) and 50% restoration conservation 4) Remember the FS is the largest "business" entity in the west. Change your business practices to support rural enterprises involved in conservation activities.

Currently working on water systems in regards to Eurasian mussels. Water infestation in lake meade and lake havisu. Must address more containment on invasive species. Will help habitat by federal govt taking a more proactive role in containment.

Want more advanced mitigation planning by infrastructure agencies – environmental review to access impacts on projects. To buy larger offsets (land acquisition) with more federal support.

We maintain 65 regional parks. We are working with DOI and NPS on joint venture on concord naval warfare station to be an open public space. Support public access and want more access in the future. We also support more easements throughout CA.

More easements. Klamath cascade region – we are trying to encourage retention for water production and wood production. Working with forest service, blm and need more collaboration. Forest legacy and land and water conservation fund must allow nonprofits funding.

National wildlife refuges need to be less isolated. From the sacramento river to the coast range the refuges need to be more accessible.

F-Prioritize and fund outdoor service learning opportunities in schools followed by opportunities for youth training programs after graduation that offer EQUAL scholarship opportunities similar to the military GI bill.

E-Advocate and influence politicians for sustainable job training for green jobs. Use current groups or create a new one to lobby.

B-Create and promote free family outdoor events where they can get active outdoors and obtain free local outdoor experiences.

E-Creating a political platform that focuses on outdoor experiential education curriculum requirements for schools.

C-Pass legislation for environmental education (this is a current bill in congress) pass environmental literacy plans to implement environmental education nation-wide.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

H-During the great depression the federal government created jobs by employing those in need by building trails and conserving wildlife. Create a federal employment program that is environmentally focused.

P-An internship with a federal agency supporting or doing this kind of job.

Pass legislation for environmental education (this is a current bill in congress) pass environmental literacy plans to implement environmental education nation-wide.

During the great depression the federal government created jobs by employing those in need by building trails and conserving wildlife. Create a federal employment program that is environmentally focused.

Advocate for access to public lands

Federal and State lands should be available and usable to public except for special cultural and environmental resources

Suggest private lands conservation must be a priority

Partnership opportunity with fed govt

Land trusts are working on important envr issues, can do more with state and fed funding

Remove prohibition against direct grants

Small investment in kids in outdoors is big investment in future

National landscape conservation system- BLM

Balance agriculture and property rights

Sustainable economy

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Non-profits should be able to hold easements

Fed govt needs to address and contain invasive mussels that threaten CA water distribution

CA's ability to convey water for ag, cities, wildlife is threatened

Federal grant programs help sustain education programs

USDA-creating economic opportunities

Opportunities around climate change - money for conservation can contribute to carbon sequestration

School based programs

Urban parks cost more -- no federal funding for decades. Need partnerships with federal agencies to break down agency barriers

Takes more than talk or messages -- need action, collaboration between PUT landowners and local, state, and federal governments, PUT landowners essential to stewardship

Old days fed would provide technical staff to assist locals

Expand opportunities on federal lands, more than just sportsmen, make opportunities to do other things

Federal agencies duplicating work, structure -- work with companies that have volunteer days

Govt needs to strike a balance among conflicting uses in sensitive areas

-- local governments will maintain -- city/counties will make it happen

Need to bring stakeholders to the table

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal support for youth initiatives such as youth stream monitoring

Create vibrant open spaces that people can use

Multi-federal approach for support is more effective--getting many agencies together for supporting a local initiative

more funding needed for conservation initiatives from multiple sources--Federal, private, lotteries, tax credits

Best practices for developing metrics about conservation initiatives -- improves chances for knowing audience and developing relevant responses and programs

Get kids connected with the land, with being outdoors, with nature at an early age. Teach kids how important conservation is, make it real and doable to kids, make connections between local, small scale activity and the wider good.

Being outdoors is not a priority, get DOE and local school systems involved

LWCF criteria should recognize projects that have partnership components

Need to expand the AGO conversation and replicate on a regular basis

Be more imaginative and flexible, unclear regulations and non-green regulations, offer access to federal employees by youth groups and partners

need federal agencies to treat states as equals

Federal government needs to facilitate these types of gatherings/discussions 3-4 times per year throughout the country

Partnerships with local governments; organization and planning should occur at a regionalized level with federal support

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Private lands conservation: NRCS = assistance only/land owner does conservatio, half the land in ag., could use more employees/range conservationists to work with farmers, one place where additional public employees would be welcome, landscape conservation/private lands -- flexibility in funding and programs, need creativity/loosen reg's that stand in the way, success -- FERC and state examples of creative interp. and use of regs., need message from agency that applicants need to work together to develop a creative solution

Rural legacy program -- block grant model -- administered by nonprofits in an area

Don't compete with programs that are already doing good things -- just because federal government doesn't know bout it, doesn't mean it's not a good program

Conflict among agencies-need integrated regional vision

HUD should be present - need to provide housing before we discuss conservation

New "partnership mode" - need training and funding

Conservation and stewardship hampered by partisanship - tax credits needed

Dedicated funding for this purpose, whether LWCF or otherwise, is critical for states to conserve land and continue connecting growing populations to the outdoors. Stateside LWCF funding has been substantially reduced over the past 5-10 years and general taxpayer funding has been reduced substantially for the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, which has reduced our capacities to meet needs in these areas. Conservation and recreation can be odd at times. However, outdoor recreation is the conduit by which we connect current and future generations connect to the outdoors, and quality natural settings are necessary if we are to conduct these activities. Conservation and outdoor recreation partners need to continue to work together to further shared goals. We need more coordination and collaboration between federal & state agencies, and local governments and other outdoor recreation and conservation stakeholders. Institutional barriers need to be broken down so all parties can be on the same page. Additional outdoor recreation planning expertise integrated within all levels of land use planning will also ensure that more connections to the outdoors are available for the public to enjoy and benefit from.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dedicate Funding. Fully fund the LWCF program with a 50-50 apportionment b/w the federal and stateside funding. Additional sources of funding may need to be dedicated to conservation, outdoor recreation, and connecting people to the outdoors. **SCORP Planning.** SCORP planning should be strongly supported, with federal agencies playing a meaningful role in each plan's development. States need to be provided with additional resources and support for plan implementation. **Partnerships.** Continuing and expanding partnerships with private industry groups, non-profit organizations, state agencies and local governments to leverage support for outdoor recreation initiatives and programs. **Standardized Data and Defensible Research.** By providing standardized, high quality data (GIS or otherwise) pertaining to land conservation and outdoor recreation (i.e., acres conserved trail mapping, etc), progress in specific areas can be meaningfully measured and contrasted over time and between states. This may be helpful in identifying regional needs as well. In addition, defensible research on the benefits of outdoor recreation and connecting people to the outdoors is critical. **Connect the Dots.** Land conservation, paired with outdoor recreation, play an integral role in building healthier and more sustainable communities. Continue to expand dialogue and the connection between outdoor recreation, conservation, public health, and overall quality of life.

The continuing loss of farmland, at a time when the importance of fresh locally produced food is becoming increasingly apparent as a matter of public health and food security, indicates the need to take action on every level to support the economic viability of the region's farmers.

Farmers in the Hudson Valley often feel that government agencies at all level, including the federal, do not respect their importance to the local economy or the potential they hold to strengthen the food system in the metropolitan area. Yet it is hard to make the case for their importance because the best data we have is from the Ag Census. And while it is extremely useful - as evidenced above, we use it to the fullest extent possible - it does not adequately capture detailed information about the kind of farming we have in this region: small and mid-size farmers with mixed production. So we don't have enough clarity in the data as it applies to our smaller, diversified farmers who are making a living at farming.

Allow for term environmental market agreements to be broadly implemented and accepted for resource management objectives. This will secure intergenerational landowner participation and security.

Allow direct access to federal funding initiatives such as Farm Bil-based programs and the Land and Water Conservation Fund for any permanent or term tools that achieves defined conservation objectives.

Additional Secretarial leadership and guidance is necessary for the development of SCORPs (i.e., both process and content). It is important that the federal agencies are directed to meaningfully participate in the SCORP planning process and duly consider the resulting plan in subsequent federal planning. (Note: SCORP is not and should never be a federal planning effort, but our federal agencies will significantly benefit from meaningful collaboration in terms of assembling data, research, public values, trends, gaps, niches, vision, and partnerships; and thus make subsequent individual federal planning efforts more effective and efficient).

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1. Fund a nationally comprehensive analysis of the availability of and safe access to natural play spaces and parks and access to organized exploration and educational programs. Focus new infrastructure developments (including outdoor infrastructure such as play spaces and safe routes to parks, bike paths, etc.) and new education programming within rural and urban areas of greatest need. Analyze not only geographic barriers but also cultural and social barriers to accessing natural spaces, parks, and educational opportunities.

2. Engage Youth in the Outdoors through the School Day by collaborating with the department of education and local school leadership to engage school children in outdoor learning and opportunities that will develop active responsible citizens who are prepared to make decisions about our public lands and future environmental challenges.

a. Leverage programs that help develop future stewards and connect school children to our public lands before, during and after the school day.

b. Support the establishment of schoolyard learning environments, habitats and gardens and provide classroom teachers with training in using outdoor environments to meet learning goals. Focus school engagement in communities lacking safe access to natural play areas and environmental education programs.

c. Support environmental education legislation including the No Child Left Inside Act (H.R. 2054 / S.866) that would provide funding for outdoor and field-based learning and train teachers to provide quality environmental education to students.

d. Promote pre-service teaching requirements that includes outdoor and environmental education training for educators.

3. Focus on strategies that are inclusive of all communities and cultures. Identify ways that our natural species and educational programming is unintentionally exclusive. Develop strategies that serve diverse audiences, and reflect the changing demographics of our country, by building partnerships with organizations that serve communities of color and increasing the diversity of those employed as educators or on public lands, especially in leadership positions.

4. Support Passage of the Moving Outdoors in Nature section of the Healthy CHOICES Act (H.R. 5209) and request funding in the fiscal year 2012 budget to pilot the initiatives outlined in the bill. Moving Outdoors in Nature supports development and implementation of state strategies that connect children with the great outdoors through multi-sector policies (recreation and conservation, transportation and build environment, health and wellness, and education) Including those that: 1) support outdoor recreation programs, 2) promote public health initiatives, 3) create community based natural play areas, 4) develop trails and greenways to connect parks and outdoor recreation areas with places where children live, learn and play, 5) create outdoor learning environments, and 6) other efforts to connect children, youth and families with nature.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

5. Create Smarter Federal Coordination on Behalf of Children and the Outdoors by establishing a multi-agency coordinating council to foster collaboration at the federal level to educate and reconnect Americans, especially children and youth, with the natural world and create a national strategic plan to implement the findings of the council.

a. Multiple federal departments, agencies and offices play a role reconnecting Americans with nature and have the capacity to leverage existing programs and funding streams to meet this goal.

b. A multi-agency coordinating council should include participation from the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the White House Office on Women and Girls, the Department of the Interior, the Department of the Surgeon General, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, the Department of Commerce, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, and others.

c. The Coordinating Council should recruit organizations working in conservation, recreation and health in an advisory board and engage youth leaders in the decision making process.

Our ideas for this initiative specific to Colorado's public lands are: 1. The Obama administration should protect large landscapes, including our healthy wildlands and rivers, connecting them with working forest and ranch lands, private lands and the connections across these large areas. Protect large natural areas such as:

- San Miguel River corridor - This river corridor not only provides stunning natural scenery, it also supports a healthy and diverse ecosystem that provides treasured open space and valuable wildlife habitat.
- Western Colorado's Gateway area - This stunning redrock valley draws diverse recreational use and creates an ecological bridge between river canyons and tributaries and verdant forests, and includes the towering cliffs of the Palisade.
- Wildlands of the Arkansas River Watershed - These ecologically rich, lower elevation lands provide essential habitat, protect major water supplies, and provide quiet recreation opportunities for two million people living nearby. Protecting these public lands and rivers will provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while conserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. This will give us the opportunity to actively reconnect our children to their incredible natural heritage.

2. Reaffirm and implement BLM's authority to establish Wilderness Study Areas. This effort should include giving the BLM the authority to establish new wilderness Study Areas and to protect the wilderness characteristics of those areas. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land across the West that were identified by citizens and BLM as worthy of wilderness designation have been leased, and they deserve both a commitment and an approach to real protection before they are lost forever.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

3. Create a comprehensive 'Quiet Recreation Strategy' for federal lands in Colorado. This strategy should variously provide for non-motorized activities such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing, family camping, wildlife photography, and more. A formalized acknowledgement should create more sustainable use of our lands while encouraging things like stewardship, trail maintenance, volunteerism, and getting youth outdoors. Using Colorado as a pilot project for a Quiet Recreation Strategy will also provide a sustainable use model for the rest of the country to follow.

4. Support and implement more science-based management of our resources in Colorado. This science based management needs to provide a better understanding of the impacts of conflicting land uses on other resources across the landscape. Colorado is fortunate enough to have many important native species, such as sage grouse, which would benefit from the incorporation of a more science-based management plan for their protection.

5. Support opportunities for sportsmen to continue enjoying healthy and challenging hunting and fishing on federal public lands and rivers. Preserve the values and access that make backcountry hunting a wholly unique endeavor. This can be done through a variety of measures, including through the designation of backcountry hunting Special Recreation Management Areas, as has been proposed by the Jarbridge, Idaho and Little Snake Colorado BLM Field Offices in their respective Resource Management Plan revisions.

Protecting, connecting, and restoring our public lands should be a critical component of a successful America's Great Outdoors. Thank you for taking this important first step and beginning the conversation for conserving our natural heritage and reconnecting Americans to nature.

Direct federal conservation funding to landscapes in which existing collaboratives like the Rio Grande Legacy Project in the San Luis Valley and the Peak to Prairie Project on the eastern plains to provide the strategy, experience and coordination for watershed wide success.

Focus federal programs on landscape scale priority areas; Place a high priority on protecting, reconnecting, and restoring aquatic systems. Coordinate efforts of federal agencies and existing programs to accomplish this.

Provide for federal funds to be used for 3rd party easements. Easements held by local land trusts are a cost effective tool to achieve conservation outcomes.

Increase funding for Farm Bill conservation programs (e.g., GRP, FRPP) and allocate funds based on conservation outcomes in priority areas Increase coordination between DOI and NRCS on priorities so Farm Bill programs achieve conservation goals in addition to landowner goals.

Permanently allocate full funding for LWCF and establish a competitive grant program emphasizing private landowners, easements, working lands and riparian wildlife corridors. Build on the successful efforts of on the ground collaborative groups like the Rio Grande Legacy Project, the Peak to Prairie Partnership, etc.

Maintain and expand federal tax incentives for conservaiton easements.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Landowners are decades ahead of the majority of conservation initiatives through their own resource stewardship practices. Offer to understand and learn about these initiatives and find ways to be part of the solution.

The 1965 Land and Water Conservation Fund Act requires the preparation of a statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP) in order for states to receive SWCF funds. Every five years, all 50 states and territories develop and submit a SCORP to the NPS. Each federal resource agency has its own planning legislation and regulations, promulgated by NEPA. Our federal agencies develop plans for their own jurisdiction. That is, federal agencies are not authorized or responsible for statewide comprehensive planning. The LWCF SCORP program was administered by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation for a decade, then shifted to the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service until HRS was disbanded in 1981, and is administered today by 1.5 FTE within the NPW WO. The nature of administering the SCORP program has gone from a proactive, collaborative, interagency resource/support program to simply a LWCF stateside grants program (i.e., a check the box program). Along with the 30-year shift in program administration from a federal Bureau to 1.5 FTE, LWCF funding during this time has been erratic and declining. The relatively few dollars on the stateside has influenced the quality, integrity and utility of SCORPs. That is, today SCORPs are largely viewed as simply an administrative requirement necessary to secure stateside LWCF funding.

It is commonly recognized by the NPS and the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners that the number of "good" SCORP plans in the nation is few. The SCORPs recently prepared by Colorado, Wisconsin, Oregon, Georgia, and dVirginia are commendable. The declining respect and utility of SCORPs over the years is recognized by others, and thus involvement and collaboration in the planning process by our federal agencies has waned. The LWCF Act provides minimal guidance for what a SCORP should contain, but does allow the Secretary of the Interior to add additional requirements as deemed appropriate, both in process and context.

When one views a "state's landscape", there are hundreds of agencies and organizations involved in resource conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors (i.e., public, private, ngo, districts, communities, trusts, counties, state and federal). The problem is not the number of players, programs, resources, personnel, competency, energy, or other assets. The problem is our human nature to confine ourselves and operate within our "institutional walls" --- we have hundreds of disconnected agencies and organizations spread across the landscape of any state, akin to farm silos and oil derricks across the Colorado landscape. We need a bridge and conduit that will connect the hundreds of agencies and organizations within a state or region within. We need a forum and state to build a shared local and community-centered vision. We need a process that will facilitate communication, coordination and collaboration, and one that will build partnerships. We need a statewide plan that will help to build a system of resources from a desperate collection of resources, that will identify the voids and gaps within, and one that will enhance effective and efficiency at all levels of government. Ironically, we have had the mechanism in place to do just this for almost 50 years.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Each of the five initiatives was designed by a working group assembled by our Chief State Officers with appropriate leadership, six-state membership, and senior officials from your own federal agencies. The working groups responded energetically to this opportunity in the belief that effective regional action will add value to their own state's related agenda and goals, especially in a time of severe state budget stringency. At the same time, they believe this a most auspicious time to undertake these initiatives in light of the Obama Administration's express interest in addressing the nation's resource management issues at landscape and regional scales, especially through demonstration projects that link the public, private and philanthropic sectors, and honor the nation's heritage of private land ownership.

A 2009 series of forums with concerned citizens across New England convinced the Commission that New England must once again lead the nation, this time through a new and collaborative partnership among the public, private and non-governmental actors necessary to successful land conservation in the 21st Century. From this process the Commission developed a set of core principles to guide its work and the actions of its partners, including: • New England enjoys one of the most privately-owned and stewarded landscapes in the nation, and the Commission seeks to honor and strengthen this tradition in all its work; • It is today insufficient to view land conservation as a "good" solely for its natural benefits; it must today be linked directly with economic and social benefits, as well. • Multi-state collaboration toward New England land conservation, to protect and preserve this important natural heritage at a regional scale, is a matter of national interest, particularly in light of climate change and its impacts; and is, therefore, deserving of federal support.

The five national demonstration projects proposed by the Commission and endorsed by the Governors are organized around the shared themes of: • Making the regions's working lands more financially viable, and convertine their public benefits from liabilities to assets;

Enhancing economic, environmental, and social resilience across the region, to create more prosperous and sustainable resource-based industries and communities; Educating the general public to the many public benefits of the landscape and its wise use, and cultivating a conservation ethic as an active duty of citizenship;

Assuring full and effective coordination among the five initiatives, to realize the full complement of benefits that will be realized at a cost of some \$200 million over three years for the five demonstration projects.

We now ask the Obama Administration to create a working group of senior officials from your departments to work with us to flesh out fully the five national demonstration projects, and to establish the collaborative relationships needed to realize their full benefits to New England and the nation. This would include the U.S. Forest Service and USDA Rural Development and Natural Resource Conservation Service; the National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; and NOAA Office of Coastal Resource Management. The CLC will meet next here in mid-September, and it would be wonderful to have these collaborators in place in time for this meeting.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1. Local incentives - We have several very effective sources of funding here in Colorado, including Great Outdoors Colorado, but they alone are not enough to meet the demand for conservation from landowners. CCALT has an immediate backlog of more the \$100 million in high quality projects. Federal investments, particularly in those areas that are not wealthy enough to develop local funding sources are a critical part to being able to protect key ranchlands that buffer National Forests, BLM canyon country, National Wildlife Refuges, and even State and National Parks.

2. Federal Programs - There are a number of important federal programs such as the Natural Resource Conservation Services, Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and the Grasslands Reserve Program which are very effective in protecting private lands. Full funding of these programs is critical. Small changes such as removing cash matching fund requirements and allowing for the programs to pay for transaction costs associated with conservation easements will only increase their effectiveness.

3. We urge you to make important changes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund that would allow qualified non-profit conservation organizations to compete for and effectively use those funds for conservation. There are literally hundreds of places in Colorado alone where key private lands adjacent to iconic federal lands are threatened with conversion. LWCF funding, leveraged with our state resources, could protect those landscapes at a fraction of the cost of outright acquisition, which is also often opposed by local communities in the West. Colorado would be please to be a pilot program for such an effort, and show just how effective this approach can be.

4. Contrary to what some may say, there are thousands of family farms and ranches across the West that are threatened with the possibility that the land may be lost to pay the estate tax after a death in the family. There are several proposals being suggested to address this, including one by our Congressman John Salazar. We urge you to take this point into consideration in your recommendations.

5. Finally, we urge you to make the conservation easement income tax incentive permanent. Nationally, this single incentive nearly doubled the pace of land conservation since it was instituted in 1996. In closing, we have the opportunity to protect the West's iconic working ranch landscapes, but only if we work with private agricultural landowners. Based on our success and the backlog of conservation projects waiting for funding, the landowners are ready and we have the appropriate tools to accomplish this work. We simply lack the funding to allow all of us to accomplish our conservation goals. Thank you again for coming to Colorado to listen to our vision for conservation.

Of the overwhelming majority of Congressmen and Senators who vote on issues such as Wilderness, National Monuments, Conservation Areas, and other such designation, how many of them even KNOW what true Wilderness even is? How many have personally experienced designated Wilderness to know the real difference between Wilderness and non-Wilderness? Do they really take into account of all the many resources they make inaccessible when putting these designations onto an area? Not just the physical resources. The Historical resources. The Scenic resources. The Hunting and Fishing resources. Even just the Access resources.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The first thing the federal government can do to become much more effective is to balance the staffs of land management agencies with people who are "Pro-Motorized Use". Presently, the overwhelming numbers of "preservationist" leaning personnel can and do intimidate those with "Pro-Motorized Use" thinking to the point of having them transferred or fired. Some of the most knowledgeable members of a land management agency office are often the ones who spend much of their time "in the field". They know the physical land well and are seeing the changes needed in "real time".

Another way the federal government can be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors is to promote Universities and Colleges with Forestry, Geology, land use policy, and related studies with a more balanced curriculum. Currently the overwhelming number of Professors teach the "Preservationist" view only. A more balanced approach to education is necessary for the correct management of "public lands".

Forests are being decimated by bug infestations which lead to wildfires because present policies have precluded logging and other uses of the renewable resources. Proper land management would include select logging in areas with mature trees. Newer technologies and machinery can and should be used to "manage" these resources. It can and will help make the forests more:

- Healthy
- protect them from huge wildfires and insects
- promote local economies with jobs
- promote income from resource sales to the federal government
- protect watersheds
- promote recreation opportunities

In other words, everybody wins... except the "Preservationists" who will not be satisfied no matter what you do.

I manage three tracts of land, and two of these tracts are close to the Uwharrie National forest. My largest tract of 534 acres shares a boundary with the national forest. Along a shared road, the Uwharrie National forest goes beyond this tract, and the U.S. Forest Service has used my fire roads in the past to access wildfires. Many family forest owners across the country are similarly positioned near national parks or forests. I share this to emphasize the role that America's family-owned forests play in the conservation of America's Great Outdoors. Our privately held forestland is not "an island unto itself", what we do on our property and our ability to continue to manage our land well, impacts the neighboring federal lands. Many who recreate in national forests go there for the solitude or the scenic beauty my neighboring land is a key part of this experience, even if they never step foot on my property. Additionally, if I'm not able to manage my land well my federal neighbors are impacted, just as I'm impacted if the federal land is not managed well. An "all lands" approach, focusing on conservation and management of both public and private forests is essential to conserving America's Great Outdoor.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Second, I am gravely concerned about the effects of the estate tax on the ability of family forest owners to keep their land in the family. Often, the high costs due to the state tax to transfer land to the next generation result in fragmentation. MY first two tracts are in a family LLC. There are many restrictions included to protect the land from member sales and tax burdens that often causes fragmentation of our privately held land. However, this was a very expensive and burdensome legal process. Many family forest owners cannot afford to put their land in an LLC. Congress needs to find a fix to the estate tax that removes some of the tax burden of generational transfer and will encourage continued management and conservation of family forest lands. H.R. 5475, The Family Farm Estate Tax Relief Act of 2010, introduced by Rep. Mike Thompson (R-CA) is a good start to finding a solution.

In addition to the specific thoughts below, I would like to add my support for increasing federal programs and incentives that support the conservation of our working forestland -- specifically funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Forest Legacy Program, increased funding in the Farm Bill and extension of conservation tax incentives. Consideration also should be given to new federal programs with regional applicability.

Increasing and targeting federal funding: The most crucial and timely opportunity the federal government has now to protect the great outdoors is to support full, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million a year. Funds for key federal conservation programs, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund and those in the Farm Bill, should be increased and targeted for the purchase of conservation easements and for public acquisition of sites of high biological value. This expansion of funding programs for public land acquisition and acquiring conservation easements on private lands will help connect entire landscapes that are intermixed with private and public lands. Now is the opportunity for Congress to restore its original promise to fully fund LWCF at 900M per year - through new legislation that makes it permanent, dedicated funding. More tax incentives for conservation easements are also needed as well as other tools that sustain private conservation land stewardship.

Flexibility for federal programs: Encourage and allow federal agencies to collaborate across agency lines, connect and focus existing federal programs within project areas and make the spending of those funds more flexible to meet local needs. This includes giving the local branches of Federal agencies more ability to implement grants and programs, collaboratively, in ways that fit a particular place.

Private landowners have a critical role to play: in buffering and connecting conservation areas within a landscape context and should be involved throughout planning and implementation of the federal conservation approach. Conservation easement funding in target areas that is available to eligible non-governmental organizations will incentivize conservation among ranching and agricultural constituencies.

Support existing homegrown conservation efforts that are poised for greater success with more focused support by private and public partners. The landowners and agency partners are already in place, providing additional funding will help these opportunities become larger, more successful, and be reproduced in neighboring and other landscapes.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As you may know, Ducks Unlimited has proposed that the portion of the U.S. Prairie Pothole Region with significant expanses of native prairie and abundant wetlands - the eastern Dakotas - be designated for inclusion in the Administration's Great Outdoors conservation initiative. The goal of this project is to secure in perpetuity 2.5 million acres of grasslands and associated grasslands through the purchase of conservation easements and the expansion of the National Wildlife Refuge System lands in the Dakotas.

- Include America's Byways as equal partners with National Parks, National Forests and Grasslands, National wildlife Refuges and BLM lands in the Federal resources that reconnect Americans to the outdoors.
- Place the emphasis on "America's Great Outdoors" that not only includes the treasured outdoor assets that are in Federal and State ownership, but also those that are in the neighborhoods where Americans live, and receive the most frequent daily use. These sites utilize the intrinsic natural, historic and cultural resources that build pride in the places we live and visit.
- Provide a place at the America's Great Outdoors table for national not-for-profit partners that serve as advocates for National Parks, National Forests and America's Byways to collaborate with education, agriculture and economic development interests.
- Provide funding for capacity building of the organizations that will provide the programs and resources to implement recreation and conservation programs in addition to "bricks and mortar" projects.
- Remember that the road to conservation and developing a passion for the outdoors is when an experience strikes an emotional chord. This happens when people connect with people.

There are growing and exciting efforts here to restore New York - New Jersey Harbor Estuary. It is a partnership that brings together the Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and numerous state, local, and civic partners. Its epicenter is Jamaica Bay, approximately 25,000 acres of wetlands that are part of Gateway National Recreation Area and Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Several related efforts in and around the Bay provide a model for how local-state-federal cooperation can restore damaged ecosystems, improve public access and quality of life, manage growing flood hazards, and create jobs and economic opportunities. These are key opportunities in engaging young people in outdoor recreation and stewardship of our natural resources.

I believe these efforts, taken as a package, could provide a new model for the management of natural resources in an urban setting. This model brings together federal agencies, specifically NPS, ACOE, and EPA, around a common set of objectives. Implementation by federal agencies and local partners creates jobs for local residents and lasting economic value in urban communities. The end result is federal land providing outdoor recreation and educational opportunities for young people and increased resilience to sea level rise and coastal storms.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The President needs to include the two largest forms of recreation as a priority in his plan to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. That would be Off Highway Vehicle recreation and Mountain Biking. More areas need to be opened to people who enjoy these most popular ways to enjoy the outdoors.

Changing the access rights to this much land is unacceptable to any and all avid outdoors people.

Protect large landscapes: Opportunities for park expansion

The federal government needs to increase funding for conservation easements that protect private lands on the borders of our national parks. The Federal government also should promote efforts at regional consultation between the National Park Service, other federal agencies, and state and local governments

Once again, the stewardship of these lands requires a fully and permanently funded Land and Water Conservation Fund, able to finance acquisitions and easements that protect the trail's scenic corridor.

The Ocmulgee River corridor south of Macon contains a wealth of natural and cultural resources. The opportunity now exists to provide landscape-level protection for this corridor through the innovative use of a dual National Park and Preserve designation.

The Greater Macon Chamber of commerce, in consultation with the National Park Service, is seeking to undertake a study of the potential for enlarging the boundary of the Ocmulgee National Monument. The Monument embodies the vestiges of over 12,000 years of Native American culture. It is viewed by the Muscogee (Creek) people as "the place we first sat down," meaning the place where ancestral Muscogean peoples stopped their nomadic wanderings and first became a settled agricultural civilization. It is also viewed by contemporary Native Americans as the "Cradle of the Creek Confederacy", which played such a critical and tragic role in the early history of the United States. Thus, an expansion of the National Monument would provide the medium for communicating a superior telling of the ancestral Muscogean story and its intersection with American history. Ideally, a boundary adjustment for the Monument would extend to the northern border of the Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. It would include the full extent of the Ocmulgee Old Fields and as much of the Muscogee Traditional Cultural Property as possible.

In addition to the boundary expansion, local Macon-area citizens, along with the Georgia Wildlife Federation and the National Parks Conservation Association are requesting that congress designate a National Preserve to safeguard in perpetuity wildlife habitat and natural areas along the Ocmulgee River, from Bond Swamp south, incorporating the Oaky Woods and Ocmulgee state Wildlife Management Areas (see Appendix A).

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The importance of this broader river corridor south of Macon is widely acknowledged. In 2004 a resolution passed both the House (HR 1256) and Senate (SR755) of the Georgia General Assembly.... "Urging the Congress of the United States to consider creating a national preserve or other similar federal property to protect land and other natural resources and promote hunting and fishing in a continuous corridor of the Ocmulgee and Altamaha Rivers in central and south Georgia: and for other purposes" (see Appendix B).

The Federal government has a critical role to play in supporting and completing these efforts, if potentially nationally significant resources are to be protected for future generations.

One potential solution to protecting this corridor would be to designate the Altamaha as a National River. Congress should strongly consider this possibility, as was requested by the Georgia General Assembly in 2004.

Next year, 2011 , marks the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Monument. It would be a fitting gift to the citizens of Georgia and to the American people to see the original vision of Congress finally fulfilled. Ideally, a boundary adjustment for the monument would extend to the northern border of the Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. It would include the full extent of the Ocmulgee Old Fields and as much of the Muscogee Traditional Cultural Property as possible. It should also include the Brown's Mount archaeological site and , possibly, Fort Hawkins.

The continuing loss of public hunting lands and hunting opportunities in middle Georgia, especially as regards units of the state Wildlife Management Area system that are under lease, rather than being owned by the state. There re many such units throughout the state and their long-term security and public accessibility are in question and under threat. The "poster-child" for this quandary is the Oaky Woods WMA.

The long-term conservation and management of the unique and isolated Central Georgia black bear population that also occupies and is largely confined to the Oaky Woods and Ocmulgee WMAs and adjacent properties. This population has been cut off from Georgia's two other larger and healthier bear populations (those in the Chattahoochee National Forest area in the north and the Akefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in the south) and it may be genetically distinct. The Central Georgia bear population is greatly in need of further study and enhanced habitat protection and management.

Pressures on the river corridor continue to build. Due to the fact that this is an election year, we are writing to urge you to sponsor legislation to authorize a Special Resource Study and to shepherd it through the hearing process before the Congressional recess begins in August. In the absence of such both to Georgians and to other conservation minded citizens.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Timber Reserve. The management orientation of the U.S. Forest Service should be changed. Its role as a commodity producer of forest products should be terminated. In the forest products area, its role should be returned to its original one of holding a forest reserve. Its timber resource should be held as a reserve against catastrophic events. Rather than providing a stream of subsidized products to the market, it should develop and maintain a reserve of old growth forest to be used only in emergencies when no other source is available.

North Shore Road Settlement. By a contract finalized on 6 February 2010 the Department of the Interior, TV A, the State of North Carolina and Swain County, North Carolina agreed to a monetary settlement of the North Shore Road Controversy. The agreement calls for the Department of the Interior to pay Swain County \$52 million in lieu of building a road in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Of the promised amount, \$12.8 million has been paid. The contract contemplates payment of the balance in installments. Care much be taken to make sure this agreement is not forgotten, or the payments stretched out interminably. The Department of the Interior should have its budget preparation process programmed to provide appropriation of an annual installment on this debt.

We urge you to consider locating the LA area Great Outdoors America listening session in the San Gabriel Valley, a major population center in Los Angeles County adjacent to the San Gabriel Mountains. We would especially recommend consideration of major Valley cities such as El Monte or Pasadena. The San Gabriel Valley has a unique relationship to nearby urban Los Angeles providing it with over 70% of its open space and hosting over three million visitors a year, rivaling the visitation level at major national parks.

Currently, the National Park Service is conducting a special resources study of the San Gabriel Mountains and watershed that could help improve recreation opportunities for families and address the major recreation deficiencies of the San Gabriel Valley through the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in LA County's Westside serves as a shining example of what is possible. We believe that LA County's Eastside - the San Gabriel Valley - deserves the same. The creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area should be part of our national public lands agenda, and this would be facilitated by the San Gabriel Valley location of the listening session.

If the goal of America's great outdoors is to reconnect people to the outdoors and activities please encourage scientifically based, as opposed to ideologically based management of the population of all species of animals inhabiting the National Grassland. Further, encourage use of the grasslands by maintaining access for all people no matter what their limitations are. Restrictive designations, reservations and/or areas will not achieve the goal of reconnecting all people with the outdoors.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would like to invite you to hold one of these sessions out in the Pacific Northwest, specifically in the Puget Sound Region. I believe that the Puget Sound area and its surrounding watersheds and forests present an ideal representation of the kind of area that has tremendous natural resource values, significant an growing public use, and the need for a more comprehensive and coordinated level of protection and management. The people of the region are starting to take a look at landscape scale planning from the mountains to the Sound.

Washington State and local county and city governments are making major commitments to protect and restore Puget Sound - creating a working plan and strategy under the direction of the Puget Sound Partnership. However, these efforts to protect the upper watersheds and increase coordination and funding of management plans in the lower watersheds, forests, and Puget Sound would benefit from a greater level of integration and attention. I believe the mountains, watersheds, forests, and Puget Sound - from the snowcaps to the whitecaps - provide an ideal place for realizing the full potential of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

The focus needs to be on preserving every inch of space as wilderness. Keep everyone - including gentle users - out. For the rest of the forest, parks, etc. have signs of no litter, and enforce whatever weak laws there might be. A ranger visiting the East Fork on a weekend could give lots of citations if time is taken to watch people.

We appreciate that President Obama has made the future of the United State's land resources a high priority. We look forward to a continuing discussion with you and the Federal agencies that are partnered on this initiative. We are particularly encouraged that the President seeks to recognize the importance of conservation on private lands and the hard work that local communities have undertaken to establish land conservation priorities. All of these are worthy of expanded funding in recognition that they are investments in the natural infrastructure of the nation, supporting many basic services and economies.

We ask for your support of several specific Federal programs that are particularly valuable to land conservation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and on most lands in the Eastern United States, where conservation of private property has to be part of national, state and regional conservation strategies. These polices enable us to cement the many thousands of parcels of land, each individually beautiful and valuable, into a landscape mosaic which is more than just the sum of its parts.

Make permanent the expanded Federal income tax incentives for land placed into conservation easement. These incentives, coupled with state and local tax incentives, have resulted in millions of acres of land conservation across the United States since 2001

Support an expansion of the Estate Tax exemption for land under conservation easement.

Increase funding for the American Battlefield program in recognition of the tremendous public awareness of Civil War resources during the 150th anniversary.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increase funding for the Farm and Ranch Protection Program, which enables entire farms to be conserved with conservation easements.

Going forward, Federal land conservation initiatives need to recognize, celebrate and enable solutions that match these interrelated values. Tools that are flexible and not limited to one objective are more likely to benefit the conservation opportunities in this region. A typical property in the Mid-Atlantic, and particularly in Virginia, includes land which is visible from a state designated Scenic Byway, soils which can produce food for the region, streams which supply water for both local drinking water systems as well as the Chesapeake Bay, and forests which help clean our air and water. All of these interrelated resources are valued by the community which sees the property on a daily basis, drinks the water which flows through the streams and is cleaned by the forests, and eats the food which comes from the property's farmland. Moving into the future, it is critical for federal programs to acknowledge and celebrate these multiple layers of conservation benefit.

In closing, I strongly urge to include this project in the Great Outdoors America initiative, and pledge to work closely with you and other partner organizations to make it a successful and historic conservation achievement.

Government Rule - Natural Disasters and commercial off shore -- drilling

Protection from Chemicals what about genetic hormones seeds?

We need to be sure that each of the 3 branches of this restoration receive equal representation and that the economies and industry do not overpower more nonprofit environmental groups. Need to expand the picture to NJ as this is the NY/NJ Harbor.

New York Harbor needs an integrated plan for mitigation banking that will facilitate large-scale restoration projects.

To turn the CRP into reality: need programmatic authorities and apropos. For the family of federal agencies participating in CRP. This makes us steady and predictably reliable partners to our state, local, civic area, and NGO partners.

Expedited, prioritization of projects: the list is done. Now is the time for action. Fund restoration directly to local sponsor.

Work to develop broad-based grassroots understanding of the need to restore the estuary - to build political will among elected officials.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

From the perspective of a scientist: integrate geographic unites that are connected by moving water and a related ecosystem. Focus on restoration of "ecosystem engineers," species that provide the matrix for ecosystem function: e.g., marshes, oysters, eel grass, etc. Avoid any organizational structure that defeats pts 1 & 2

DOI needs to unleash the private sector to reach its goals. Work hard on reviewing and revising regulations to achieve above; this requires great critical thinking.

Need to accommodate the vetors of change in coastal systems

Identify, preserve, and protect the remaining natural areas surrounding Jamaica Bay. Promote the significance of the national resources on a national level - not something local. National significance = national decisions.

A plan to restore and conserve waterways which will be institutionalized and mimic throughout administrations. Consulting with the communities ensuring they are involved.

Capitalize on the CESU mechanism to support science-based management of natural areas. Advance the seamless network of protected areas to foster working partnerships on behalf of natural areas.

For public involvement - find the "big idea" that links all experience - water's role in NY/NJ history. Coordinate partners' efforts consistently.

Need "administration" culture change - that the best investment in environmental restoration and urban park improvement are in a city like NY where we have 400 years of urbanization and deterioration. NYC has lost >75% of its wetlands and struggles in contaminated sites. 26m people need these quality of life improvements. Need to maintain robust federal, state, and local funding in restoration projects.

School children have few opportunities for outdoor experience beyond their local parks. Recommend expanding outdoor overnight camping in Gateway and other parks and environmental education programs.

Encourage collaborative programs with elementary children to learn about conservation first-hand and to foster conservation especially in urban areas. (Education at any level is great!) Pick local restoration projects that can be managed in conjunction with local NGO groups and government to promote conservation ethics and commitment.

Everyone in this room is old enough to be my parent or grandparent. There should be more youth involved. Go out to the schools and pass index cards there. Show them who runs the NPS and the thousands of opportunities they have. In 20 or 40 years they will be sitting here running the parks, show them the National Parks you represent.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Build upon "ken burns mentality" and rebrand NPS website, educational opportunities, and expectation of Americans to play a role in conserving and celebrating national park sites. Do this as part of 2016 centennial.

We need to get the National Park Service into the educational system. Having park rangers take trips to NYC schools will enforce schools to take trips to our national parks in the NY harbor and beyond.

Maximize the use of waterborne transport to connect people to the resources and the resources to one another. Focus on environmental education.

The key to access is affordable water transportation that links all major U.S. state and city parks. We need regional management systems - one harbor, another for Hudson River Valley. The key to mgt success is enduring partnerships with civic and enviro groups.

Make our parks accessible by water as well as by land. To the greatest extent possible ensure continuous waterfront access across all parks. More access into the water for people and human powered boats.

Coordinating task force for region, too many agencies. Pay attention to developments in conservation biology, especially landscape ecology, also endangered species. Look for solutions that help people and nature, like coastal preservation.

Federal commission should be established to spearhead restoration efforts in and around Jamaica Bay. All restoration efforts should be coupled with access and recreation programs; perhaps driven by private sector.

Improve the flow of federal dollars to the NGO community to improve science and implementation of ecosystem restoration. Promote a more coordinated and singular voice from the federal govt.

Create areas to be conserved for the future. Create areas to be utilized for recreation by the people for now and the future.

Human resources - Staff with authority to marshal resources that must be put together across agencies, tasked with particular projects and result.

NPS needs to expand its commitment to partnerships. Legacy containment sites in NY Harbor must be cleaned up.

Fully recognize the importance of the government's private partners, and be willing to empower those partners so they can get their jobs done efficiently.

Leadership - empower a core team to distill information and implement i.e. make decisions.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Create a new partnership directly with county and local govt to partner cost share and help finance land protection in important watersheds. Help finance cost share and partner with habitat restoration of Long Is Sound.

Establish avenues for public/private partnerships to implement projects. Enlist congressional champions to for restoration.

Do more oyster restoration. We need NJ sites for recreation.

Improve access to J-Bay via Bennet Field. Enable energy and environmental projects via ppp's. Raise standards. Create new transportation links/modes to ??

Need consortium of partners which will then be funded by the administration and congress to implement the comprehensive restoration plan. Programmatic authorization needed (like Everglades or Great Lakes). Need Champions and steadfast commitment to fund and construct restoration projects and enhance policies to enable, improve and overcome regulations hurdles.

We need to create contingency plans for how we keep a system of waterfront parks in the face of rising water levels. How do we build an infrastructure in the Fed Govt to ensure attention is paid to urban national (and muni) parks as administrations change/

Purchase all available coastal property for the public.

1. Fair share funding for NY/NJ Harbor via advocacy coalition to prioritize money to this region. 2. Strengthen the grass roots network and NGO's to bring everyone to the water, teach kids to swim; subsidize a free ferry system; provide access to water, views and transportation.

Democratic ideas of most outdoors for most people - no better place than NY and Hudson. New Yorkers hunger for direct physical contact with the natural world. Great need for access - especially small docks everywhere.

Transform Floyd Bennett Field into the centerpiece of the Gateway National Park by creating areas for public access and recreation. Appropriate funding for wetlands restoration projects in J-Bay.

MMS/BOEM Reorg- Ensure offshore will is not lost in MMS/BOEM restructure. New Harbor clean energy jobs. Use NY/NJ Harbor as staging port for offshore wind, to create new clean tech manufacturing and construction jobs.

Establish a NGO type outfit that can receive and disburse govt funds w/out all of the spending/contracting restrictions. This would be costs and time to implement. Enhance WRCA funding for the HRE and develop a more predictable federal funding stream going forward.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Need funding for restoration projects. Gov and Mayor have requested \$52 million in the EPA budget for NY Harbor and j-Bay Restoration.

Federal funding for conservation in Metro areas, including NY/NJ Harbor

Admin - funds work needed to finish CRP and feasibility studies of Harbor Restoration effort. DOI and NPS review and reinvigorate their approach to Gateway. Open its doors; connect it to the city; redesign the Floyd Bennett Field.

Authorize restoration, federally on a programmatic, not individual site, level. Use HRE's master plan to guide restoration and fund agencies w/ authorization is in accordance from one general fund.

NPS Must set objectives and policies with consensus of many partners. Strong Supts must direct effort. Vision must be translated/communicated via professional promotion and marketing using available resources beyond NPS, such as concessions, NPPC and others. Implement will require funds, using fund raising talents of friends groups and concessioners as partners. Engage students at schools at all levels.

Bring together Fed, City and State agencies to collaborate on 4 pilot projects on the east river upper harbor SW, Brooklyn waterfront inspired by the exchange with Rotterdam. Create a research and development and manufacturing center in Brooklyn to marry education, workforce development and innovation to address climate change, etc. make the Spunge Park on the Gowonos Canal at Red Hook a NP!

Push Congress to establish an Urban Park Caucus to examine the feasibility of informing park legislators that specifically benefit when metro areas. Free up Mickey Fearn to implement an urban best practices plan - immediately. He gets it.

Allow federal dollars to be managed by state governments.

Can the federal government be more of a central resource for all different organizations and people to access and share? Coordinate management and outreach.

We want to see heavy hitters in government actually using public lands, fishing, taking international visitors to public areas. Seeing them use the places rather than just talking about them will speak loudly.

Federal land policies are hard to understand. Simplify land management policy so ordinary folks can use the lands. E.g., we need a better permitting system. There are a lot of hoops that don't support getting people outside.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal agencies should stop pushing more Wilderness and closure of areas and focus on the big picture problems, such as Mountain Pine Beetle. Too much Wilderness makes it harder for people to gain access in the time they have.

We chase federal dollars for conservation programs. But if we only receive a per capita portion of those funds, it's not enough. The conservation values in Wyoming are more than competitive for the federal dollars. Private land conservation has to be a major part of that. Use Land and Water Conservation dollars to preserve those private lands. It preserves our state's cultural identity as well.

Poor maps and confusing characterizations/land classification by the federal government, like class I viewsheds or "special recreation areas," pose a challenge.

Use the internet to make information more available – how to make camps, self-print maps, including attractive images that will interest users and young people.

Make it cheaper to access parks. Waive fees. Have a locals day.

Include citizens more in land management meetings and planning.

Wyoming should have more say in local issues and local enforcement– not the blanket that feds might try to lay over the whole country.

Stop pushing more wilderness and closure of areas. Mountain pine beetle and other resource issues still need to be addressed and can't be with imbalance of too much wilderness. Minerals industry pays the taxes, so there needs to be a balance.

Federal agencies need to be careful and thoughtful when encouraging uses that preclude other users.

Help keep kids' programs going. We need to reinvent the educational wheel. The outdoors is a great way to integrate what the kids are learning.

Organize "6th Grade week in Sinks Canyon"? In my old school in Flagstaff, we did that with everyone in the school district and added that component to their education. It impacts their families too.

Our government agencies need more funding for trail maintenance. In order to enjoy the outdoors, the infrastructure needs to be there.

The Conservation Corps could do more.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Agencies should coordinate management and outreach.

We chase federal dollars for conservation programs. But if we only receive a per capita portion of those funds, it's not enough. The conservation values in this state are more than competitive for federal dollars, and private land conservation has to be a major part of that. Use Land and Water Conservation dollars to preserve those private lands. It preserves our state's cultural identity as well.

Keep working landscapes productive, in both agriculture and minerals

Federal dollars should be managed by state governments.

Don't crowd out animals and plants. Make sure there's enough room for our wildlife and enough water.

The federal government should have mandatory conservation and environmental education in schools.

Fully fund LWCF. Wyoming gets less of that funding than Puerto Rico. And make sure that there are mechanisms in place that allow us to make that work in Wyoming.

Government regulation is a double-edged sword. If you look at list of things you can/can't do and where you can/can't go, it's government interference basically.

Get groups together (motorized, equine, hikers), and cross-educate on how they can use the same area in harmony.

A national push or campaign to connect people.

Provide more education on the various users of the outdoors and how they can live together

Require that schools integrate outdoor-related curriculum into schools.

Provide on-the-ground funding. Consistency in funding and earmarks ensure that it goes back

Money and the organization of outreach programs make things happen, but it won't happen unless people are behind the concept.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The economy makes it harder to buy and use ATVs, limiting parents' ability to take kids out

Monies available for building trails could be put toward 50-inch trails, which kids could ride ATVs on when they're too young to drive on roads.

Inconsistencies between agencies on adjacent public lands confuse travelers. Tying up a horse differs across agencies, for example. The complex permitting system is a deterrent, as well, and the hoops you have to jump through don't encourage people to get outside.

Federal bureaucracy should make an effort to understand the constraints of businesses

Federal agencies need to communicate better. BIA in particular is disconnected from other federal agencies.

Federal agencies need to encourage more local involvement, and harness more local ideas. Agency personnel often are unaware of what's happening on lands under their jurisdiction

Educate and provide resources to educate children and adults

Increase funding – obtaining federal grants is nightmarishly hard

Improve public access to all federal agencies, be progressive

Reform school testing benchmarks, relieving pressure on schools from hitting benchmarks

Present all sides of an issue. Students are told that there are fewer moose in Yellowstone because of fires, but wolves and bears are never mentioned.

Support ATV use in promotional materials, including the America's Great Outdoors video.

The USFS could provide internships for interested youth. Federal agencies need to advertise that they are willing to sponsor internships, and let high school counselors know about opportunities.

The federal government should provide more fed money and grants to high schools going to see more fed money and grants? Federal funds could buy outdoor gear for schools to start outdoor clubs.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The outdoor industry should create outdoor programs for kids in the community to grow their customer base for tomorrow.

Game and fish should provide outreach education to schools with science teachers, and to take students to go bird watching, for example.

The USFS has biologists, archeologists, etc that could do outreach programs.

More community forums like this one encourage community involvement, which is good because Wyoming doesn't respond well to federal involvement.

Encourage grade-level-specific curriculum, like hiking to the falls at one grade level, overnight camping at another grade level, bicycling, cross country skiing, etc. the educational system should provide these opportunities.

Do more nature-related activities at school.

The government should help fund an outdoor club.

The government should give block grants. For example, get at least 10 kids to participate and then find things in which they have common interest.

The USFS needs more human resources. They need to hire someone to coordinate outreach activities, not unlike the current military structure.

Every agency should have a local youth coordinator.

There should be a proposal about these ideas that can be presented to the school board.

This information is not just for the federal government but also the local government and school boards.

Federal agencies should get together with the local state agencies and the school districts to get together to talk about how to facilitate an outreach program.

There is political polarity on sustainable use, with two extremes as the only possibilities. No middle ground blocks sustainable management.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The government should give public lands back to the public at a management level. The government should stay out of it. People's land should have no restrictions.

There is inconsistent leadership at the federal level. Though it's great that the current administration is advocating for outdoors, there's no follow through. In two years there might be a new focus.

The government could support trail associations, at the local level, and train to trail-build.

The federal government should assist the public with its recreational needs, but stay out and leave the local people in charge.

The federal government should support local groups that manage local lands.

Public lands belong to the state, but the state asks the feds to manage it. The federal government should discuss land management with locals, and communicate at a local level.

The government should support education and teachers who utilize the outdoors.

The federal government should keep environmental terrorists out of the forests.

Demonstrate sustainable management of our natural resources

Recognize and support the organizations that are using the outdoors for education such as rock clubs, geological societies, natural history groups,

Simplify land management policies so ordinary folks can use the lands. Current policy is too confusing.

Wilderness classification is bad, and the Wilderness act is outdated. It's designed to keep folks out of the wilderness. It's protecting disease. The federal government should aid local communities to restore forest health.

Partner with non-profits.

Learn how to manage lands and rid the land of disease.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We can't have a timber harvest to combat beetle kill, so there might be no solution. This might be something we may not be able to stop. We are looking too much at right now and not 100 years from now, when there could be benefits to what is going on right here right now. We can't prevent everything.

There's no real focused, multi-agency effort, on providing educational opportunities that teaches kids about and in the outdoors. Agencies have different foci.

A lot of groups don't want to be educated. The federal government should look for right ways to manage lands, and recognize individuals that are experts.

The government should build a network of local expertise, not manage an agency without local experts.

The government needs to provide sustainable funding for wildlife management, including non-game species and their habitats. This should be dedicated funding, not grants we reapply for each year. The state has a wildlife trust fund.

No land management agency should set fires to forests. No prescribed burns!

There should be an emphasis in inner-city youth education on the outdoors.

Manage for ecosystem health, not just isolated protected islands.

Make sure people can get access - issues that diminish access might be private landowners, might be wilderness. Compensation or a tax break might incentivize private owners to provide more access.

Prioritize access, subsidies, etc. in public land areas close to urban centers to get that big group connected.

Increased signage helps people access and understand where to go.

The Federal Department of Education should add an outdoor component to different curricula and school levels/grades.

Maybe an incentive, rather than requirement, to support teachers building outdoor elements into their classes. Provide finances to encourage outdoor connections.

Road easements from private and tribal landowners to allow access to public lands

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Make Physical Education a requirement in all schools again

Fully fund land and water conservation programs

Develop better communication and coordination between the agencies and departments

Have more days where fees are waived to enter National Parks

Eliminate the recreation access tax (i.e. fee demo programs)

National leaders should role model the lifestyles and values (a la Teddy Roosevelt) that would inspire the population to want to be more connected to the outdoors.

The education system should emphasize high-stakes testing less and encourage outdoor activities and experiential learning more.

USFS needs adequate funding/personnel to support partnerships to the fullest extent possible. Volunteers are turned away because there is not enough staff to train and assist them.

The government should advertise and promote outdoor activities.

There should be more collaboration between USFS and local planning committees to prevent homes from being built in high-risk fire areas. This would mean that less of the USFS budget would have to go towards fighting fires and more could go to recreation.

Fund land management agencies so they do not have to implement user fees, which are an obstacle to some people.

Support recreation more as one of the “many uses;” it is a sustainable use that does not go through the boom-bust cycles like the extractive uses do.

Federal agencies need to build a constituency in the younger generations; they are the recreational users of the future.

Create incentives for schools to increase outdoor education curricula at all grade levels; make conservation/environmental education mandatory.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Too much federal government interference in local issues.

Inconsistent leadership at the federal level. It is great that current administration is advocating outdoors, but there is no follow through. In two years there might be a new focus.

My hometown is in Michigan, one of the most beautiful and safe states to hike in, due to the lack of larger predatory animals, poisonous snakes and insects. Home to the Great Lakes, our water shed suffers dramatically from the illegal dumping of chemicals by big money, such as Dow. While I recognize the need for companies like Dow, they use their "weight" to dismiss the damage they cause and do not accept responsibility. They must be held responsible; they owe something to the people who allowed them to prosper, while they dumped Dioxin into our rivers. Thousands of people's land is now worthless and the health problems are numerous. If you, Sir President, can tax sodas and other things considered unhealthy to the general population, then you must stand for our land and waters. It must be protected and the people who damage it, must be held accountable to the strongest extent. Thank you for your time.

Perhaps you (we) could conduct clean-up campaigns on some or all of our state and national lands.

Please help Upstate New York in allowing mountain bikers to use the shared use trails, Hikers are trying to put an end to mountain bikers in the area.

Please support conservation projects and those that use our resources wisely and conserve them for future generations. Open more hunting land and buy land for future generations (now the land is cheaper than the future prices).

Better advertising. When programs to get people outdoors are already in place, sometimes their success relies on getting the word out.

Include outdoor education in schools. One option would be implementing outdoor education at the grade school level, by making environmental coursework compulsory.

Property fund recreation programs within government agencies. Land managers need proper equipment and management to do their jobs.

Update outdated systems and eliminate antiquated rules. Eliminate federal mechanisms or regulations that prohibit proactive partnerships. Work to remove onerous regulations on active recreation I. For example, you can pull a yacht behind a semi truck and drop it in Jackson Lake, but you cannot go on a guided kayak trip.

Reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Partner with land managers, find out roles and objectives by being more forceful and organized.

We have to capture the power behind grassroots groups and those groups have to be involved at the ground level.

Continue federal programs like AmeriCorps, leadership foundations, Student Conservation Corps, Hard skills are being lost and money is needed to increase training programs.

Introducing kids to the outdoors, this doesn't happen because of lack of access and leadership.

People want signs and maps.

Incentives (tax credits, loans, etc.) for mentoring.

Public School funding that incorporates P.E./activity/REC.

Educate, inspire, enable, and train.

National recreation/conservation corps (e.g. CCC; DARE).

Community-level engagement is a must.

Partner with the American Ad Council

Fund research and make ALL information readily accessible and easy to get.

Zion NP shuttle is a good example of what works well outside.

Fully fund LWCF.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Funding. Regional coordinators should be placed country-wide to support existing programs, coordinate grants and funding for progressive programs (e.g., those geared toward kids and longevity), evaluate how best to wed the business and non-profit worlds, and identify and provide incentives for educators, business, and non-profits promoting the tenets of AGO. More money is also needed for the creation, protection, and maintenance of existing outdoor spaces.

Land creation. Land agencies need to work to create more public lands and better access to existing lands. This entails a review of permitting and restrictions on public lands, and ensuring that designations are commensurate with users and surrounding communities.

Lead by example. The government needs to respond to AGO--i.e., show the public they are listening with legislative/other tangible results.

Work with youth. The administration needs to create more incentives for schools to hire facilitators specific to outdoor recreation/outdoor field trips. There is need and room to support, update, and create more programs that are early-childhood specific (e.g., cub- and boy-scout model). Technology must play a large part in such programs in order to communicate effectively with kids.

Campaigns and exposure. There is a need to communicate with all Americans about the benefits of outdoor recreation. This education to all agents and demographics needs to address the health benefits, safety, and ease of getting outside.

Local initiatives.

More land.

Lead by example.

Provide more incentives and revenue.

Better funding of existing programs (e.g. matching funds from corporate interests, tax breaks, etc.).

Better leadership and top-down examples.

Listening to public input and following up with discussions like these.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Permitting.

When you got more users, make sure there is money to maintain spaces.

Review the restrictions on public lands.

Review and provide better and more access to spaces.

Make sure spaces have appropriate designated uses--e.g. human vs. motorized (be more intelligent about uses for various spaces).

Incentives for schools to have field trips outside.

Put people in schools to facilitate kids getting outside.

Find progressive programs--introduce kids to the outdoors, but you MUST follow up and take them back.

Boy Scout model is dated. Start something to give it an edge (young kids aren't drawn to uniforms and patches anymore).

Encourage "free range kids"--perception is that it's not safe to let kids run around all day.

Create more afterschool programs within schools.

Instill within parents that outdoor spaces are as safe as sitting in front of the T.V. in their own homes.

Not necessarily a socioeconomic problem; it's a societal issue--people need to see that getting outside is easy.

Change perception that the outdoors is unsafe.

RE-education--all ages: youth, university-age, parents, etc.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Develop education standards for the outdoors. Work with Department of Education to integrate outdoor education into schools beginning with elementary school programs. Promoting an active healthy lifestyle at an early age is just as important as education in math and science.

Streamline rules and regulations. Different agencies with different mandates and different rules and guidelines can be confusing for the public. One group suggested major changes should be considered such as managing federal public land under a single department-Department of Interior.

Get young people out working in the outdoors. In light of the tremendous maintenance backlog on federal lands and the current unemployment rate, there is a tremendous opportunity for 21st century version of the Civilian Conservation Corps. This could get young people out repairing and updating decades-old infrastructure, provide much needed job opportunities, and instill a passion for the outdoors by building a new generation of ambassadors for public lands.

Get agency staff out in the field and improve communication. Too often agency staff are stuck behind desks planning or writing reports and not interacting with the public. Those who do interact with the public are often just the enforcement staff. Get staff out in the field, hiking, skiing, climbing, mountain biking or paddling with public land visitors. More interpretive staff are needed to create a more welcoming environment for the public. Encourage staff to engage with the public in settings outside of agency headquarters--e.g. farmers' markets, church groups, etc. It needs to be someone's job to make the outdoors accessible and culturally relevant to a wider spectrum of the public. A roll exists for great era use of technology and social media that should be enhanced beyond what agencies are currently doing but this can not take the place of human contact.

Play a more proactive role in conflict resolution. Don't just respond to lawsuits but take the initiative and recognize issues before they get to that state. Often non-profit organizations are out convening diverse stakeholder groups that seek solutions for land management issues. Federal agencies should take on more of this role.

Utilize partners better. Place greater value on recreation-based economies and experiences and work more effectively with those who want to provide these. Outfitter and guide permits are prohibitively expensive and cumbersome for those, particularly in gateway communities, who wish to help provide experiences for the public on federal lands. Policies on allocation need to be reviewed on a more regular basis and in light of changing trends in recreation. Currently these policies discriminate against young business owners--those who may be most energetic and enthusiastic about attracting the next generation to the outdoors through new and innovative programs. Provide greater support for volunteer groups who wish to work with agencies in providing experiences on public lands. Putting on a river festival or bringing a group of urban youth out for an outing on federal lands involves complicated permitting requirements that can be overwhelming and cumbersome for volunteer groups.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund. The federal program is important for opportunities on public lands and the stateside program provides critical resources for close-to-home needs particularly in providing access to quality recreational opportunities.

Promote connections between getting outdoors and improving public health. Think beyond the federal land managers to agencies like Health and Human Services or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention who can actively support and promote local activities in the outdoors and close-to-home recreation that encourage healthy lifestyles. Employee health plans can play a role through lifestyle balance that encourage activities in the outdoors (tax incentives or other federal incentives could be provided to employers who promote a healthy lifestyle that engages their employees in outdoor activities).

Invest in research and translate products of that research into interpretive information for the public. Land management agencies have an important role in supporting research both directly and through partnerships with universities and other research institutions. Providing information on this research that is accessible to the public is important in enhancing the quality of the visitor experience.

Consolidate BLM and Forest Service

Move all public land management to Department of Interior

Examine outdated laws

Utilize partners better - empower partners

Eliminate appointed positions that are politically sensitive

Implement national policies to protect land

Funding outdoor and science education

Make sure federal agencies reflect the times

Use technology to inventory roadless areas

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Use technology for many purposes

Effectively communicate with a variety of communities and constituencies

Streamline the process of rules and regulations

Communicate what the federal government wants to do in clear, simple language (and not always in English)

Reduce barriers - make them less confusing

Professional people and agencies are stuck behind desks - get them outside to connect to constituents. Don't just write reports all the time.

Create more community stewards

Targeted outreach to real people

Remember that all Americans own public lands - these are their clients (and not just those with property adjoining the public lands)

Make decisions - don't just study issue. Reach conclusions and take actions.

More interpretive staff - at all kinds of federal facilities and not just NPS units, etc.

Can the federal government help prioritize the education of girls because girls become women and generally have a greater sphere of influence?

More PSAs - use the media to convey the importance and use of public lands

Market public lands to kids

Cool interactive websites that are fun for kids - positive but not dorky or preachy. Should be fun and creative.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

More education about what people can do to better enjoy their public lands

Agency law enforcement - not supposed to intimidate people

More diversity recruitment in career paths related to natural resource management

Move funding to home-grown and culturally specific entities so that outreach and engagement is relevant and effective

Making connections between entities and government, private companies, and community organizations. Get the gear and expertise to get people comfortable and successful.

Promote Outdoor School <<http://www.mesd.k12.or.us/os/OutdoorSchool/Welcome.html>>, a 21st Century version of Civilian Conservation Corps

Minimum standards for outdoor education and conservation skills as a minimum education standard

Children's Bill of Rights for the Outdoors

Funding for parks and recreation

Make the connection between health and the outdoors - have the CDC and/or HHS fund or otherwise actively support local activities in the outdoors and close-to-home recreation to promote healthy lifestyles

Employee health plans can play a role through life balance incentives (tax or other federal incentives for employers who promote a healthy lifestyle that engages employees in outdoor activities)

Promote a model like menu labeling for physical activities

Internships with federal agencies to learn natural resource management - investing in related career paths

Play a more proactive role in negotiating and mediating conflict - not just respond to lawsuits. Many non-profit organizations are convening diverse stakeholder groups to seek solutions for land management issues - agencies should take on some of this role.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The government needs to realize what our public lands represent (what we have) and communicate it

Protect more wilderness

Congress goes for a walk day - leadership

Funding to keep state parks open

Allow logging (measured, limited) with requirement that they pay back in terms of campground maintenance

Leadership: bridging gaps of policy an implementation

Take advantage of unemployment: New Deal style trail maintenance program

Pro small business recreation support

Asking for local expertise

Placing value on recreation-based economies - outfitter and guide permits not being prohibitively expensive for small business owners who can introduce people to the outdoors. A more regular review of these policies (e.g. permitting requirements)

Leading public roundtables and dialogues (bringing stakeholders the table)

Streamline with local communities - connect with businesses in the community

Issue with local communities and trying to do events/activities is that the permitting process on federal lands is very difficult and challenging for volunteers

Everything is polarized but public land should be a place for common ground removed from politics

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Constant struggle with budgets

Challenge with PSAs - people don't listen to them if they come from the government - inefficient and costly. Issue of credibility to deliver the message

Government very compromised around recreational use of public lands - competes with extraction that generates revenue

Make it more accessible

Building on PSA discussion - more effective use of earned media

Fund businesses and non-profit organizations to do the PSAs - from those with local ownership and involvement with conservation issues

Enforce the rules on the books - agencies have obligations for stewardship of the land/water and need to follow through on those obligations

There were two strong messages relating to the role of the Federal Government which are supported by a series of good ideas. First, the Federal Government ought to provide funding for things like public transportation to recreational opportunities, staff in public lands, land protection, and creation of new recreational opportunities. In addition, participants felt that the Federal Government needs to step up its role in raising awareness about the importance of getting outdoors. Mandatory, appropriately funded environmental education programs in schools as well as better advertising of the opportunities and access to public lands were two key recommendations. Participants believe that the federal government has more of a role to play in bringing the great outdoors to the national stage.

funding

Funding to create programs, protect local recreational opportunities and areas

Mandatory programs in Environmental Science, Conservation, Environmental History

Place based learning requirements for education o Mandates o Programs to school o Programs from school o Support with funding (not an unfunded mandate)

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National requirement in every year of elementary school for outdoor studies activity

advertising; o tell people where to go o knowledge of what's out there

weeding out people who are obstacles in the federal government

Federal funding for public transportation

Jobs in parks - fully staffed

Should be role models and act on it by funding

Relevant - make the outdoors relevant to people/families

Take a stand for the outdoors as an important issue

Talk it up! Push it!

Education programs, experiences, and opportunities

Federal Highway Program funding to support creation of bike trails

Streamline government departments and agencies

Better access for cyclists on National Park Service

National Wildlife Refuges and Wilderness

Park Prescription as a part of healthcare bills

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National recognition of successful programs

Tax code benefits to for profit companies to support outdoor initiatives.

Tax on outdoor gear to fund outdoor programming

Land Preservation - site preservation

Set requirements o for maintaining close to home parks o requirements for funding

a. Fully fund LWCF - 28%, 383

b. Federal funding for land conservation - 24%, 332

c. Federal funding for recreation opportunities - 24%, 332

d. Implement environmental education - 23%, 309

a. Fund existing programs and lands at federal and state levels - 27%, 368

b. Engage youth and families in the outdoors - 26%, 357

c. Link conservation an recreation with health and education - 24%, 330

d. Focus on accessibility to the outdoors for all - 24%, 326

a. Encourage partnerships, philanthropy, advocacy - 18%, 310

b. Fully fund LWCF - 18%, 304

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

c. Adapt policies and agencies to current obstacles - 18%, 302

d. Be more vocal advocates for conservation and promote recreation - 18%, 299

e. Promote sense of urgency with health and economic benefits - 16%, 278

f. Landowner liability - 12%, 198

1.) Fully fund LWCF. Use federal dollars to leverage conservation and recreation.

2.) Fully fund LWCF. Stay with the program - will AGO be around in 2 years?

3.) Federal government should encourage more public partnerships, philanthropy, and advocacy. Dedicated funding. Flexibility - depends on the project, sometimes the lead, sometimes the limited partner (different parts of the state are different). Give incentives for private landowners to open land for recreational use. National parks should not obstruct different initiatives. Contribute \$1 on tax form for conservation. Wild and scenic rivers - do more to help protect.

4.) Federal landowner liability (not an issue in Maine, but consistency is needed). Assessment of federal funding programs for flexibility to support efforts of local lands trusts and private landowners.

5.) Through education and PR, promote a sense of urgency about connecting to the outdoors - act now based on the leadership, health, and economic benefits. Pass the No Child Left Inside Act, which includes environmental education. Fund regional strategies (think Heritage areas, all interested parties come together to focus on the region). Better funding for all state and federal conservation, including LWCF.

6.) Adapt policies/agencies to address current challenges. More RTCA. Sustain and share programs that work. Communication - share best practices from elsewhere.

7.) Be more vocal advocated for conservation and promoting more recreation. Understand the value of recreation and time spent in the outdoors. Better infrastructure. Need multiple conservation projects with multiple organizations an the correct coordination. Promote philanthropy. Support for private landowners. Federal highway money - connect transportation with recreation. Implement conservation in all agencies.

a. Maine has incredible natural resource - consider and fund it at national level - 27%, 347

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

b. The important role that Maine's recreational and natural heritage play in Maine's economy - 26%, 328

c. Fully fund LWCF - 24%, 306

d. Broad benefits of connecting people with the outdoors - 23%, 289

Make access cheaper (fee free days, locals' days).

Consider a "recreation easement" akin to the conservation easement that would provide tax breaks for providing recreation access.

Fully fund LWCF. Wyoming gets less funding than Puerto Rico. Make sure that there are mechanisms in place that allow us to make that work in Wyoming.

The Secretary of Transportation could emphasize United States Bicycle Route System to identify routes that are ride able/bike friendly in all states that are connected (e.g., Adventure Cycling model)

Use the internet to make information more available – how to make camps, self-print maps, including attractive images that will interest users and young people.

Make it cheaper to access parks. Waive fees. Have a locals day.

Include citizens more in land management meetings and planning.

Wyoming should have more say in local issues and local enforcement– not the blanket that feds might try to lay over the whole country.

Recent local flood challenges brought many federal workers to our locale, which built connections and potential partnerships.

Stop pushing more wilderness and closure of areas. Mountain pine beetle and other resource issues still need to be addressed and can't be with imbalance of too much wilderness. Minerals industry pays the taxes, so there needs to be a balance.

Allow enough access to let families access wild places. Too much wilderness makes it hard for people access wilderness in the time real people have. One example is the proliferation of wilderness study areas in the Red Desert that severely restrict travel.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal agencies need to be careful and thoughtful when encouraging uses that preclude other users.

Manage for ecosystem health, not just isolated protected islands.

Create clear, sensible rules and regulations, and the people to understand and enforce them.

Give tax breaks for recreation access too, not just conservation easements. How about a "recreation easement"?

Make sure people can get access - issues that diminish access might be private landowners, might be wilderness. Compensation or a tax break might incentivize private owners to provide more access.

Prioritize access, subsidies, etc. in public land areas close to urban centers to get that big group connected.

Increased signage helps people access and understand where to go.

The Federal Department of Education should add an outdoor component to different curricula and school levels/grades.

Maybe an incentive, rather than requirement, to support teachers building outdoor elements into their classes. Provide finances to encourage outdoor connections.

Help keep kids' programs going. We need to reinvent the educational wheel. The outdoors is a great way to integrate what the kids are learning.

Organize "6th Grade week in Sinks Canyon"? In my old school in Flagstaff, we did that with everyone in the school district and added that component to their education. It impacts their families too.

Our government agencies need more funding for trail maintenance. In order to enjoy the outdoors, the infrastructure needs to be there.

The Conservation Corps could do more.

The government should be more of a central resource for all different organizations and for people to access and share.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Agencies should coordinate management and outreach.

We chase federal dollars for conservation programs. But if we only receive a per capita portion of those funds, it's not enough. The conservation values in this state are more than competitive for federal dollars, and private land conservation has to be a major part of that. Use Land and Water Conservation dollars to preserve those private lands. It preserves our state's cultural identity as well.

Consider keeping viable ranches without a conservation easement. Keeping ranches working is as simple as not making everything they do feel incredibly difficult. Make it easier for those ranchers to get their jobs done. Permitting, litigation, etc., make it hard to get things done.

People not acting because they think they need to ask for the Government's help and funding. Individuals can do an incredible amount on their own. Keep the funding local to begin with.

Keep working landscapes productive, in both agriculture and minerals.

We should promote more wilderness areas in our public lands.

Federal dollars should be managed by state governments.

Don't crowd out animals and plants. Make sure there's enough room for our wildlife and enough water.

The federal government should have mandatory conservation and environmental education in schools. Fully fund LWCF. Wyoming gets less of that funding than Puerto Rico. And make sure that there are mechanisms in place that allow us to make that work in Wyoming.

A big push towards Conservation Corps.

Get groups together (motorized, equine, hikers), and cross-educate on how they can use the same area in harmony.

Some sort of regulation to even the playing field on media coverage, which tends to sensationalize the dangers of the outdoors and generate fear.

A national push or campaign to connect people.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide more education on the various users of the outdoors and how they can live together

Require that schools integrate outdoor-related curriculum into schools.

Provide on-the-ground funding. Consistency in funding and earmarks ensure that it goes back

Money and the organization of outreach programs make things happen, but it won't happen unless people are behind the concept.

Don't approach an outreach program in a regulatory fashion, which cuts out half the American population that doesn't want government interference. It has to be grassroots and from the people. Similar to the UID project in India, which is a movement to establish unique identifiers for Indian citizens. The movement is grassroots and a coalition: not just the government.

We would like to see the Secretary of Transportation emphasize a United States Bicycle Route System to identify routes that are rideable/bike friendly in all states that are connected, along the lines of what Adventure Cycling has done.

Monies available for building trails could be put toward 50-inch trails, which kids could ride ATVs on when they're too young to drive on roads.

Inconsistencies between agencies on adjacent public lands confuse travelers. Tying up a horse differs across agencies, for example. The complex permitting system is a deterrent, as well, and the hoops you have to jump through don't encourage people to get outside.

Federal bureaucracy should make an effort to understand the constraints of businesses

Federal agencies need to communicate better. BIA in particular is disconnected from other federal agencies.

Federal agencies need to encourage more local involvement, and harness more local ideas. Agency personnel often are unaware of what's happening on lands under their jurisdiction

Educate and provide resources to educate children and adults

Increase funding - obtaining federal grants is nightmarishly hard

Improve public access to all federal agencies, be progressive.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Facilitate putting tools in the hands of would be service-project-workers

Reform school testing benchmarks, relieving pressure on schools from hitting benchmarks

Present all sides of an issue. Students are told that there are fewer moose in Yellowstone because of fires, but wolves and bears are never mentioned.

Support ATV use in promotional materials, including the America's Great Outdoors video.

Opportunities need to be available to everyone despite cost.

Focus primarily on conservation of private land , but also on general management of Forest service and BLM lands.

Incorporate open spaces into the education system, educate kids in wild spaces and teach about ecosystems in schools.

Someone still need to be in charge so make it more local.

Emailing information to everybody, and better communication in general, help agencies involve the public in lands decisions.

Connecting youth to local parks .

The government should give public lands back to the public at a management level. The government should stay out of it. People's land should have no restrictions.

The federal government should keep environmental terrorists out of the forests.

Demonstrate sustainable management of our natural resources

Recognize and support the organizations that are using the outdoors for education such as rock clubs, geological societies, natural history groups,

The government can be a more effective partner in recreational organizations

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Simplify land management policies so ordinary folks can use the lands. Current policy is too confusing.

Partner with non-profits.

Learn how to manage lands and rid the land of disease.

The government should build a network of local expertise, not manage an agency without local experts.

No land management agency should set fires to forests. No prescribed burns!

There should be an emphasis in inner-city youth education on the outdoors.

Road easements from private and tribal landowners to allow access to public lands

Get kids involved through working in agriculture, or 4H. More chores=less plugged-in device dependency.

Use electronic media (Facebook, Twitter) to advertise outdoor recreation opportunities

National leaders should role model the lifestyles and values (a la Teddy Roosevelt) that would inspire the population to want to be more connected to the outdoors.

The government should advertise and promote outdoor activities.

There should be more collaboration between USFS and local planning committees to prevent homes from being built in high-risk fire areas. This would mean that less of the USFS budget would have to go towards fighting fires and more could go to recreation.

Support recreation more as one of the many uses; it is a sustainable use that does not go through the boom-bust cycles like the extractive uses do.

Federal agencies need to build a constituency in the younger generations; they are the recreational users of the future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Can the federal government be more of a central resource for all different organizations and people to access and share? Coordinate management and outreach

Push back on/counter the media-induced fear factor

Federal agencies should stay out and allow local people to be in charge.

Federal land management agencies don't work, the DEQ and EPA don't function well because there is no one there with the know-how. Public lands need to be returned to the public, and the public should own and manage public lands, few folk left that know how to run the lands.

It is hard to balance our need for industrial development of these lands with my love for these lands. I drive a car. It has an impact. To best address this, we need to be smart with our impact. And balance development with protecting lands.

Getting kids outdoors! You need to get them there. Children age 8-10 open to the strongest impact. It's a problem that they can't get enough kids to go to the park.

No child left behind is forcing teachers to find the most objective parts of education, and forcing them to teach to the test. Funding is tied to whether students know facts. It needs to change. Students love to learn outside.

Go back to the basics. The state should allow people to access public land, not shut down public lands to the public.

Communicate well with people to let them know what is available, make it "less scary" for adults

We need to focus on cultures in big cities. Amazing at the boy scout level, few scout masters knew the animals in Wyoming. Takes dedication. We can figure out ways to manage land for the best uses; we live in a small population, and there's no need to have every use on every acre of public lands.

Public lands belong to the state, but the state asks the feds to manage it. The federal government should discuss land management with locals, and communicate at a local level.

A lot of groups don't want to be educated. The federal government should look for right ways to manage lands, and recognize individuals that are experts.

Kids don't show up, and don't have outdoor activities as a priority. Can we create an incentive for kids to volunteer to build trails, etc.?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Wilderness classification is bad, and the Wilderness act is outdated. It's designed to keep folks out of the wilderness. It's protecting disease. The federal government should aid local communities to restore forest health.

The USFS could provide internships for interested youth. Federal agencies need to advertise that they are willing to sponsor internships, and let high school counselors know about opportunities.

The federal government should provide more fed money and grants to high schools going to see more fed money and grants? Federal funds could buy outdoor gear for schools to start outdoor clubs.

The outdoor industry should create outdoor programs for kids in the community to grow their customer base for tomorrow.

Game and fish should provide outreach education to schools with science teachers, and to take students to go bird watching, for example.

The USFS has biologists, archeologists, etc that could do outreach programs.

More community forums like this one encourage community involvement, which is good because Wyoming doesn't respond well to federal involvement.

Encourage grade-level-specific curriculum like hiking to the falls at one grade level, overnight camping at another grade level, bicycling, cross country skiing, etc. the educational system should provide these opportunities.

Do more nature-related activities at school.

The government should help fund an outdoor club.

The government should give block grants. For example, get at least 10 kids to participate and then find things in which they have common interest.

The USFS needs more human resources. They need to hire someone to coordinate outreach activities, not unlike the current military structure.

There should be a proposal about these ideas that can be presented to the school board.

This information is not just for the federal government but also the local government and school boards.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The government could support trail associations, at the local level, and train to trail build.

The federal government should assist the public with its recreational needs, but stay out and leave the local people in charge.

The federal government should support local groups that manage local lands.

The government should support education and teachers who utilize the outdoors.

The government needs to provide sustainable funding for wildlife management, including non-game species and their habitats. This should be dedicated funding, not grants we reapply for each year. The state has a wildlife trust fund.

Protect Large Landscapes: Opportunities for Park Expansion 1) The Blue Ridge Parkway 2010 marks the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Parkway is the most visited unit of the National Park System, with nearly 20 million visitors per year, contributing an estimated \$2.3 billion annually to the economies of Virginia and North Carolina. It is the economic lifeblood of nearby mountain communities. The Parkway traverses a distance of 469 miles, linking Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina with Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. The very nature of the Parkway requires a regional approach to landscape level conservation, since it bisects 29 counties. Such an approach must engage county governments, planners, municipalities, NGOs, developers, etc. in an integrated effort to channel necessary and inevitable development in ways that protect and enhance the viability of the Parkway and its' mission.

The degree to which the Federal government, regional stakeholders, and local decision-makers become invested in this process will determine whether the Parkway remains a jewel of the National Park System, or whether it slowly becomes just one more commuter route in the regional transportation network. The federal government needs to increase funding for conservation easements that protect private lands on the borders of our national parks. The Federal government also should promote efforts at regional consultation between the National Park Service, other federal agencies, and state and local governments.

The opportunity now exists to provide landscape level protection for this corridor through the innovative use of a dual National Park and Preserve designation. Dual designations have been used in Alaska and in the west (e.g. Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve in Colorado and Craters of the Moon Monument and Preserve in Idaho). However, they have not yet been employed in the eastern U.S. A dual designation provides a mechanism for integrating the protection of highly sensitive archaeological sites and cultural areas, with other important, but less sensitive areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, in consultation with the National Park Service, is seeking to undertake a study of the potential for enlarging the boundary of the Ocmulgee National Monument. The Monument embodies the vestiges of over 12,000 years of Native American culture. It is also viewed by contemporary Native Americans as the "Cradle of the Creek Confederacy", which played such a critical and tragic role in the early history of the United States. Thus, an expansion of the National Monument would provide the medium for communicating a superior telling of the ancestral Muscogean story and its intersection with American history. Ideally, a boundary adjustment for the Monument would extend to the northern border of the Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. It would include the full extent of the Ocmulgee Old Fields and as much of the Muscogee Traditional Cultural Property as possible.

In addition to the boundary expansion, local Macon-area citizens, along with the Georgia Wildlife Federation and the National Parks Conservation Association are requesting that Congress designate a National Preserve to safeguard in perpetuity wildlife habitat and natural areas along the Ocmulgee River, from Bond Swamp south, incorporating the Oaky Woods and Ocmulgee state Wildlife Management Areas (see Appendix A).

The importance of this broader river corridor south of Macon is widely acknowledged. In 2004 a resolution passed both the House (HR 1256) and Senate (SR755) of the Georgia General Assembly - Urging the Congress of the United States to consider creating a national preserve or other similar federal property to protect land and other natural resources and promote hunting and fishing in a continuous corridor of the Ocmulgee and Altamaha Rivers in central and south Georgia; and for other purpose

Furthermore, in 2005 the Georgia Department of Natural Resources published its Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for Georgia. This document recognizes both the Ocmulgee and Altamaha river corridors as among the most ecologically important landscape features in the state, and as having the highest conservation priority. The Federal government has a critical role to play in supporting and completing these efforts, if potentially nationally significant resources are to be protected for future generations.

Currently, the long-term security and public accessibility of many of Georgia's WMAs is in doubt and under threat. This is due to the fact that a significant fraction of the state WMA system is under lease, rather than being owned by the state. In recent years, the sale of these leased private forest lands has resulted in a continuing loss of public lands and wildlife habitat in Georgia. The Altamaha is a critical wildlife migration corridor between the Okefenokee Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in the south and forest lands in the middle of the state. One potential solution to protecting this corridor would be to designate the Altamaha as a National River. Congress should strongly consider this possibility, as was requested by the Georgia General Assembly in 2004.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We strongly encourage the inclusion of fee interests in land donated for conservation purposes in the anticipated re-enactment of the federal tax incentives for conservation, which expired in December 2009. Under that version of the federal tax incentives, only conservation easement interests were eligible. Given the current effort to enact legislation making the conservation tax incentives permanent, we feel that those generous individuals who are willing to donate their land outright for conservation purposes should be given the opportunity to benefit at least as much as those giving only an easement interest. Inclusion of fee interest in those land conservation gifts eligible would have huge impact on the pace of land conservation in Massachusetts and nationwide - a timely public policy when viewed through the lens of climate change and when considering the massive transfer of important land from an aging landowner base anticipated in the next decade.

Commercial timber harvest in our National Forests should be discontinued. This practice, which is heavily subsidized by the tax funds of the citizens of our country, cannot be justified under any pretense except as noted here. Our timber resources should only be commercially harvested, if needed in the event of a catastrophic event that severely damages private forest lands over a very large area of several million acres. As the US Forest Service (USFS) now practices commercial timber harvest, and growing timber for this purpose, private businesses that own and grow timber for the wood products industry are forced to subsidize their competition.

The primary mission of the USFS should be to manage our National Forests for water quality protection and recreation. There are several ways that users can assist in funding the recreational programs, which I will not attempt to enumerate here, that should be considered by the USFS.

But there are many other roadless areas in the Cherokee, Nantahala, and Pisgah National Forests identified by both the USFS and citizens organizations that should be designated as wilderness study areas. They should be given immediate protection from timber harvest, road building, and any other development until their qualification for protection under the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act has been determined.

A number of our National Forests throughout the nation should be officially, by legislation, designated as National Recreation Areas with qualified areas given additional protection under the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act. The Cherokee, Nantahala, and Pisgah National Forests are three of our National Forests in the southeast that should be designated as National Recreation Areas.

The use of ATVs and ORVs for recreational purposes, should be prohibited on all federally managed public lands, except on roads maintained for use by ordinary passenger automobiles.

The use of bicycles and motor vehicles (wheeled vehicles) in our National Parks and all other units managed by the National Park Service should be restricted to use only on roads maintained for use by ordinary passenger automobiles, except on roads and trails constructed and maintained specifically for use by wheeled vehicles other than ordinary passenger vehicle.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The long standing controversy (67 years) concerning the construction of a road in the Great Smoky Mountains National from Bryson City, NC to Fontana Dam will be resolved once and for all, only when Swain County, NC is paid the full amount of \$52 million in lieu of building the road, as agreed to by the new agreement which replaced the earlier "1943 Agreement" that promised the road.

The Department of Interior should include in it's budget, starting with FY 2011, sufficient funds to complete full payment of the \$52 million in no more than another 5 years. Current payments (2) add up to \$12.8 million, leaving \$39.4 million due.

I'll close by providing some perspective on federal agency involvement in Chicago Wilderness. Unlike many conservation partnerships around the country where federal agencies intentionally and perhaps necessarily stay behind the scenes, federal agencies have been front and center in Chicago Wilderness since its inception. This has been of great benefit to both the federal agencies and to the greater partnership. In the Chicago region, federal agencies have fulfilled several roles and these have been critical to our mutual success. These include roles as landowner, as deliverers of federal programs, and as organizational leaders

There is much opportunity and much to learn about how parks and nature can be incorporated into education, can benefit human health, and in a range of other areas. We are here to listen to you and learn.

- The federal government is in possession of nationwide data that can be used to illustrate and educate communities at the local, regional, and national levels about these interconnections by building decision support tools that allow communities to understand these interconnections and the consequences of their resource stewardship decisions.

- A nationwide Natural Resource Knowledge System needs to be developed with the next generation of imagery (Probably LIDAR) and a common nationwide landcover at its foundation. This GIS layer would be critical to every community in the nation in understanding and appreciating its Green Infrastructure and the contribution of that infrastructure to their economic and social well-being.

- Many of the emerging pressures upon our natural resources, like climate change, invasive species, and energy and water development, are regional or national in scope. The federal government is uniquely positioned to coordinate the first line of defense against threats at this scale. A robust, nationwide monitoring network that targets standardized landcover classes is needed, and feeds data to the US Natural Resource Knowledge System, where it can be accessed by the broad spectrum of partners who are needed to manage the nation's natural resources. Such a system could provide the under-pinnings for Adaptive Management nationwide.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

· Coordinated landscape-scale management decisions are needed to respond to threats like climate change. The only way to effect such management is by establishing and nurturing robust public-private partnerships for resource management. There are many successful models that can be built upon, Chicago Wilderness, for example, the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, and Illinois' Ecosystem Partnerships. The Department of Interior's new Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and Climate Science Centers are a tremendous first step in providing landscape conservation science to natural resource partnerships. But now it is time for the federal government to take the next step in building natural resource management partnerships by empowering those partnerships to make decisions about their own futures.

· This may require a change in mindset in some agencies. We are asking that, in the face of local and regional unanimity, when a broad spectrum of local and regional interests bring their own dollars to the table, and these interests can articulate an educated and thoughtful vision for their natural resource and economic future, that you trust their judgment. We are asking that you build flexibility into funding programs, that in such cases you reward the partners by cutting through the rules and red tape, and that you trust the collective wisdom of an engaged community. Thank you.

Recently we did an inventory of restoration projects in 2007 in three counties, identifying 169 projects restoring natural areas in the heavily industrial locations in Indiana. We are now documenting the results of what happens when you restore nature in these types of areas, and that information is being used by the agencies that own and manage those lands to improve their results. This was federally funded through a program that sponsors service learning by college students. The federal government is already doing a lot to support these kinds of efforts, and we need more federal leadership in setting priorities and facilitating local public and private partnerships.

We need public agencies to have consistency in their policies, and we need to focus on partnerships, and on kids' involvement.

The Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision is important in that. Our 2040 plan focuses on development to promote economic growth, and sustainable development. We've heard from people here that it's important to them to have sustainable communities that are safe and have access to amenities, including parks and open space. Public and private involvement in land conservation is important.

We believe federal investment in regional plans is critical and we need to think about it together. We need to talk about what it will take to solve problems at the local level, and we need involvement from multiple federal agencies. This will determine whether we become a sustainable region or not. We thank you for your time and look forward to a continuing relationship

Chicago Wilderness members are working together on this instead of competing. The federal Leave No Child Inside act needs to focus not just on children and teachers at school, but also on informal educators.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I also represent Eden Place Nature Center in Chicago. Everything we do is close within the community, and I think we need more investment in smaller organizations already operating in communities to make a large scale difference. We train youth, and pay them when funding is available. Allowing them the time to learn and come back the following year is what we hope for. We also recognize the outdoors is a personal experience and should not always be looked at as a quota. We work closely with the schools in our area to plant the seed with youth, implanting the passion and love and give them something they enjoy doing. That leads them to get their families involved. The Chicago area has a lot of park districts, but on the south side the park districts are not as cooperative as they might be. A lot of youth on the south side don't have a place to go and we can provide that. And we can redefine 'outdoors' as a safe place between school and home.

The ADMC welcomes this opportunity to submit comments to help achieve your objectives. Most specifically, we believe tremendous improvements in water quality, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, reduced flooding and an increase in productivity of American agriculture can be achieved through better water management practices. Attached with this letter are a number of recommendations for achieving our shared goal of expanding and enhancing wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation and the environmental health of our nation in manner that benefits the economic well being of our rural communities. We would be happy to provide you and your staff with additional information related to the recommendations set forth in our attached comments.

Progress in developing and testing ecosystem markets in the United States continues to lag. Selected pilot projects can help overcome some of the impediments to potential innovation. The ADMC recommends establishment of pilots in the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes and, subject to funding availability, additional watersheds. The purpose of the pilots would be to demonstrate on operating farms the potential for ecosystem service markets to advance cost effective conservation strategies. As a result, the pilots would provide real world experience to foster environmental improvement within the agricultural sector and between sectors such as point source industrial and municipal facilities and agriculture. Initial pilots could be targeted at the development of a pilot water quality and conservation credit trading. Tools and practices utilized to initiate development of the initial credits could include nitrogen removal, flood and water quality management through temporary restoration of landscape functions and the establishment of wetland and riparian habitat.

FUNDING

This is a big issue, but the main issue is really one of national priorities. There is money available for programs, but the Administration and Congress need to push much harder to shift spending priorities toward programs that directly benefit Americans and our environment. That might mean, for example, that departments that have huge budgets, like Defense, have funding shifted away from them. Also, the current system of government subsidies needs to be overhauled so that money

is not going to support activities that harm the outdoors, like oil and gas companies (which seem to have no problem being very profitable). Agricultural and transportation subsidies also need to be examined for their environmental impacts.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Department of Interior needs to undertake a study to determine what would constitute full funding for proper management of our public lands agencies. The Administration should then use this information to request full funding every year. The Administration should support full funding for, and the extension and renewal of, the Land & Water Conservation Fund as well as the Historic Preservation Fund.

LOCAL INTERESTS VS. NATIONAL INTEREST

The Administration needs to proudly broadcast its support for public lands, from the President and Secretary of the Interior on down, and at every opportunity. It was disconcerting to see Secretary Salazar say that 'land use decisions would be made at the local level in Utah where politicians and others in that state, representing a minority of Americans, voiced opposition to the

possibility of new national monuments. This is not to say that local opinions should be ignored, but federal public lands belong to all Americans. Only a small minority of Americans lives in those states having the most vocal anti-public lands attitudes, and this minority should not be allowed veto power over proposals and management policies that benefit the majority of Americans.

The history of land conservation issues repeatedly shows that in the long term local citizens see the benefit of conservation initiatives, even if they initially opposed a park or monument designation. For example, Utah's national parks are now among the crown jewels of the National Park System, even though most of them faced vehement local opposition initially.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

PARTNERSHIPS & CONCESSIONAIRES

There is a growing trend toward the development of public-private partnerships in the management of our federal (and other) public lands. While useful in the short term, because of funding constraints, in the long term these partnerships will tend to undermine the notion of public lands being the birthright of every American. Rather, the natural temptation will be to plan

around and for those projects that will attract private funding. And while this temptation might be overcome, it will take a special kind of land manager to do so. In any event, the commercial interests of planners must be always subservient to public interest and benefit.

A related topic is the role that private concessionaires play in the running of our public lands. Again, the public interest must take precedence over the interests of private concessionaires. Resource management decisions must be made on the basis of sound science and not private desires. Concessionaire fees must return a fair value to the agency since it is a public resource being exploited [or private gain (even while providing a public service)]. But charges to the public (citizens) should not be exorbitant, either, such that average citizens are priced out. Prices for lodging in the national parks are becoming far beyond the range of ordinary Americans to enjoy. A quick look at some lodgings shows the following examples:

Yosemite Lodge, mid-week, after Labor Day, \$208 minimum for 2.

Awarona Hotel, Yosemite, 2 adults, mid-week, after Labor Day, \$498 for 2.

High Sierra Camps, Yosemite, (tent cabins, including dinner & breakfast), \$153/person.

Zion National Park Lodge, mid-week after Labor Day, minimum \$158.95 for 2.

Fees need to be reasonable for families to be able to camp, but the use of concessionaires, by the Forest Service in particular, to run campgrounds causes several problems. The first is that not only must campers pay the costs of maintaining the campground, they must also cover the concessionaire's fee to the government plus cover a reasonable profit. So campers pay much higher fees than they might if the government were running the campground. Secondly, concessionaires are closing "non-profitable" campgrounds earlier and earlier every year, whereas

the Forest Service used to keep campgrounds open, with bad weather being the more decisive factor. The trend toward concessionaire operations is depriving people of opportunities to enjoy their public lands in an inexpensive manner.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ducks Unlimited is especially interested in ensuring the protection of key Great Outdoors and national economic and conservation objectives. However, we are focusing on the Prairie Pothole Region in these remarks as an example of how to be effective in this most endangered habitat. All of these recommendations include programs and initiatives that are both beneficial to waterfowl and will promote, support, and sustain the goals of America's Great Outdoors. These recommendations are:

1. Designate the Prairie Pothole Region as a key part of the AGO initiative;
2. Focus key conservation programs in the Farm Bill on the Prairie Pothole Region;
3. Provide full funding for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act;
4. Increase the price of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp;
5. Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and
6. Create a market mechanism to sequester carbon in ranch lands.

habitats of the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) in the North Central States. While we are interested in a number of key landscapes across the country, the Prairie Pothole Region is at the greatest risk of loss, and there is a need (and opportunities) for immediate action. The following recommendations relate to the overall policy goal of keeping the PPR's native grasslands and wetlands intact for the benefit of all Americans. Many of the programs and policies that are needed to accomplish this objective will benefit other aspects of America's We look forward to working with your Administration and its agencies on these programs, and offer our assistance and expertise as requested, particularly on waterfowl, wetland and grassland-related projects. Many of these efforts require Congress to take action and we are already working with them to shape and implement appropriate legislation. We hope the Administration will include these legislative efforts in its work with Congress.

Full funding of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act

One of the most immediate and direct ways in which the Obama Administration can influence waterfowl populations through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative is to fully fund the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NA WCA). This 20-year-old matching grant program has been used to conserve or restore over 25 million acres in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, and given the nature of waterfowl migratory patterns, this continental effort has paid off tremendously.

Authorized at \$75 million, the program has never been fully funded.

Appropriations in FY 2010 were at the highest levels since the program's creation- \$47.6 million - but funding is almost certain to decrease by close to 10% in FY 2011.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

NA WCA is a tool that can be used by the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to conserve and restore wildlife habitat and areas for outdoor recreation in perpetuity. In his FY 2010 budget, President Obama pledged to provide full funding for the NAWCA program by 2012. The America's Great Outdoors Initiative is the perfect opportunity for the President to fulfill his pledge, and make a difference for waterfowl populations across the continent.

Iconic parks' attendance is up -- all others are down

Work with park concessionaires as partners

Consumer-generated websites for promotion

Prioritization (cut some programs in favor of outdoors)

Mandates that reduce budgets can be changed

Volunteer programs --create ownership and bring others in

Government-driven media campaign to raise visibility of outdoor pursuits and natural areas and make it "cool" to spend time outdoors

Government regulations to discourage over-sensationalization of crimes against children and negative media regarding natural areas and wildlife

Decrease barriers for partnerships between agencies and with others

Fund federal recreation programs

Partner with communities

Use mineral royalties, etc. to support programs -- not just purchase lands. Fully fund LWCF and provide for equal stateside portion. Effectively use those funds

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The federal government needs to increase funding for conservation easements that protect private lands on the borders of our national parks. The Federal government also should promote efforts at regional consultation between the National Park Service, other federal agencies, and state and local governments.

In addition to the boundary expansion, local Macon-area citizens, along with the Georgia Wildlife Federation and the National Parks Conservation Association are requesting that Congress designate a National Preserve to safeguard in perpetuity wildlife habitat and natural areas along the Ocmulgee River, from Bond Swamp south, incorporating the Oaky Woods and Ocmulgee state Wildlife Management Area (see Appendix A).

The federal government has a critical role to play in supporting and completing these efforts, if potentially nationally significant resources are to be protected for future generations.

Among the Commission's most important outcomes were recommendations to the president to "map a national strategy for protecting America's natural and cultural heritage.... And articulate the role of National Parks... in carrying out the nation's conservation and preservation strategy".

The Commission also urged Congress to protect "critical habitats -- especially freshwater and marine areas, and corridors connecting protected areas with broader wildlife ranges -- to ensure the ecological integrity and long-term viability of National Park ecosystems". Further, Congress was asked to identify "historic sites and cultural landscapes that broaden the diversity of the national narrative embedded in the Parks".

LWCF is an exceptional program that needs to be fully funded and better targeted to meet priority access needs. Access to federal lands is a problem- we need to make Public Lands Public. Current priority scoring rules make it difficult to fund small acreage but strategically critical parcels to secure access to our public lands, and this needs to be changed.

Partnering is an efficient investment of Federal dollars, often leveraging with returns of 4:1

Voluntary Public Access and managing lands for wildlife habitat incentives for private farm and ranch owners should be enhanced in Farm Bill.

Opportunity: Much Foundation Work is Already Available (e.g. State Wildlife Plans, Regional Fish Habitat Partner Plans). The federal government should ensure that it works closely with State partners in developing landscape scale plans.

The Federal government and partners should reach out to Sportsman and blend in the North American Model of Wildlife Management into Education Curriculum. This information is already in place, and there is no need to start from scratch.

Small Urban Parks can be dangerous, and they don't offer the opportunity to teach natural history. Better for the Federal government to go the educational route rather than invest in new small urban parks.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

FED GOC needs to collaborate w/Ngo's and States to support, not attempt to lead, efforts to provide enhanced Access, Opportunity, Education. Many organizations already have established programs to promote outdoor recreation to women, disabled persons, youth, and other targeted populations.

The Administration should facilitate close coordination between USDA, DOI, and EPA to ensure that decisions related to toxic substance control petitions (i.e. lead shot and tackle) are informed by sound science, as well as recognition of unintended consequences, such as a decrease in Pittman-Robertson funds if lead shot/bullets are banned.

USDA and DOI should undertake site specific assessment to identify and pursue opportunities to expand recreational access and enhance wildlife management by providing access through units of public lands that prohibit hunting to adjacent lands where hunting is permitted.

Life in the prairies is changing with land use changes, and much prairie and wetland habitat is at risk. USDA CRP works- a proven effective program, with 4.3 million acres currently enrolled. CRP works, and recommend that the department do a 25 year review to make a strong program even stronger. Prairie pothole region deserving of Treasured Landscape designation.

Landscape restoration program in the area with the USDA private lands programs for conservation. Private lands/treasured lands something to focus and do more with private lands. Need to be more aggressive in the south to help with bird habitats. Manage areas with prescribed fires. Midwest improve water quality in the Mississippi river water shed. See what programs will do for the people who live there. Open Fields is a good program and needs to be continued and enhanced, voluntary open grounds can help reconnect youth to the outdoors.

Funding the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) of 1989 needs to be a high priority. A federal investment of \$23 Million was leveraged to \$71 Million through this program.

Long leaf pine restoration, East Texas, many different federal agencies are working well together to see help with conservation (listed them) in the Natchez River basin. Big challenge in changes to who owns the different wood lands. The best federal role should be to assist and support areas where there are multiple agencies working together, and concentrate funding where it will do the most good. TMO's are now the major landowners in the Natchez, and the lands are at risk. Tools: 100 years of Weeks act 1911 is being celebrated this year (the 'organic act' for Eastern National Forests), substantive legislation to reinvigorate the act should be passed.

Prairie Pothole region, really need to look at a way to look at conservation in the 21st century look at places at landscape scale and adopt a model of public/private partnerships. Like to see fed to use all existing tools/programs that are currently formula driven, to create a new pool of funds to really help certain areas. National Fish Conservation Act must be passed into law.

Renew law providing dedicated to conservation land in the west. Creates \$50 Million fund which can be used for many different things. Want to reauthorize this legislation because it has expired, has 1 year extension.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Highlight volunteering public access program. Engage private landowners with incentives to encourage recreation access and conservation and fully fund LWCF, including a 1.5% guaranteed for procurement of access to existing public lands. Please to use LWCF funds (CLEAR Act?) to open access. Build up quality of quantity of recreational opportunities and elevate the Prestige of Recreation in organizational structures.

Sod saver and Farm Bill, the Federal government should reconcile current conflicting programs, by removing the subsidies which are currently being used to destroy prairie pothole country and other native lands which are excellent habitat but marginal farm land. Get administration to get more involved in prairie pothole Treasured Landscape area, in close cooperation with the governors and State agencies, to leverage capacity and to save money. And thank you for work in the Gulf.

Full dedicated funding for LWCF. CRP think creatively about keeping the programs going and successful. Stack payment system as commodity prices rise, farmers need higher subsidies to keep lands in conservation status. Consider carbon sequestration credits for farmers.

Put more focus on outside recreation look and coupling with the Lets Move and the First Lady. Consider appointing a "Recreation Czar" to help get kids and families outside, connect outdoor activity to health benefits, promote private land access incentives such as the USDA Open Fields program.

Sporting Conservation activities are critical to the Economic well-being of rural America. Wildlife is a huge part of bringing people to areas for hunting, fills hotels restaurants etc. Need to fix clear cutting.

Full funding for LWCF, including guaranteed portion for access to existing public lands. There are ways to see improvements to LWCF, like to see everyone working together to make sure this all gets done.

Support what all the people have said regarding protection of Treasured Landscapes and private lands, but reminded Federal government that the States have primary responsibility for fish and wildlife in the state. Need to make sure that State agencies are in the loop and working with everything to get the initiative done. Like looking at a landscape lens lots of the problems and solutions are on the landscape level. Linkages and corridors funded through LWCF has merit and is supported by States, but must be coordinated.

Need to do a better job financing the different natural resource agencies. Consider conservation, transportation, energy development revenues and royalties dedicated to State and Fed Natural Resource Agencies.

Education of the outdoors is important. It has to be fun for the kids to truly get involved. Learning and understanding are good, but also getting out there is essential for engagement of young people. Permanent legislation is needed to make sure it stays past the current administration.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In May of 2008, Congress approved a two-year extension of expanded federal tax incentives for conservation easement donations. Specifically, the new law raised the deductions a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of his or her income to 50%, and to 100% percent for qualifying ranchers and farmers. The law also extended the carry-forward period for the donor to take the deductions from 5 to 15 years. Recent data indicates that the increased incentives have resulted in the protection of upwards of one million acres a year since they were first enacted in 2006. Despite this success, the incentives are set to expire at the end of this year. Include permanent extension of the expanded deductions in the President's FY 2012 Budget Proposal.

Create a Private Lands Conservation federal advisory committee (FACA) charged with developing conservation and outdoor recreation tax incentives and policy proposals. Made up of experts in the field from the conservation, outdoor recreation and tax finance communities, the FACA would be charged with developing consensus recommendations that would guide the federal government in the area of private lands conservation and recreation issues. For example, the FACA might consider:

A 50% capital gains exclusion for conservation related donations that further the goals of programs such as NAWCA and State Wildlife Action Plans.

A "New Market" tax credit for conservation credits related to the protection, restoration, and enhancement of habitat for priority and/or declining species and other fish/wildlife species.

Expanded conservation related deductions, exemptions, and credits that could be enacted as incentives to keep family owned private lands intact when inherited.

Investment, or new market tax credits that would incentivize development of improved technologies for utilizing woody biomass for cellulosic ethanol. The credit would apply to all stages of a project including the removal of woody biomass and its transportation.

IRS guidance or legislative report language confirming that private land forestry meets the definition of "Agriculture" for purposes of qualifying for expanded deductions.

The creation of a full time political appointee or high-level FTE at the Treasury Department tasked with the domestic conservation tax portfolio.

Work with the Department of Treasury to develop and transmit legislation to Congress authorizing a conservation tax credit.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To that end, the ADMC proposes two actions we strongly believe will concurrently result in significant benefits to farms, watersheds, wildlife and outdoor recreation throughout the nation through expanded utilization of hydrology management practices. The practices and tools used to achieve these goals on the ground will 1) Provide the science and education needed to enrich conservation planning, implementation, management decisions, and environmental health; and 2) Measure, monitor, quantify and utilize project outcomes for the development and enhancement of market based approaches for achieving conservation and environmental goals on a watershed scale.

The ADMC commends USDA for recently completing and issuing the "Assessment of the Effects of Conservation Practices on Cultivated Cropland in the Upper Mississippi River Basin," (CEAP.) While we have found CEAP to be a helpful and informative tool, we also believe the potential exists to broaden and expand upon its applications through a new USDA-NRCS led initiative. The initiative would include consist of collaboration between your departments and agencies, the conservation and sportsmen's community and the agricultural sector to identify and pursue opportunities to expand the capacity for actively managing our water resources to provide economic, environmental and societal benefits for generations to come.

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, work with USFS and BLM, energy policy. Hard to find hunting and fishing in policy documents. First thought of fed is not as partner but as a regulator. Want them to be seen as stewards of the land. Want to see the uniqueness in each local community, see the resources of the local folks, bottom up not top down.

Landscape conservation, focus on things that work: Protect good health habitats which we already have through full funding for LWCF, including some guaranteed for opening up access to the public lands. Keeping asian carp outside of the great lakes, could ruin the lakes. Restoration and reconnections have some very good programs, e.g. Farm Bill Conservation Partnership Program, . Does realize that funding will be in short supply. Great projects to restore fisheries Fish Passage Program, Partners for Wildlife are excellent for leveraging fed dollars, youth educations as a priority is key, service learning is important and get connected, "Open Fields" has been authorized to open up private lands to hunting and fishing. River restoration/dam removals (e.g. Penobscott, Elwha, Klamath) should be done in partnership through National Fish Habitat Program legislation.

Feds should implement service learning curricula for schools, and require volunteer work.

Full fund LWCF, including a small percentage to secure access to existing public lands. Coast Guard is a critical player working with the shipping industry with ballast water. One of the barriers to connect with the outdoors is a lack of information about where you can go, especially for hunting and fishing, where to take the kids. Important role that the government can do. Directly interact with kids to get them in there and out there. National Wildlife Refuges are great and have multiple uses, and should be better funded to accomplish AGO goals.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Echo what everyone is said. Climate change is the biggest threat to climate change now and in the future. National adaptation strategy is important and urgently needed. LWCF as a conservation tool is an important part, and should be fully funded.

Prairie Pothole region is very important and at risk of being lost, and should be a designated Treasured Landscape. Key conservation programs in the Farm Bill should be focused on the Prairie Pothole Treasured landscape.

The National Wetlands Conservation Act is critical and is working, but increased funding to fully authorized level is needed.

National Wildlife Refuges are important to sportsmen and outdoor enthusiasts, but the National Wildlife Refuge System lacks the brand awareness of the National Park System. Steps should be taken to raise the profile of Refuges and promote them, so people will know about them and so use them.

Fully fund and improve the operation of LWCF at \$900 Million per year, and make it a permanent dedicated source of conservation funding..

Create a market mechanism to sequester carbon on ranch and farm lands.

Adopt legislation that includes coordinated changes to the tax code to encourage private land conservation.

Recreation is the foremost issue that needs to be addressed in AGO. Conservation is important, but so is recreation. Feds have hundreds of conservation goals, but few recreation goals. There is no one in the Federal Government who is responsible for promoting and managing recreation. AGO should promote a recreation perspective that is “breathtaking” and bold. Bring more Recreation Specialists to the decision table. Partnerships are important, and programs like “Take Me Fishing” are excellent. To engage youth, their learning must come through experiential immersion- textbook lessons will not be effective alone.

Partnerships are important. The MOU on improving recreational NRA stuff on federal lands, has been a good relationship with the agencies and more than 40 organizations. Round table addresses issues and solutions, and the National Park Service should sign on with the rest of the land management agencies. Working on “Making Public Lands Public.” Ensuring adequate access to existing public lands, and educating sporting community through “Respected Access Is Open Access” campaign. User conflicts are avoidable if taken into consideration during Planning , so want to make sure hunting and fishing are important in area planning. Echo ___’s comments- “Make sure to focus on recreation”.

Studies have also found that protection of water supplies is the most cost efficient way to ensure clean and plentiful drinking water supplies to communities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The U.S. Forest Service in its groundbreaking Forest on the Edge report in 2005 predicted unprecedented new threats to eastern forests from forest subdivision and development through 2030.

It is imperative that we continue to make significant public and private investments in forest conservation to limit and offset impacts from new development on our most critical forest resource areas.

Enact Full and Dedicated Funding Legislation for the Land and Water Conservation Fund

There have been several pieces of legislation introduced during this Congress to fully fund and dedicate \$900 million annually to LWCF, including provisions within the House passed oil spill legislation (HR 3534, the CLEAR Act), and S.2747, the Land and Water Conservation Authorization and Funding Act of 2009.

At AGO listening sessions through the Eastern Forest region, the need for full, dedicated funding of LWCF to meet pressing needs in eastern national forests, parks and wildlife refuges was raised repeatedly.

We urge the Administration to support the enactment of legislation for full, dedicated funding of LWCF as part of your AGO recommendations.

Increase and Provide Consistent Federal Funding for the Following Programs that are Critical to the Conservation of Eastern Forests

We are encouraged that the Administration has proposed a robust FY 11 level of \$100 million and urge continued increases to meet demand.

We urge the Administration to support full funding of the Highlands Conservation Act.

Established in the 2008 Farm Bill, the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program has yet to receive adequate funding from Congress to administer this program targeted at protecting and preserving forests and open space vital to local communities. In the East we have identified potential projects in Vermont, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina.

We urge the Administration to fund the Community Forest Program at \$10 million in FY 12.

The unique needs of the eastern forests cry out for exactly the kind of modern solutions sought by President Obama through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, and we stand ready to work with you to examine how best to integrate public and private lands, identify key remaining natural systems and recreation lands deserving of permanent protection, and pursue ways to connect the millions of residents of the east to the natural areas outside their doors.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing to you to implore you to save Bristol Bay from a mining disaster. We have already ruined our Gulf Coast line with a massive oil spill. We cannot afford to leave our children a ruined country. The destruction that will occur is unthinkable. As you know Bristol Bay area is a treasure drawing many forms of wildlife, that require our protection to their habitat such as: grizzlies, wolves, seals and whales spawning salmon which are the linchpin of this glorious wilderness, supporting valuable commercial fisheries, indigenous people and a vast array of wildlife. Yet the whole system could come crashing down if giant mining interests get their way.

The only way these foreign mining companies can get at the rich gold and copper deposits located in this pristine area that we the United State people have preserved, is to extract this ore through destructive and pollution-producing hard-rock mining. At risk is over 1 million acres of public land. This land should be preserved for our children and grandchildren. What kind of a legacy are we leaving exchanging dollars for natural resources that once gone will never come back? I tell you this beautiful piece of natural beauty must remain in its natural glory. It is our duty as human beings protecting the earth to be excellent sheppard's of this treasure. I implore you to use your conscience and protect this natural wonder that we the people of the United States have inherited.

Think about it, do we want pristine areas with animals in their natural habitat roaming free? Or an open-pit mine that would be 2 miles wide (enough to line up nine of the world's longest cruise ships end-to-end) and 2,000 feet deep (enough to engulf the Empire State Building)? As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams -- all of them taller than China's Three Gorges Dam and located just 20 miles from an active fault line. A proposed a single accident here would be disastrous. But even the construction and operation of the mine could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem. It's a risk most local Alaskans and United States citizens all over the country are not willing to take -- the true gold of this region, they say, is its fish and wildlife. I live in New England and feel strongly we need to protect this area. It is our duty.

The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed.

Relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened.

Standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter.

Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Can the Obama administration really afford to leave a legacy of destruction of our natural resources? Or will the administration take the only solution to saving our beautiful land by protecting Bristol Bay from ruin. I implore you to act on behalf of our children and all the living creatures of Bristol Bay to stop the Pebble Mine development.

The Northeast State Foresters Association (NEFA) has asked selected organizations for comment on NEFA's far reaching proposal for a \$2 billion federal, state and preservationist group program to purchase 15 million acres (23,437 square miles) throughout New England and eastern New York State. The purchase appears to combine outright public purchases and easement purchases by private preservationist groups. There is no indication that this land purchasing initiative will end when the \$2 billion is spent. NEFA plans to present this proposal, or a modified version of it, to the New England Governor's Conference later this year. NEFA also appears to desire integration of this proposal with the U. S. Department of Agriculture's "All Lands" land management policy, the Department of Interior's "Treasured Landscapes" program, and the Department of Energy's renewable energy program in an, as yet, undisclosed manner.

VTC's initial reaction is that the proposal fails to meet some of its key stated goals. Second, the proposal probably marks the most profound overhaul of the North Woods economic and cultural fabric of all-time. As such, VTC is worried that far reaching decisions will be made within the federal bureaucracy, the uppermost levels of state government, and the preservationist group board rooms before the residents of the North Woods region have a chance to determine whether they are even interested in a complete overhaul of their current way of life.

The rationale for the former Champion Lands purchase and the promises made prior to the purchase sound vitually identical to the rationale and promises in the abovereferenced concept paper. With respect to the Champion lands purchase, while Vermonters were promised that the land purchase and grant of "conservation" easements would preserve the time-honored traditional uses of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, the reality that had been worked out by preferred stakeholders outside of public view was quite to the contrary. The preservation groups' "conservation" easement banned tree cutting in a 20 square mile "core area" and other large acreages, sought eventual closures of public access roads, eventual destruction of generations old hunting camps, and a ban on ATV riding. Furthermore, the preferred stakeholders proposed a series of restrictions such as bans on worm fishing, target shooting, fish stocking, horses, and new snowmobile trails. The Nature Conservancy and Vermont Land Trust became easement holders in an arrangement where these wealthy private special interest groups are making public management decisions on all facets of activity on the above-referenced Essex County properties. Plus, the federal government has become a major public influence in Essex County land decisions.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

VTC fears that NEFA's proposal is sending us in that direction again. NEFA's Draft Concept Paper speaks of 15 million new "conserved" acres in the Northeast, and recruitment of funding from private interests, such as those involved in the Champion purchase, whose policies are well-known to include all of the restrictions mentioned above. The \$2 billion proposal also suggests large federal land purchases. The timing of the proposal closely follows the Green Mt. National Forest Twenty-Year Land Plan controversy that rocked Vermont from 2003-2006. The outcome of this controversy resulted in 42,000 acres (65 square miles) of new federally designated "wilderness". As NEFA members know, federal "wilderness" designation involves many of the aforementioned restrictions associated with the Champion Lands purchase. The GMNF "wilderness" designation would have been much more expansive if the Vermont Traditions Coalition, the administration of Gov. Jim Douglas, ten forest host towns, and a plethora of other traditional interests had not fought the "wilderness" proposal tooth and nail including two trips by Vermont Traditions Coalition representatives to the nation's capitol. The Vermont House of Representatives even passed a Resolution calling upon the U. S. Forest Service and Congressional delegation to refrain from designating any new "wilderness" in the Green Mt. National Forest. Regarding the NEFA proposal, why would all the interests that have been victimized by the restrictions outlined above want to bring on a massive new injection of the same prescription? Why would they be interested in a drawn out highly technical, highly contentious public input process which pits ordinary citizens who want to preserve their current way of life against a small army of well-paid hired personnel associated with numerous preservationist groups?

At present, Vermont includes the ever expanding 400,000 acre Green Mt. Forest stretching from our southern border all the way into Chittenden County on the Northwest side of the state. There's a proposed federal Wild & Scenic designation stretched over a sprawling chunk of Northwest Vermont. In Northeast Vermont, there's the former Champion Lands and substantial expanses of easement lands. Plus, there are thousands of acres of state lands throughout Northern Vermont. Finally, VTC understands that there is a new proposal that has not been widely publicized to designate the Lake Champlain basin as a "Heritage Area." Do Vermonters and other residents of the great North Woods really want wealthy national preservation groups, the federal government, and state entities controlling much of the remaining real estate on the northern tier? The model NEFA proposes seems to be exactly that. While NEFA talks about preservation of the culture and traditions of the North Woods, the original Champion lands purchase and NEFA's Draft Concept Paper suggest that a restrictive model controlled by outside interests will once again be advocated by the controlling interests.

In addition to the 65 square miles of restrictive "wilderness" that Vermont's Congressional delegation added to the Green Mt. National Forest in 2006, there are 91 square miles of pre-existing restrictive "wilderness" in the GMNF: a total of approximately 100,000 acres. Plus, much of the remaining land in the forest is locked up in other restrictive federally designated categories. Timber sale acreage on federal lands throughout the country has nosedived in recent decades. Due to an entanglement of procedural pre-requisites to any timber sale, the federal government doesn't even come close to "Allowable Timber Sale" quotas that delineate the timber cutting goals of the forest.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

That's not all. While the State of Vermont's public lands timber cutting efforts have greatly improved during the last eight years, Vermont state government still falls woefully short of cutting even the available timber left after exclusion of cutting by "sensitive" land classifications. Conservation easements owned by preservation groups, whose mission is often hostile to timber cutting, also tend to sharply limit our open landscape's timber management potential rather than preserving it. Rather than supply "expanded forest products production and consumption" as your Concept Paper proclaims, federal ownership and preservationist groups ownership sharply limits timber product availability for the forest products industry. NEFA's purported solution to future forest products industry sustainability fails, and produces outcomes contrary to NEFA's stated goals.

The limits on timber cutting and termination of traditional access roads by the federal government and easement owners also discourage hunting. A landscape with reduced timber management depletes the health and abundance of virtually all wildlife species. Lack of access roads prevents sportsmen from using large amounts of the preserved land. Plus, restrictions placed on access roads, snowmobiling and ATV riding sharply-limit recreational tourism potential. The Champion Lands proposal often years ago, like your proposal, touts the eco-tourism potential of the public and preservationist group land acquisitions, but then proposes restrictions on traditional tourism opportunities such as fishing, hunting, and motorized recreation. It is no secret that, by far, the number one tourist driver of the Champion lands region economy is snowmobiling, yet the Champion lands purchases sought limitations on future snowmobile trails in the Champion region. The Nature Conservancy and Vermont Land Trust routinely try to terminate motorized recreation in easement lands that they acquire even if motorized recreation trails pre-exist the easement acquisition. Plus, the Nature Conservancy stops open hunting on lands it requires, and mandates "Hunting By Permission Only". Often times, finding out where to get permission and other impediments make what should be an unnecessary requirement even more difficult to comply with. Plus, TNC is quick to shut off "sensitive areas" to hunting (while continuing to allow other user groups to utilize these areas).

Like timber cutting, creation of recreational amenities on public land has nose dived in recent years. The federal government has created such a tangle of procedural prerequisites to recreational amenity creation that federal land managers have trouble creating such amenities even when they want to. Instead, federal trends demonstrate that closure of access roads, trails, camping areas, and other amenities is more likely than creation of such amenities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The federal land management system also suffers from a revolving door of land managers. National Forest managers are routinely transferred to a different national forest location every few years thereby diminishing institutional knowledge and mission connectivity. Vt. Traditions Coalition opposes NEFA's advocacy of regionalism, because smaller bureaucratic entities such as the individual states are able to better manage their lands than larger entities such as the federal government. For many reasons, regionalizing the future of North Woods land management will create negative consequences for residents of the North Woods. To the maximum extent possible, residents of the North Woods should remain in control of their land base. The above-referenced federal and preservationist group initiatives that have been completed or are being attempted already involve a dangerous amount of land use control being transferred from North Woods residents to outside conglomerates and the loss of local control that goes with it.

The federal government's appetite for restrictive land designations that cut off public access and use of public land shows no signs of going away soon. Major new "wilderness" designations involving millions of acres throughout the United States passed in the last couple of years. Now, proposals are already floating about for another massive national effort to add millions of acres of federally designated "wilderness" to the millions of acres of recently designated "wilderness" and the millions of acres of long-time "wilderness". Thus, the entities that NEFA selects to preserve the future of forest industry sustainability and traditional rural land uses, in fact, have a demonstrable record of failure to deliver on such promises. Furthermore, time and again, these entities have demonstrated an appetite for adding new restricted acreages that ban many of the activities NEFA claims they will promote. Fundamentally, there is no "end game" to the drive to add restrictive roadless acreages to the vast expanses of previously restricted lands.

Yes, real estate development consuming our Northeastern woods is a concern, but the alternative NEFA proposes to resolve that concern brings a potentially larger set of negatives to the situation. And yes, the public's protests against restrictionism, public education about the benefits of more aggressive timber management, and public education about the value of public access/ use have resulted in modest gains for all of these interests since the original Champion lands purchase. However, at the end of the day, there has been no significant moderation by preservationist interests, and no indication that a proposal involving unprecedented land acquisition by these interests will be much more friendly to traditional rural culture than the Champion lands acquisition.

NEFA's proposed \$2 billion, ten year acquisition of 15 million acres (23,437 square miles) of the North Woods sections of New England and New York does not deliver on NEFA's stated goals, and therefore, if NEFA's goals are truly as stated, NEFA needs to seek a different solution. The proposal needs to paint a realistic picture of its outcomes. What is actually being proposed appears to be a National Park. At present, Vermont Traditions Coalition has seen no indication that the people of the North Woods want to undergo such a wholesale transition in their way of life.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In the 1990's, a study commission thoroughly considered the desires of N011h Woods residents for their future. It is VTC's understanding that ideas along the lines of the NEFA Draft Concept Paper were rejected. The outcome of the 1990s study, if VTC's recollection is correct, calls into question whether NEFA should even be embarking on the herein referenced proposal. If NEFA insists on moving forward with the proposal regardless of whether it conflicts with the desires reflected in the 1990s study, then, at the least, a thorough public input process should be undertaken before decisions are made, not after. For a proposal as dramatic and far reaching as NEFA's Draft Concept Paper, a much longer comment period for public input and greater outreach than NEFA has used would seem to be highly advisable.

Rather than reiterate those March 31, 2010 Comments for you in the context of the Great Outdoors Initiative, VTC will simply include them here. VTC strongly suspects that the Great Outdoors Initiative is headed toward the same policy that's advocated by the Concept Paper. VTC therefore asks that you simply extrapolate the comments from the March 31 VTC submission to the Great Outdoors Initiative. If the Great Outdoors Initiative is headed in the direction of restrictions on recreation, timber management, and road access to federal lands or federal lands to be acquired, VTC's opposition and the rationale for it are clear. Based on the experiences of the last 12 years, both in Vermont and nationally, VTC does not trust the federal government as a landowner and strongly opposes land ownership interests being conveyed to private preservationists groups with restriction agendas.

These federal land restrictions have worked to displace hunting camps, shut down snowmobile trails, outlaw all motorized use, ban horseback riding and mountain biking, close off road networks, shut down timber harvesting, end fish stocking, and on and on. These federal restrictions and ever changing land plans cater to, in many cases, unnecessarily to only a small user group. VTC believes all forms of recreation are important. Not only to the people who visit, but to those who live there and depend on recreation to fuel the economy. These broad-based restrictions that are filtered down from federal agencies working in conjunction with wealthy, national, extreme environmental organizations work to only disconnect people from nature, hurt local economies and divided recreational user groups. Battles over land use can create great distaste, ripping local communities apart over unnecessary federal restrictions. VTC has witnessed this firsthand. When the federal government worked with the Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Land Trust to conserve the 126,000 acre champion lands timber company lands as part of the Silvio Conte Refuge system, they coined the lands pristine. Yet, they strived to remove the people who cared for the land for generations. A decade later those scars are still not healed.

It is our hope that this new Great Outdoors Initiative will truly create new policies dedicated to working better with local communities, landowners and state agencies, discovering new ways to protect traditional values and land use practices that connect a large number of Americans to the great outdoors. Let's cut through the red tape and celebrate Rural America, not work to destroy it. Let's continue to conserve important lands, but allow the people to continue to use it and the natural resources it holds, not lock it up and shut it down.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A key factor in helping maintain the public benefits from private working forests is ensuring those private landowners have an economic incentive for keeping their forests as forests. Without markets, landowners won't have the capability to derive revenue for forest products, thereby decreasing or extinguishing their ability to manage and protect their forests. If a landowner no longer has the fiscal means to keep their lands in forest, a common alternative is to sell it off as building lots, causing a permanent conversion and thereby negating all the positive public benefits that the forest once provided. Supporting existing and new markets will be key in ensuring we keep forests as forests. Biomass is one example of a blossoming market for low-grade wood. Yet while USDA seems to be promoting the use of biomass, EPA seems to be downplaying or even penalizing its importance in the renewable energy arena (EPA tailoring rule). Any assistance the federal government can provide in helping develop and maintain markets, particularly emerging markets such as carbon and other ecosystem services, would be very beneficial.

Yet another factor in making it economically viable to maintain working forests is making sure regulations are not unreasonably restrictive to the harvesting and transporting of forest products. Once again, if the permitting regulations and costs become prohibitive for a landowner to practice good forestry, that land may not remain in forests. Federal agencies that develop regulations that may directly or indirectly impact the ability to manage forests should seriously scrutinize those regulations to determine whether they are reasonable. If regulations become so burdensome or costly that a landowner can no longer afford to manage their forests, and subsequently sell it for development, have we really protected the environment in the big picture?

Support by the federal government for regional land conservation initiatives is also a way to conserve America's Great Outdoors. A regional example from the Northeast is the recent report by the New England Governor's Conference on Keeping Forests as Forests. This initiative has several "pilot" projects. Some of these projects have already shown their value, such as the Quabbin to Cardigan project (Q2C), which is made up of 27 private and public partners in two states. Targeted support for these regional projects that have proven effective is yet another way the federal government could assist in conserving these valuable landscapes.

This past year each state developed a Forest Assessment and Resource Strategy as required by the 2008 Farm Bill. These assessments are a comprehensive look at the key issues facing the forests of the individual states, as well as regional and multi-state issues. Implementation of these strategies will be fundamental in how successful we are in accomplishing the goals we've set out to do to protect our forest resource.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yet an overall comment on the AGO initiative is the importance of reaching our children. Forest landowners are aging. Many of today's younger generations are no longer connected with the land like past generations. Whether it's hunting, fishing, gardening, camping, etc., these pastimes seem to have given way to computers and technology. We need to make sure education about the local forests and natural resources are part of the curriculum in schools. Not just learning about the African savannah or the Brazilian rainforest, but what's in their backyard. Programs like Project Learning Tree are wonderful. Here in New Hampshire we used to take Smokey Bear in schools all the time and talk about the importance of forests and fire protection. In the last decade, less and less schools have time for us to do a Smokey program, and we have had to resort to other venues. If today's children grow up with a lack of respect or a lack of understanding for the importance of our forests and other natural resources, we will have a bleak future, as these children will be the decision makers of tomorrow. Also, if they don't learn about the importance of working forest, and instead think it's a crime against the environment to cut a tree, we have failed.

Developing a strong and lasting campaign to educate the public about the many benefits they derive from forests and open lands, particularly private forests, will be necessary in order to accomplish many of the goals mentioned above. Given the state of the economy, a person living in a high-rise in downtown Boston may wonder why his tax dollars should go towards purchasing an easement on private property, funding the Stewardship program to benefit a private landowner, or helping develop markets for forest products. If that person clearly understands that the lands protected by Legacy funding as part of the Quabbin to Cardigan project protected the water supply for the water that comes out of his tap, he may support these initiatives. However, the public benefits derived from private forests are not necessarily intuitive for many people, and it's all of our responsibility to do everything we can to make sure all the public understands the importance of these private working forests, and why it's in everyone's best interest to maintain them as such.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

Convert all USFS, BLM and NPS facilities to renewable energy. Technology exists to accomplish this. It would demonstrate to the world and to our children that we are trying to conserve the resources that the future will need.

How on earth did these beautiful trees get left out of Redwood National Park? These are some of the biggest trees in the world, and there are almost none left because loggers have cut them all. Your suggestion is absolutely solid. But I would go further. We need an Ancient Forest National Park, because the Redwoods that remain need the surrounding other forests to be a complete ecosystem. There are presently no complete Ancient Forests represented in the US national Park System, though we're always hasseling South America to set aside the Amazon. Go figure.

I don't care if it costs a billion bucks. I need trails to hike on. Taxpayers should pay for installation and maintenance of a new trail system for hikers only. Just like the forest service road system OHVers want to use, my hiking trails should be built along 500 foot contours. I gotta see it all. And there are a hundred million people just like me who want to see it all. And we wanna hike, so no motorized vehicles. And, because there are so many of us, we're all paying taxes and that's how we want our money spent. Actually, why don't we make some trails up and down the ridges too, so we can hike at 1500 feet for a while and then hike up a ridge and get on the 2500 foot contour. This'll be great for wildlife too. Bears love trails. They'll be able to get to their favorite blackberry patches a lot easier.

Most, by far, of the lower 48 is covered with people. The only places that are not covered are places that are too dry, too cold, too high or too far from a mall. Protecting land is for wildlife, not humans. The areas that are protected already are too small to have thriving, vibrant interactions between life forms that most folks don't care about or understand, even though protecting them may benefit humans in some way.

Nature is basically a dictator and it's laws are inflexible. Governments who don't align laws carefully to reflect the laws of nature won't last for long. This is where we are getting in trouble with carbon emissions, ocean acidification, air and water pollution, over fishing and farmland destruction right now. We need to line up our law with the law of nature right away, or we are going to be extinct.

Some public lands that are presently managed by the USFS and BLM possess outstanding scenic, cultural and wildlife values and should be transferred to the National Park system so that they can be protected in a way that will preserve the outstanding values for future generations. These new national parks need to include whole ecosystems, not just fragments. If not enough public land is available to preserve this whole ecosystem, then private land should be aquired adjacent to the public land.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The government needs to get out of the welfare business and quit giving extravagant amounts of money to people who spend their time lazing around wasting natural resources and when they should be out there working for a living like the rest of us hard working Americans. Every year millions of government dollars go to mining, logging, cattle grazing, auto companies, huge banks and oil drillers. The government builds them roads, leases land to them for almost nothing and then taxpayers have to come in and clean up their messes when they're done destroying the planet for their profits. And quit subsidizing OHVs and their high maintenance trails. And quit making big campsites in National Parks to accommodate people who waste gas and parking space moving their house around. Get out of the welfare business and this country would run like it was intended by our founding fathers.

The new national parks should be huge and not necessarily be for people. Wildlife should be the factor that dictates what new parks are established and where they should be. The new parks will not be "land grabs" but will be just a change of use of already government owned land. As far as I'm concerned, there is no backlog of maintenance that needs to be done in National Parks. If the parks can't accomodate visitors in ways that certain visitors expect, maybe those people should go to Vegas or Disneyworld for their vacations.

Government promotion of local environment coops that could unite together for the restoration and maintenance of wild lands within the community. Coop members could buy individual plots of land to care for, which adjoin national or state parks, or just have a lot of wild acreage. This would expand the wild areas locally, land owners would take responsibility for their own areas, decreasing the burden on government agencies. They would live close to the land they buy and have more insight and working knowledge of their own individual land. The privately held lands would be restored and maintained by the individual owners who would utilize the coop to pool wholesale buying power and resources, work as a group with local forestry, fish and wildlife services to make land management plans for the land. Land owners would have pride of ownership and feel responsible for their land, the animals living there. It would give people something tangible that they would want to visit to enjoy, but more importantly, to care for. Coop members could receive financial assistance via government cost sharing programs.

Before there are no more wild places we must set aside the spectacular wilderness areas located on Federal BLM lands in Utah. The highest and best use of these lands is to preserve them for future generations in their natural state. As man and our machines encroach, this opportunity is being lost. We can not turn back the hands of time; we must act now. Local communities will benefit directly from tourism and all of the economic benefits that the tourism economy brings. It is a win-win situation, and future generations will appreciate our support for these permanent protections for all time.

Actually, that's not the case. Under the 1872 mining law, land can still be claimed and patented, but since 1994, congress has cut all funding for processing of patents and does so on a year-to-year basis. So all it takes is one Congressional session to restore funding and the land is gone.

FLTFA should be reauthorized but amended to allow funding to go to lands anywhere in the U.S.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'd much prefer to see a tax on something destructive, such as fossil fuels or coal-based electricity (just to name two simple examples; I'm sure there are others we could target), with those revenues going to the same conservation goals you mentioned -- rather than taxing the very items that help people enjoy and experience the outdoors.

On the surface, I love this idea. However, it's just a band-aid. Instead, we need to encourage Congress to act, and to do it in a timely, positive, and non-partisan way. Better that we put the pressure on our representatives to stop bickering and instead take action to preserve our wild spaces.

The AT is wonderful! It is a treasured resource for us all. But some of the ten other National Scenic Trails (NSTs) have hundreds of miles of corridor that needs to be acquired, just as was the case with the AT 35 years ago. The federal government needs to bring to the other NSTs the same commitment that it so successfully brought to the AT before additional NSTs are designated. The NSTs in the Great Lakes area like the NCT and IAT in particular, where there is tremendous public support for increasing the amount of public land, are ready and ripe for the federal government to begin acquiring land from willing sellers.

The BLM needs to obtain access to the 9,100-acre BLM Berryessa Peak Unit from the Yolo County side of the Blue Ridge. This is the closest public land to all the towns in the County, but the public has no access.

The BLM started work on a 38-mile ridgeline trail in the late 1960's, that runs from Cache Creek to Putah Creek along the Yolo/Napa county lines. They need to complete this trail. They stopped after only building 8 miles, because a few people who had exclusive access to BLM land further down the ridge, complained. They need to finish the trail.

The land access decision making process is in the hands of career bureaucrats who are allowing themselves to be manipulated by special interests and failing to ensure that valid science and proper analysis are applied prior to land access decisions. The Federal Government must start from the default position that public lands should be kept open for the public to use and lands made available for all use patterns. Withdrawing land from public access should require a stringent burden of proof be provided by anyone who wants to exclude the public from public land. Today land is closed on trivial and unproven pretexts. This must be immediately stopped.

The last thing you want to do is give the EPA more power. Too many other government organizations (transportation, cities, utilities) spend so much time and resources because they are concerned about the EPA enforcing severe fines for any environmental violation. Its crazy to have government organizations hire lawyers to defend themselves from other government organizations. It's bureaucracy at it's best. It's your tax dollars being spent on both sides.

This area should be preserved as a National Conservation Area.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The designation of "wild" or "natural" lands refers to the lands themselves, not to how we can travel across them or otherwise mess with them. Even those places that are designated "wilderness" are being degraded due to heavy visitor use. Trails are eroding and delicate life communities are being damaged. We are "loving the wilderness to death". But - love means doing what is best for the loved one. How about deciding the management of the wild areas based on what is best for the _area_, not for people? After all, we're only one species. And some of these wild areas are endangered. Should we even go there? Maybe there should be places where people just stay out.

One of the greatest ideas the United States ever had, our National Parks, are falling apart. The State Parks are even worse. We need creative fixes NOW. Let's use the Peace Corps, or the Conservation Corps (from long ago) ideas, and pay people who are out of work to fix the problems in the parks. The money the US government gave to the banks would have been better spent paying people to work in our parks. At least everyone would have benefited. Combine the need for environmental conservation, and the need for people to work. Put in solar panels on the roofs of all buildings in the parks to reduce the need for electric power. That would take care of two important issues at once, reduce the need for electric generating plants, and put people to work.

Local-level politicians in southern Utah should not have such a disproportionate voice on the management of federal public lands in that region. These are lands that belong to the federal government, and thus to the hundreds of millions of American citizens, not just the officials of a handful of counties. Southern Utah is a nationally significant landscape. This administration should put local politicians in their place by enforcing the federal government's right to manage these lands. National Monument designations, interim conservation designation, Executive Orders, whatever it takes to keep these lands as they are, and exert the Constitutionally-mandated federal control over our federal lands. Failing action, these county commissioners will continue to erode the federal jurisdiction over federal lands in their counties. Their voices should only count in the context of what the majority of all Americans want for their public lands: keeping wild places wild, and keeping roadless areas roadless.

While Congress has reserved to itself the right to enact wilderness legislation, the administrative agencies and/or the President should immediately provide interim designation of our highest-quality federal lands, providing a default of conservation in an 'as-is' state until later times when Congress passes legislation. I suggest this idea to comprise all existing USFS and BLM "recommended wilderness," "inventoried roadless areas," "wilderness study areas," and other similarly labeled lands. Preservation of intact ecosystems, diversity of wildlife, and clean air and water are the highest common good. When concerning pristine and near-pristine federal lands, industrial, economic, recreational, access, and user-based arguments are irrelevant.

The things people are saying in this discussion are absolutely ridiculous. There is a lot of hypocrisy and ignorance going on here. Offroading is my passion and I will defend my rights to enjoy my hobby. Share the land!!! The government needs to stop controlling every aspect of our lives...

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My counter The great tragedy is that technology is one of the few subjects that the left and the right, and the environmentalists and the corporations, all tend to view in the same way....technology is neutral!! And yet technology is certainly not neutral, and we need to understand this. Nuclear power and solar power will both light the lamps in your house. But to have nuclear power requires that society provide huge financial resources from central sources, apply fabulously high technology skills, and employ a military capacity to protect poisonous materials from terrorism and from accidental release, for all the 250,000 years that it remains highly dangerous. So society is essentially committed to a centralized technical military and financial mode of organization for a quarter of a million years. On the other hand, solar energy can be built by you and me, paid for by us, and it would not require support from any central system, whether technical, military, or financial. At least not from now on, because the technical base has been achieved. What this guy is selling is another 1/4 million years of enslavement to the centralized government we have in place. He is not saying hey why don't we cut back on how much we consume. During world war 2 all forms of energy be it food gas or lamps were all rationed. The fact of the matter that no one is saying is no form of mass produced energy is sustainable. Now to put the second to last nail in the coffin; Safety isn't the real issue (to the government that is)nuclear power hasn't become ubiquitous in the US, it is because it's so damn expensive. Even after decades of subsidies, it can't compete with other forms of energy. The cost of a kilowatt-hour of electricity generated by nuclear power is about 7 cents, coal 5 cents, natural gas 4 cents(note it is on the rise), wind power, solar, and hydro, at 3-5 cents. What is more amazing about the continuing high cost of nuclear power is the scale of subsidies lavished on the industry. In the past 50 years wind, solar and nuclear power combined have been funded to the tune of \$145 billion. Unfortunately 95% of those funds went to nuclear energy, the other two forms managed dramatic drops in unit costs, efficiency and, production of energy. Some versions of the White House- backed energy bill offer federal loan guarantees to cover half the cost of the first new plants to be built in 30 years. yet the Congressional Budget Office warns that it expects these plants to be " uneconomic to operate". Last nail on safety; On August 14, in New York, there was an electricity failure that plunged fifty million people into darkness. 16 nuclear power plants automatically shut down in the US and Canada. nuclear power plants run on off site power, not their own reactors. If the grid fails, reactors are designed to automatically close down. One or more diesel generators, with the capacity to power basic safety equipment including the cooling system, are supposed to start up. If a generator fails, the reactor cannot be restarted without off site power: another wonder of fanatic technological optimism. Something has to continually pump circulating cooling water to the reactor and to the giant, densely packed wasted fuel pools, or those fuel rods, active and spent, will catch fire and reproduce Chernobyl or worse. Don't just listen to me..... Please feel free to actually research these issues and find your own answers instead just moving with the herd, and repeating the propaganda.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

all the gov. agencies do is lock out the public rather than actively manage the public lands. We dont need more rules, just enforce what is in place! I regularly ride horses, dirt bikes, hike,etc. and segregating land for this or that is not right. Everyone should have access to all public lands. And maybe one day the gov and the "anti everything" people will stop trying to use the few "bad apples" as excuses for land closures. Well over 95% of the public lands users are responsible and take care of the land: pickup trash, stay on trails, are polite to other users, etc. Its time to stop punishing those of us who are good land users! A thought that seems to get overlooked: Public lands are entrusted to the gov, at the publics acknowledgement and approval, Its OUR land to use and enjoy.

It is nice to finally hear a reasonable point of view. Honestly, it has been pretty much anger and bile from the OHV side every time I enter into one of these discussions. For funding: Wouldn't it be awesome if the Land and Water Conservation Fund (which uses money from oil/gas leases) were fully funded so it could help states fund all those little projects that have been cut!? That Fund is all about recreation access for all; it has built city ballparks all the way up to fixing national park resources, and a huge chunk of the projects are initiated by states and local municipalities, not the Feds, so it's really a great tool for the states. There is a neat interactive map in WA (I'm from there too!), you can see where the money is doing good:

The federal government needs to take action to protect and preserve our nation's wildlife. We have carelessly paved over and poisoned the land, polluted the air and water, destroyed wildlife habitat, supported the wanton killing animals for the fun of it, and pushed species to extinction. We need to change direction, correct our mistakes, and learn to share the earth with other beings who have just as much right to be here as we do. Some suggestions: 1. Restore our Wildlife Refuges to being true sanctuaries by banning hunting, trapping and fishing. Theodore Roosevelt would turn over in his grave if he saw how our refuges have turned into today's killing fields. 2. Extend the above protections to wildlife on all federal lands. 3. Eliminate the USDA Wildlife Services, who indiscriminately kill our nation's wildlife. 4. Refocus the Fish and Wildlife Department to protect and preserve our wildlife instead of managing wildlife for the benefit of hunters, fishermen, and trappers. They should also focus on educating the public on the importance of wildlife and the need to coexist. 5. Ban grazing on public lands, which is currently being done to the detriment of our wildlife. 6. Ban BLM round-ups and killing of wild horses. 7. Expand protections for threatened and endangered species. Speed up the listing process. There are many species in dire need of help that have been denied protection. 8. Ban the use of lead shot and lead fishing tackle, which needlessly poisons our land, water, and wildlife. 9. Ban plastic bags and bottles. 10. Ban the use of dredge nets and long line fishing. 11. Protect wildlife by restricting mining, drilling, logging, and other destructive activities in key habitat areas. 12. Protect our land, air, and water from pollution and global warming. 13. Restore damaged areas and help our wildlife to recover.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama and advisors, One of the biggest threats I see to the balance and protection of Earth and nature is the genetic manipulation of food crops and the resulting increase in the use of herbicides and pesticides that kill bees, birds, frogs, fish and ultimately humans. GMO crops themselves have also been implicated in killing cattle and in causing human illness. This is big business with big money behind it, yet it is supported in part by the farm subsidy programs paid for with our tax dollars. As a tax payer, I don't want to support farms growing GMO crops! (I also don't want to see former Monsanto executives appointed to public office!!) It would make much more sense to offer farm subsidies to the organic farmers who grow food without poisoning the environment, particularly those who grow the fruits and vegetables that are so necessary for human health, rather than supporting the financial health of mega-corporations (like Monsanto) that bully farmers into growing crops for the environmentally-destructive meat industry and the junk food industry with its demand for the cheap high fructose corn syrup that is rapidly undermining the health of our nation. We need GMO labeling laws to allow consumers to choose whether to buy these products or not (and most would not). We need laws protecting our farmers from the bullying of large corporations. I think a large percentage of the U.S. population would agree with both of these points. We also need to put the health of our environment and of our human population above financial interests by supporting clean, sustainable energy, clean sustainable farming, and much less meat consumption, since cattle are a significant factor in greenhouse gas production (in addition to high meat consumption being a major factor in diabetes, heart disease and cancer). I am also very concerned with the unregulated use of nano technology, because these microscopic particles can penetrate through the skin and enter the brains of humans and animals. There is no way of knowing what harm they could do when unleashed into the general environment. Of course there is a lot more we need to do to protect our planet, but these issues stand out as the greatest threats at the present time, because they could have huge consequences. And, though we can already see the increased pollution from toxic herbicide (i.e. Roundup and the like) and pesticide use, as well as allergic reactions to GMO crops, we really have no idea how much damage they could do once unleashed in the wider environment. I cannot overstate how important I feel these issues are and I hope someone in the Federal government will take note and start listening to the demands of the majority of U.S. taxpayers on the GMO issue in particular. For a cleaner, greener world, Bernadette Wulf

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have just returned from the annual Ft. Stevens Day event sponsored by Rock Creek Park (NPS) and their Civil War Defenses of Washington coordinator Alexa Viets. Fort Stevens is an excellent, urban example of a fairly well preserved Civil War fortification; however, it -- like many battlefields throughout the country -- is threatened by development, encroachment and otherwise incompatible structures which will negatively affect its beauty and sanctity. The Federal Government, specifically the National Park Service and its partners, needs to take whatever steps are necessary to protect these endangered sites. The approaching Sesquicentennial of the Civil War is the perfect time for our government and its citizens to rededicate themselves to this effort. American Recovery Acts funds have been allocated to help restore and preserve Ft. Stevens' nearby Battleground National Cemetery, but this should be just a first step towards assessing, conserving and preserving these monuments to those who gave so valiantly.

Over 27 million acres of the most amazing BLM lands are included in the BLM National Landscape Conservation System. The protect biological diversity, offer opportunities for recreation consistent with that goal and help with the economic sustainability of gateway communities. Protecting these lands as part of the NLCS makes sense on many levels. It should be strengthened, the science mission should be expanded, and conservation programs with gateway communities should be encouraged.

This is a great idea. A tribute to America's history and a great step forward for the future. I love the name "Buffalo Commons National Park," but as others have said the name is less important than the idea. This is a great example of how history can be preserved as both a story of our collective past, as well as an on-going testimony to the our current and future values. What more can I do to make this happen? I am prepared to spend my tax dollars!

Over 80% of lands West of Mississippi are open space. Wildlife has plenty of places to live. There is no need to create Wildlife Corridors or designate additional Wilderness Areas. The creation of Wildlife corridors will have a disproportional and severe negative impact on rural communities. It appears that organizations such as The Nature Conservancy stand to make huge illicit profits by swapping lands to the government for Wildlife Corridors

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Over the past decades Multiple Use Lands and Trails have been closed at an alarming rate. This has been done with Wilderness and Monument Designations supported by a vocal minority and against the wishes and recommendations of the local residents, Forest Service and BLM. These closures have concentrated use on the remaining Multiple Use lands putting them in danger of being over used. The restrictions on the Wilderness and Monument lands have also eliminated conservation work. This is true in Sequoia National Forest and other Forests and BLM lands. The America's Great Outdoor Initiative must permanently protect remaining Multiple Use lands in order to: 1. Promote active conservation work and Forest Health. 2. Ensure all forms of recreation continue to be allowed for current and future generations. 3. Prevent any further concentration of use or closures of these lands where the majority of the public recreate. 4. Support local rural economies which depend on the income generated by the recreational user of Multiple Use lands, as well as sustainable grazing and timber harvesting which provide much needed products, jobs, income and taxes. 5. Protect Multiple Use lands where the majority of the public can go to refresh and recharge while recreating and supporting local rural economies. I attended the Los Angeles listening session on July 8, but was not chosen to speak so I have provided my testimony and suggestion here. I am the Executive Director of Stewards of the Sequoia. Since forming in 2004 we have continued to be the largest on the ground volunteer organization in the Sequoia National Forest. Our volunteers perform maintenance on over 200 miles of trails per year. Our conservation work has provided over \$350,000 in benefit to the local community and the Forest Lands at zero cost to the community. Our work is done on Multiple Use Trails which are enjoyed by everyone including motorized recreation, mountain bike, horse riding, hiking, hunting, fishing, rock climbing, camping and more. Our concerns are based on actual day to day involvement and working in the forest with land managers.

The initial Wilderness Act envisioned about 20 million acres as suitable. Today we have over 120 million acres of Wilderness where public access is restricted. The majority of the public have been forced onto smaller and smaller areas outside of Wilderness. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors we do not need more Wilderness areas, we need less. The proposed Wildlife Corridors along with the proposed Wilderness and Monument designations would harm rural areas, push people out of their homes and force them into cities. This destruction of our Rural Communities, also known as the United Nations Wildlands Project, is detrimental to the interests of all Americans and should not be supported in any way by the Outdoors Initiative.

Although the Federal portion is important, an equal share of stateside funding is crucial.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Perhaps the Obama administration should take pause and consider that had this most necessary and horrific war not been fought he would not have achieved as much as he did in this great country. Over 2% of the population died in that war, a figure that would be 6,000,000 in today's numbers. Brothers against brothers, fathers against sons to insure that freedom in America was just not words on a paper and not for a select few, but for all that live here. Battlefields need to be preserved so that the memory and the sacrifice of those brave souls would not be in vain and that future generations will know what took place here during those bloody four years of struggle, strife, atrocity, heroism, sacrifice, and death. To understand America you need to understand the Civil War. The Revolution made us a country and a free standing nation; the Civil War defined us as a nation "...of the people, by the people, for the people...." If the battlefields are forgotten then those brave men would have truly died in vain.

Invasive species, especially invasive plants, are a top threat to our wildlands. Many local initiatives bring together public and private stakeholders to plan and implement restoration projects. At the same time, more states are organizing inter-agency councils to ensure strategic efficiency. Both local and state efforts show the kind of working together that we need to conserve our great outdoors. Support from the federal government is key. First, leadership from federal land management agencies is vital for supporting state and local efforts. Second, development of biological control agents, our only truly effective tool against many widespread invasive species, needs federal expertise and resources. Finally, small but steady amounts of federal funding can leverage extensive action at the state and local level. Lastly, it's important that all of us who spend time on our public lands learn about how we can prevent the spread of invasive species and protect the places we love. Coordinated education campaigns can aim at this important education.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The federal government employs hundreds of veterinarians all over the nation, myself included. As I have started to see the images of the oil soaked wildlife along the Gulf, I feel a strong desire to offer my assistance to help save the suffering wildlife, preserve the habitat, and do anything I can do to keep the precious wetlands in the danger zone from being destroyed forever. I understand my job serving the taxpayers to ensure a safe food supply is very important and cannot be ignored, but in times of great ecologic disasters involving great numbers of wildlife that need more assistance than can ever be offered, I think it would be worth consideration to look into the possibility of establishing a network of federal veterinarians able and willing to serve as consultants or hands on care providers to aid in relief efforts following various natural or man made disasters. Federal veterinarians have been utilized as consultants and team members of reconstruction teams in Iraq and Afghanistan. When veterinarians have volunteered for these details, their regular federal duties have been covered by existing resources and the veterinarians covering the duties have been willing to take on the extra workload because they know it is all for a good cause. I believe federal veterinarians could play a vital role in efforts to "clean-up" following disasters. Teams of people mobilized to go into disaster areas will inevitably come across injured wild and/or domestic animals. Veterinarians could be a valuable asset to these teams to not only provide veterinary care to the animals, but educate and advise the team on how to avoid injury to themselves when they encounter these animals. I am not sure exactly how a network of federal veterinarians for disaster relief can be organized or how they can be inserted into the disaster areas. I am sure there are thousands of questions to be answered concerning how to get the clean-up effort mobilized in the aftermath of the Gulf oil spill, but I can see where my expertise and skills could be useful and I am sure there are many other federal veterinarians that feel the same. Even if there is no way to create a permanent network of federal veterinarians available to assist in the event of national or international disasters, I still think federal veterinarians could be utilized in some way in the interest of Public Health and also the interest of Conserving our Precious Ecologic Flora and Fauna. I am willing to volunteer for such a service and to help in any way I can to mobilize other veterinarians to action for this cause.

The AT, PCT, and CDT are great, and now so are the PNT, NCT and the rest, but the more major trails there are, the better. Each of these trails relies on major community involvement to stay open and well-maintained, and that raises awareness of the need for conservation within the community involved. Right now trails like the Great Eastern Trail and the Great Western Loop are still mainly grassroots movements (as many of the others were when they began) and a little more government recognition would do a lot to help them out.

I think that each state should take care and manage the lands in their states. The decisions need to be made on a state level and by people who know what is best for their land. And not by someone involved in the politics of the federal government. The land needs to be treated with the upmost respect and be able to be used by all. everyone has a place. even OHV use has a place.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National park units have abandoned coal mines and active oil and gas wells. These lands should be reclaimed, abandoned mines closed, water quality restored and all mineral interests bought out by the Federal government to prevent more mining scars on America's landscapes. National parks are truly America's jewels and any signs of mining (including drilling) should be erased and the lands preserved in a better scenic and environmental condition. The Federal government should buy the mineral interests of any newly acquired property. Some mines and wells have been degrading Federal lands for over 50 years with no clean-up effort. Old mines and wells are safety and environmental hazards.

A spectacular idea that would in effect create the Buffalo Commons in one large step.

Agree 100%. Add Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) and the Addition Lands, North of BCNP to the list. Problem being that the true legislative intent is not being followed. Example - Senate report says NO construction except for land mg't. needs (equipment shed or pole barn) but yet many visitor support facilities have been planned and built which flies in the face of intent. One more example is that ORV's that provide the only means of accessing many areas of these places have been banned from large areas which goes against the intent which never mentioned bans without scientific justification. One part of the reason is that the NPS says the Senate and House reports are not part of the law. If that is the case someone needs to figure out how to append them to the wiggly room filled enabling acts that get passed by some minimally informed legislators too worried about being re-elected. Cultural tragedies have happened there due to enviro-extremist induced law suits and pressures being applied to an agency and government lacking the funds and expertise to refute their lying junk science. This is a really good idea that could bring folks together and eliminate confusion for visitors, land managers and the courts.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The situation is in our Nation's first National Preserve. The problem is in applying adaptive management (am) to an ORV plan Record of Decision signed and adopted nearly 10 years ago. A FACA committee composed of extremely diverse people (some whom were usually diametrically opposed to one another) has been established for about 2 years. Over the last 2 years committee members have grown to understand each other much more than they did at first. The previously opposed factions actually have dinner together with NPS after some meetings. The committee and others all agree that some of the guidance provided by the ORV plan ROD could be modified slightly in order to accomodate some special situations but NPS says that can't be done because there isn't a statement that am applies very near to that particular subject in the ROD. NPS says it would take an EA at minimum or an EIS to accomplish folks desires due to NEPA requirements rather than using the more informal adaptive management process. Some of us suspect that the real reason is the rapidly approaching ORV plan implementation schedule deadline of 2010. I hope I am explaining this so it is understandable. If what NPS says is accurate my suggestion is that NEPA somehow be modified to authorize broad application of adaptive management throughout an ROD so as to provide NPS and FACA committee members the ability to come together on issues that folks have been diametrically opposed to previously. I have witnessed Defenders of Wildlife, NPCA, Fl. Wildl'f. Federation and ORV advocates surprisingly come to agreement on some very tough issues only to have their consensus be prevented by something in the NEPA process. I am not a NEPA specialist but do know it has a lot to do with public input into decision making. Hopefully this further description helps someone more knowledgeable than myself to chime in here with on the ground knowledge.

Those who want to kick the Feds out of their State must do it one step at a time. What lets the Feds into a State is the State itself, otherwise it is treason. States routinely and willingly get into cooperative agreements with the Feds for grant money. One example is Section 6 cooperative agreements set up by the Endangered Species Act. The bait is federal money and States bite on it like starving fish. In the process of swallowing the hook, line, and sinker the State gives the Federal Government the authority specifically reserved for the States in the Constitution. This process in my opinion is legalized treason. Most folks don't have a clue. It is not irreversible though since in these 10 page agreements there is an escape clause for either party to the agreement. All one party has to do is write the other party a letter stating they want out. It is that simple. Sadly there are many of these type agreements allowing the Feds into many areas of our lives. First find out which of your State agencies has entered these type agreements with the Federal gov't. and second attend that agencies meetings repeatedly demanding vociferously for them to withdraw from them until they do it. It shouldn't take too many attempts to succeed since cockroaches run from a bright light quickly as a rule.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

NEPA established regulations around both environmental policy and managing cultural resources. While writers of this act saw significant comparisons between these two components of our country, many organizations and agencies do not see the same correlation. The federal government can help to convene the leaders of these two interconnected groups to find ways to get more people outdoors. One possible solution is further identification and interpretation of cultural resources within cities. This process may be aided by further development of an urban trail system - walkable cities. Developing cultural identity in both local and national context) while getting people outdoors is a great starting point for those who may not be comfortable outside of traditional institutions. I spend quite a bit of time in the Cascades of Washington state. Very few trails identify or interpret cultural resources connected with Northwest history or culture. When they do, they can be effective tools to getting people outdoors. For example, the Iron Goat Trail is extremely effective at connecting people with history and the environment. The 4-mile loop identifies an early rail road line which was destroyed by a deadly avalanche. This highlights both a connection to nature and the recent past. This is just one effective example.

Animals that walk, fly, or swim to do have national boundaries. We should be looking at connecting several migratory routes in the United States with the nations of Mexico and Canada, for joint International Parks. The Monarch Butterflies of Mexico, feed in Michigan. The birds of Alaska, travel the entire coastal areas to nest and feed. Four International Migratory National Parks should be created in the United States, Mexico and Canada. They should include an area from Quebec to Florida, from Alaska to Mexico, from Alberta, Canada to Mexico along the Rockies, from the Grasslands of Manitoba to the grasslands and deserts of Mexico. Animals, like man, can swim, fly, walk and run. Plants can also. Let's start looking at this magnificent New World of ours and work with our neighbors to create a giant preserve involving all three of our nations. Each segment, can still run its own jurisdiction, just like the State Parks in Redwood National Park in California maintain their jurisdiction, within the greater National Redwood Park. We have national parks and recreation areas, that can be connected with others by trails, states parks, city parks, recreation areas etc. All into a very large idea of what we can do to protect our wonderful heritage given to all of us.

Designate the two segments of the Hiawatha National Forest in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan as the Three Great Lakes National Park. Using all the now Federal lands, firstly designate the entire two segments of about 900,000- acres as a National Monument by the stroke of the pen from our President Obama. This would create by parkland, an unbroken forest connecting three of the Great lakes, Michigan, Superior, and Huron. Once it is protected as a National Monument, as so many in the past have been, Congress could vote to make this into an incredibly accessible national park. Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, etc. all would be in easy driving to access it. Imagine, three of the Great Lakes connected and protected for the future use of all.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree that all the remaining Old Growth in the United States, especially in roadless areas, need to be protected by law. The greatest way is to designate them National Wilderness areas under the 1964 Wilderness Act. My grandfather was the foreman of the French Canadian lumber camps in the Michigan Woods, and my grandmother, the "Cookie". They never dreamed that the forests would all be destroyed, but we are at that point. In the lower peninsula of Michigan, there are only 50 acres left of Ancient Old Growth. These forests take 500 years to replace, if left alone. I will never see them, nor will anyone for all those hundreds of years. I was a "stump hunter" for deer in the Michigan Woods. I used to squint my eyes and imagine what the forest must have look like. It was not until I saw the Redwoods, that I understood all that we had lost. Please designate all that is left of all humanity, wildlife, and flora. The whole world depends on this.

Lets create a National Park connecting the three states of Washington, Oregon, and California with the nations of Mexico and Canada. Using existing National Parks, Wilderness, National Forests, BLM lands in deserts and mountains, lets connect using the mountain ranges of the Sierra and the deserts of the three states to do an international park that finally connects areas along the Pacific Coast trail. Imagine three nations cooperating with three states, using national and state parks in all three nations. The wildlife and flora for all three nations will be enhanced and it would stand as a symbol of our commitment to be friends.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is the perfect vehicle for preserving open space, developing parkland and greenway trails. LWCF is a competitive grant program, which one component is a federal, state and local partnership called the State Assistance program. The BP oil spill has degraded some of America's most treasured recreation land and water, which prompts an urgent call to action for Congress to provide full and dedicated funding for the LWCF program. LWCF is a critical part of America's energy and outdoor recreation future.

The preservation of Civil War battlefields (and other historic sites) should be of the highest priority. This is one of the ways the Federal Government can work with citizens groups on both the local and national levels to form public/private partnerships that get real results. Saving land from development will encourage future generations to connect with our country's history and develop an appreciation for the enormous sacrifices made by previous generations of Americans. It is refreshing to note that respect for our country's history, particularly the Civil War, is one of the things that helps bring Americans together, regardless of their background or political affiliation. Finally it is a proven fact that Civil War battlefield parkland is of tremendous economic benefit to nearby communities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Methane is a difficult greenhouse gas to control and everyone knows that. Before you can successfully burn it to provide energy, effective equipment and methods must be in place so you are not trading one problem for another. However, we went from cathode tube to transistors to solid state to microchips in short order, and the time between innovations is shortened. Surely we can meet that challenge. We would want to spend the R&D time, energy and money for this reason: Using methane to generate energy is a smart way to go because there is nothing more renewable. Cities, towns, burgs, businesses, and farms all generate many metric tons of sewage, a primary source of methane gas. Let's capture it, refine it, and burn it instead of dump it. Separate out the water for the water reclamation facilities (we have them in Arizona and they are used to water golf courses) and use the resulting matter to generate methane. Once the methane has been processed out, the remaining material has enough safe nutrients to be made into fertilizer. They do that in Pennsylvania now. There may have been an experimental community in Virginia or Maryland years ago that did exactly this. If they are still functioning as a community, let's look at their success. If they are not, then let's examine their failures and learn from them. But, let's do it. It is the ULTIMATE recycling venture!!

This should be linked with "Federal Government role" and "Challenges" as well. The feds say it's a state issue, the state says its local, the locals say it's state, and everyone is just waiting for the appointed Pa Gaming Control Board to make the decision on the application, as though our national honor were not at stake. The Gettysburg Address is the most memorized speech in the world. This casino less than 3000 FEET from hallowed ground would be such an embarressment to the United States.

A federal, interagency commission should be created to focus on the long-term protection of endangered species and ecosystems. This commission should have authority to issue reports directly to the President of the United States. Members of the commission should include trained ecologists representing the federal land-holding divisions, as well as regional representatives from the states and non-profit conservation organizations. The commission's objectives should include prioritizing actions to reduce losses of habitat and to control invasive species, as well as prioritizing endangered species recovery plans. This commission should be backed up by a federal policy that acknowledges the importance of biodiversity protection.

A fine idea. This suggestion is better, in my opinion, than simply extending the enhanced tax incentives for conservation easements, as promoted by the Land Trust Alliance. The difference is that these "targeted" lands potentially would offer greater-than-average public benefits through their protection.

A great idea! There are huge expanses of the high plains in the West where agriculture has not been economically successful. A park of this sort would give an economic boost to its region, as well as provide an anchor for this largely-lost ecosystem. We could see the Great Plains as they appeared 200 years ago to Lewis and Clark.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A great many social and economic problems worldwide, as well as most of our environmental and conservation problems, have roots in human overpopulation. No one denies the right of people to have as many children as they wish. However, for a very long time, businesses and religious groups have effectively blocked our addressing overpopulation as a serious national and worldwide concern. For the sakes of our children, our societies and our fellow creatures, the President of the United States and other world leaders should make a strong case for intelligent family planning.

Creating a Buffalo Commons National Park provides an opportunity to work with the affected communities to plan their future within and adjacent to the new park. Development of the park must provide a new model for collaborative stewardship that honors the communities within the peopled landscape as well as the landscape itself.

it is a lie that only the rich and the young will be able to access Wilderness. I am neither. If you would like to see a change in the Wilderness Act begin to work with your representatives in D.C. and suggest that bicycles be allowed on trails. Re read the Wilderness Act and see what is allowed. Understand that access on foot costs very little. Understand that I hike with two groups of women who are all over 55. Understand that humans in their greed have devastated millions of acres. Do we need to do so to more? And in the case of Utah. All of us should be supporting America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. Just because you can't see life does not mean it isn't there. We are part of a web. Destroy one strand and we are all hurt Why as humans are we also leaving Nature worse off than when we found it?

The role of the Federal Government in connecting people to the beauty of the outdoors should be one of example. Hike, fish, ride a bicycle. Then study all you can find about all the values of wilderness - how it shaped us as a nation. How we came to be afraid of it and want to subdue it. We have been separated from wilderness for many generations and need to relearn its lessons. President Obama - Get outdoors and listen to the sounds of Nature without any manmade interference. Show your respect for what is still wild without making fun of any of it. Be a leader, President Obama and teach respect and ask all the schools to teach respect for Nature. While we use it how do we leave it better off for the next generation??

Responsible use of public land is the only thing that makes sense. Land that is managed and utilized for grazing and timber harvest is much better for the land and the environment. MORE GOVERNMENTAL REGULATION AT THE PROMPTING OF ENVIRONMENTAL RADICALS IS THE LAST THING WE NEED! SUWA – GO HOME!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Across the country, small-scale meat producers are raising grass-fed, sustainable livestock, creating healthy pastures that can aid in the sequestration of carbon, preserve the natural qualities of the land, and provide an alternative to oftentimes poorly planned housing and urban development projects. Providing these farmers with the USDA slaughter and processing infrastructure to allow them to get their products to market, make a living, and keep their land is crucial. These processing facilities must cater to small producers with small batches of livestock. These facilities are economically self-sufficient, but the US government can put in place USDA and HACCP regulations and infrastructure that encourage and incentivize small farmers. Specifically, the federal government can partially subsidize the creation of USDA slaughter and processing facilities specifically designed for small farmers, and ensure that HACCP plan requirements are feasible and appropriate for the small producer and processor.

After 40 years of posting "Public Land - Keep Out" signs on the boundaries, it's time for the US Fish and Wildlife Service to allow the public to visit Featherstone NWR on the Potomac River, just downstream from Washington, DC. The Federal officials who recently completed the "Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed" recognize that the general public will get more engaged in protecting places that they can experience, in person. The vision is "A Chesapeake watershed with ample access to provide for public enjoyment." Blocking public access to land already owned by the Federal government, with a mile of Potomac River water access, is counterproductive. Wildlife-dependent recreation is appropriate for the 325 acres of tidal marsh and riparian wetlands with mature oaks, tulip poplars and red maples. The dramatic population growth in Northern Virginia has made it even more critical to connect people to nature. If no one but Federal biologists are aware of the natural assets, don't be surprised if local officials propose developing the refuge site for commuter ferry landings, school bus parking lots, or other inappropriate uses.

Environmental and outdoor education is the foundation of efforts to reconnect citizens, and particularly our youth, with America's Great Outdoors. It also improves student achievement in STEM and other subjects, provides the knowledge and skills needed for the "green" jobs of the 21st Century and to address the increasingly complex environmental and natural resource challenges facing the nation, and helps contribute to healthy lifestyles. The Obama Administration should support and the Congress should promptly enact the No Child Left Inside Act, sponsored by Senator Jack Reed and Representative John Sarbanes. The NCLI Act provides incentives for states to provide high-quality environmental instruction, outdoor learning activities, and teacher professional development and will help ensure that every student graduates from high school environmentally literate and prepared for real-world challenges and careers.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Every land use agency including the USDA Forest Service, BLM and US Park Service have a harder time each year managing the lands under their care due to conflicting regulations, analysis paralysis and onerous policies. Adding the responsibility for these agencies to plan for lands beyond those in their care would be even more difficult. Private property owners such as Indian Tribes are better stewards of lands than our federal agencies. Tribal lands are not subject to the onerous regulations that tie the hands of our federal land managers. In many cases wildfires have devastated our overgrown public lands and cannot be stopped by million dollar fire fighting efforts, yet the fires lay down once crossing onto tribal lands where the forests have been nurtured, thinned and/or harvested. On the ground projects are fewer and fewer in our National Forests, while there are more and more costly plans. The Great Outdoor Initiative should encourage on the ground projects by removing the onerous regulations. Completing projects like forest thinning and trail maintenance will provide better conservation and ultimately better Landscapes and watershed health.

I strongly support making the tax incentives on conservation easements permanent. Easements are particularly effective in communities that are concerned about having too much tax-exempt land owned by the government or land trusts. Local officials and residents who are concerned about lost revenues are more willing to support this approach when they understand that the private landowner will still pay some taxes, even if the amount of tax on land under easement may decrease.

Mountain Biking is a healthy way to experience the environment and keeps kids and adults from becoming obese. The government should promote the construction and maintenance of singletrack trails for all ability levels of mountain bikers. The trails should access scenic areas to promote conservation and appreciation of nature.

"As an aside, do we really need the National Forest under the Department of Agriculture anymore? Or would it make more sense to put them under the Department of the Interior?" Only if we are giving up on the concept of our National Forests actually providing forest products. A lot of our rural communities have been gutted by divergence away from timber industry. Otherwise, I agree with this idea, as long as increased resources are used to improve recreation opportunities for everyone as appropriate.

"Roadless" designations during the Clinton administration were a subterfuge leading to Wilderness Study Area designation and then inclusion in Wilderness Area legislation. Through the use of Orwellian "Roadless" labels, places with historical motorized trails were shut down, and now are in danger of being closed under the Travel Management Planning process. To the uninformed public, "roadless" conveys an idea of pristine condition that is contradicted by a history of mining claims, homesteads, historical multi-use trails, etc. Environmental advocacy groups do nothing to dispel this incorrect assumption because it furthers their goals to eliminate motorized recreation from public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

"Roadless" does not mean "Wilderness." The Clinton-era Roadless Initiative was an Orwellian process that saw areas with extensive historical trail networks declared as Roadless areas, which then became fodder for inappropriate candidacy as Wilderness. Myself and others in the motorized recreation community would be far more supportive of Wilderness Area designations if we didn't observe the blatant disregard of the terms of the Wilderness Act in selecting areas for congressional nomination. The principle of soft release means that areas once rejected as lacking wilderness characteristics keep coming up for nomination in a political process whenever the pro-Wilderness lobby gains political power. By holding to the original test of Wilderness designation--that of areas truly "untrammelled by man," and not dredging up the same areas time after time whenever the political winds blow favorably, the diverse communities of people who value public lands can unite behind what is in principle a very good law.

Even if they're not "big city legislators," they're often eastern state legislators like Rep. Hinchey (D-NY22), who keeps sponsoring western state Wilderness legislation. I said it elsewhere; one for one--for every acre someone like Hinchey proposes, he should have to find an acre of proposed Wilderness in his home district.

you need to read 1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus ([Link](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1491_(book))) } New research shows that the coast-to-coast wilderness to which you referred in another post existed only before the first human settlement--not just European settlement--of the American continents. It hasn't "been 200 years since this whole country was a wilderness"--it's been 12,000 years, perhaps more. As for the original idea posted here, _____ has it correct. People seeking wild and quiet places, such as they are, have vast acreage available to them, especially in the Western states. Here's a one-for-one idea: for every western acre proposed for Wilderness by an eastern-state Congressman, designate one acre of that person's congressional district as Wilderness.

is advocating preserving the MUSY framework for public lands management that is threatened by the new Forest Service idea of using "restoration" as a guiding principle.

In the current travel management planning process, documentation of historical OHV use is being ignored by the land managers. They are operating toward a foregone conclusion that OHV access will be drastically reduced from existing conditions. NEPA requires consideration of a no-change alternative, but Travel Management Planning requires that the no-change alternative be discarded.

your statistics do not document EXCLUSIVE use. I may go to the forest on my motorcycle, and then engage in other non-motorized activities. The statistics are easily mis-interpreted. The 44,000 acre Cerro Grande fire was started by the US government and shut down access to an extensive multi-use trail network developed and maintained by dirt bikers from the local Los Alamos NM area. Kind, courteous motorcyclists lost their trails, perhaps permanently, because the government could not be trusted with matches. Opportunity was lost. The Great Outdoor Initiative should incorporate restoring sustainable access to historical use areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree completely. The preservation of an area of prairie in Western Kansas would be an appropriate addition to the National Parks' system. Somewhere around Fort Larned, a National Historic Site, would be very appropriate and bring many travelers to view our eco system as well as "how it used to be." I remember that area as a young girl, and it is much like it was 70 years ago. I think Kansas has been overlooked in the National Park System as we have many areas that could be preserved and protected from the inroads of civilization and society, to show people how it was before we began to feed the nation.

As the pace of urban and suburban development rapidly increases, it's absolutely essential to continue to increase funding for LWCF, so that additional lands may be aquired and added to our federal and state systems of public lands. Check out the Wilderness Society's recommendations about this -- { Link } and The Trust for Public Land -- { Link }

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Assist states, regions, and localities in linking land use planning, transportation planning, and conservation/biodiversity planning: The American Planning Association (APA) recommends that biodiversity should be protected and enhanced by being included in the early stages of the land use planning process. "Planning for biodiversity should use the best available science to assess natural resources and determine areas of environmental vitality as the first step in incorporating 'green infrastructure' into human settlements." Wisconsin provides an example of one state that developed a planning document that identifies places critical to meet Wisconsin's conservation and outdoor recreation needs until 2050. This Land Legacy Report, compiled between 1999 and 2003, identifies 229 critically-sensitive environmental areas, or "Legacy Places" in need of protection as the state develops over the next 50 years. The federal government might use Wisconsin's Land Legacy initiative as a model to encourage or require other states to develop such biodiversity/conservation plans. The APA supports federal and state agencies providing assistance to county and local governments to collect and analyze information on natural communities and processes. "County and local governments should supplement this information with local knowledge. Using the combined information, all levels of governments should work with non-profit organizations, businesses, and citizens to designate green infrastructure policies and carry them out." "Many local governments, where land use planning takes place, do not have the staff or technological resources to inventory and map biodiversity resources for their communities. Federal and state agencies that have the resources and scientific and technical knowledge needed on topics such as ecology or biodiversity should provide financial and technical assistance to county and local agencies, which augment the information with local knowledge. A county benefits by obtaining technical information necessary to write a strong plan, while the state and federal governments benefit by enhancing the protection of natural resources through partnerships with local governments and non-profits." The Government Accountability Office (GAO) did a study that found that, for many urban and rural communities, open spaces including park lands, environmentally sensitive lands, and farmlands are integral to planning for and managing growth. "The federal government could play a greater role in such preservation activities by, for example, expanding the education and technical assistance it provides to local communities through such resources as USGS' mapping capabilities. Communities have responded favorably to such assistance in the past, but any expansion would involve a consideration of costs and of the appropriate role of the federal government in local land-use planning." References: -APA's Smart Growth Policy Guide: www.planning.org/policyguides/smartgrowth.htm -Community Development, Local Growth Issues- Federal Opportunities and Challenges. US General Accounting Office (GAO) Report to Congressional Requesters. GAO/RCED-00-178. September 2000. -Land Legacy Report: { Link }

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

State Fish and Game agencies are a logical way to promote habitat restoration and preservation using federal \$\$\$. This program was just barely able to establish itself in many States when it was pitched overboard. Many States have private lands programs that need a consistent source of funding, other State Fish and Game agencies have no program or capacity to work with private landowners; this was a valuable program for those states with a high percentage of private property (like Texas) but most importantly, for states with a small amount of private land compared to public land such as BLM. Most always, the most valuable wildlife habitat is privately owned--if we have no consistent funding to support our work with these landowners, they lose faith in government and we lose wonderful opportunities to build bridges with the public we work for. In some cases, the Landowner Incentive Program also provided the mechanism to increase collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to facilitate capacity in both agencies to promote important Farm Bill programs like the FRPP, WHIP, WRP, etc.

NPCA has been saying it better than I can for over 10 years. My feeling is that radical preservation of large tracts of wilderness will serve mankind tremendously in the long run. Here are NPCA's talking points: National parks preserve large areas of land, yet many of the wildlife that live there must move outside park boundaries to feed, breed, and survive. It is critical that the Administration work to support or lead efforts to safeguard these iconic landscapes in a way that works for both wildlife and the people that live there. National parks and adjacent lands provide some of the best outdoor classrooms in the country. The Administration should do all it can to help support and significantly grow successful service learning and other education programs so that youth have an opportunity to experience our national parks and public lands. We have already begun to see the impacts of climate change on our parks--through the loss of Glacier National Park's namesake glaciers or the increase of fires in and around Yellowstone. The Administration must start now to protect these great landscapes so that our wildlife and rivers can sustain and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a little-known conservation program, has funded wide-ranging land protection. Full, dedicated, and permanent funding of the LWCF is a key component to fulfill the vision of America's Great Outdoors. The Administration must lead efforts in supporting full funding for this program.

The role of the Federal government in facilitating the preservation of the sacred ground embodied in the Civil War battlefields through making available matching funds for non-profit organizations is vital to our ability as a nation to the continued recognition of our heritage. Private sector groups have had great success in laying the groundwork and developing the arrangements for critical land acquisitions. These efforts, when parleyed with the ability to show financial leverage through matching gifts from sources with common interests such as governments, individuals, and grass-roots organizations have proven invaluable. These successes can continue if reliable public funding is established/continued.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A host of rules and regulations, missions and methods might be more cleanly and clearly organized with more distinct definitions that differentiate the primary concepts employed by departments, agencies and NGO's. I propose the following specifications for the primary constructs of preservation, restoration, conservation and consecration ...

To Protect and Preserve: We work to safeguard the existing integrity, quality and health of the water, its associated diversity of land and wildlife, from further declines and losses (threats) through monitoring (watch and ward) and advocacy (shield and defend) activities with other individuals, families, organizations and communities. [save ... maintain] "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the community, and the community includes the soil, waters, fauna, and flora, as well as people." -Aldo Leopold [To Preserve: keep safe from harm or injury; retain (a condition or state of affairs); maintain or keep alive]

To Restore: We seek to improve water quality (recover and reestablish), recognizing its interconnection with land use by humans and wildlife, and seek to restore (rehabilitate and reclaim) important natural and scenic areas along waterways and throughout watersheds and landscapes by partnering with other organizations focused on ecological restoration (repair and reconstitute). [secure ... manage] "Every creature is better alive than dead, men and moose and pine trees, and he who understands it aright will rather preserve its life than destroy it." -Henry David Thoreau "On the mountains mistakes are fatal. In politics, mistakes are wounding emotionally, but you recover. Personally, wilderness helps me get back in touch with natural rhythms, helps me reflect and, in the process, restore my creativity." -Mark Udall [To Restore: bring back (a previous right, practice, custom, or situation); reinstate; return (someone or something) to a former condition, place, or position; repair or renovate (a building, work of art, vehicle, etc.) so as to return it to its original condition; give (something previously stolen, taken away, or lost) back to the original owner or recipient]

To Conserve: We engage people living within the river corridors and habitats, increasing stewardship through educational, recreational and volunteer stewardship activities that give them the understanding and motivation to advocate at the local, state and national levels on behalf of the river's values. We partner with other conservation organizations seeking to insure long-term stability through land purchase (sequester in reserves, parks, and sanctuaries), easements and other mechanisms to sustain (perpetuate) a legacy of high quality land and water ecology into the future. [sustain ... mind] "In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught." - Baba Dioum [To Conserve: protect (something, esp. an environmentally or culturally important place or thing) from harm or destruction; prevent the wasteful or harmful overuse of (a resource); maintain; retain]

To Celebrate and Consecrate: This watershed/landscape/habitat is a national treasure. We live, work and play here because we love the place, and we celebrate that love at every opportunity. [serve ... deference and devotion] "O if we but knew what we do when we delve or hew -- hack and rack the growing green! Since country is so tender to touch, her being so slender, that like this sleek and seeing ball but a prick will make no eye at all, where we, even where we mean to mend her we end her, when we hew or delve: after-comers cannot guess the beauty been." -Gerard Manley Hopkins [To Consecrate: declare something sacred; devote (something) exclusively to a particular purpose]

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are many ranches and working lands with fines, liens, or notes outstanding that are held by Federal agencies and/or Federal lenders. Private landowners should be able to get some of these debts or fines removed via the donation of a conservation easement. This would allow them to keep the farm and would provide a strong public benefit as well. A variant of this idea has been used extensively in South America when nations defaulted on their debts to the World Bank and instead "repaid" the loan by preserving forests.

I heartily agree! I don't think it would take much to re-tool the program so as to meet modern needs; abolish the gender/marital status rules, up the pay, make the Corps an independent government program as it was originally. Many glowing testimonials can be found from those who served in the CCC during the great depression of the 30s; providing jobs, reforestation and maintaining our natural resources, planting lots of trees (which eat up CO2) and having a fantastic training, learning and working experience for people of all ages..it's a win-win. No reason why this can't be funded, either; Nader's proposal of taxing the biggest polluters (BP comes to mind) something like 0.5% per CO2 amount output (with NO "credits"!) would provide plenty of money to pay a civilian corps. We could also levy a tax on the big banks that practice casino capitalism (Goldman-Sachs comes to mind) equal to the tax we citizens pay for gambling winnings; that would raise plenty!!

Urban families need urban parks, urban trails, scenic highways and pocket parks. The local governments know what the people need and want, but they need help with the funding. How can we raise urban children in central Los Angeles who have never been to the beaches of the Pacific Ocean? Or to the nearby Santa Monica Mountains? They need not only their own central parks (almost none now) but also public transportation to the available recreation 20 or 50 miles away, like the beaches of Santa Monica Bay and the wild state and federal preserves in the Santa Monica Mountains. The U.S. Government can help local governments (both the City and County of Los Angeles, for example) with the funding for recreation access to green space inside the inner city and transportation to recreation at the edge of the city. See what the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has accomplished on both of those access issues. Talk to its long time leader Joe Edmiston.

As far as I have seen the concept of corridors first came about 15 years ago or so and was initiated by the Heritage Foundation a subsidiary of the United Nations. I have maps of how they virtually want to make the vast majority of Montana corridors. Mostly No human use. I don't want the United Nations telling me or our country how to use our land. I have seen lots of open space and use it regularly. I have lived in Mt. and currently live in far north east Calif. On the border of Oregon and Nevada.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

-Stop subsidizing destructive development projects. A case in point is the Federal Aviation Administration's intention of supplying \$30 million dollars to expand a small private airport by filling in a stream valley of a tributary to Mattawoman Creek, which has been documented as Maryland's most productive Chesapeake Bay spawning and nursery ground for migratory fish. - Enforce Total Maximum Daily Loads of pollutants to improve water quality—otherwise, we will not restore valuable waters like Mattawoman Creek. There are existing tools not exercised, such as requiring National Pollutant Discharge Elimination permits for stormwater to quantitatively reduce loads, and denying new development permits as necessary. -Display leadership: overcome reticence in protecting land over the objections of local officials. We did it in the Smokey Mountains and Grand Teton National Park. Now let's do it for Chesapeake Bay Treasured Landscapes, like Mattawoman Creek, at the heart of the tidal Potomac River Treasured Landscape. Mattawoman is one of the Chesapeake Bay's most productive fish nurseries, yet is threatened from overdevelopment by local officials who will not take the larger view over real estate interests.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

ED OUT is an exciting new partnership that uses parks, forests, and refuges as outdoor classrooms to improve learning, enhance fun and learning during the summer, better prepare students for the next school year, and encourage outdoor recreation experiences that help America's youth fight the epidemic of childhood obesity. ED OUT resulted from discussions among Prince William (Virginia) County Schools leadership, senior federal executives and leading national recreation officials at a June 2009 awards program at the U.S. Department of the Interior honoring the school system's role in Monarch Live, a remote learning program highlighting the birth and migration of Monarch butterflies in the Americas. The Prince William County School District has some 80,000 students in grades K-12. It is the second largest, the fastest growing and one of the most technologically advanced school systems in Virginia. The system includes 88 schools – including 55 elementary, 15 middle and 10 high schools – and more than 5,000 teachers. The system is quite diverse in population: White... 39.7%; Hispanic... 24.3%; African American...22.9%; Asian...7.7%; Other...5.3%. ED OUT launched after less than a year's planning during Great Outdoors Month 2010, as nearly 600 students went outdoors on June 4 for education and fun. Students in 4th and 7th grades rotated through learning stations and activities during the day, just as they would during most school days. But the difference was that the instruction was provided by adjunct faculty drawn from NASA and the Forest Service, BLM and the National Wildlife Federation and many more. Science, art and history were presented in ways that tied to the coming year's curriculum – and a new website (www.edout.us) provided even more information on how summer months could be used to combine fun and getting a head start on the next academic year. From learning about light spectrums and wetland mitigation projects to drawing entries for the Junior Duck Stamp Contest and learning about the music of nature, the students were attentive and very engaged. Healthy lunches – with carrots and fruit and juice – provided energy while special water bottles and ample refill opportunities kept the action going even on a hot day with temperatures in the 90's. The day wrapped with a mass swearing in of Junior Forest Rangers followed by fruit popsicles – and lots of smiles. The day utilized one of the closing days of the academic year - after traditional testing and teaching have largely concluded, and a time of significant challenge in most classrooms. The program also helps students understand more about career opportunities involving the Great Outdoors. When fully implemented, ED OUT will offer each child in grades K-11 a day of experiential learning outdoors. The day may involve outdoor activities in and nearby school campuses, including planting gardens, trees and introductions to outdoor fun. In addition, tens of thousands of students will travel to nearby recreation sites, where adjunct faculty will work with classroom teachers to deliver lessons ranging from physical sciences to history to art to forensic science. While in the outdoors, students enjoy a healthy lunch and learn more about good eating practices and the connection between eating and activity levels. This reinforces the school systems efforts beginning in 2007 to revamp school cafeteria menus to emphasize healthier eating habits, a process begun after the school system found itself a regional leader in the percentage of children classified as obese and overweight. Participating student are provided with (1) suggested summer break activities, readings and trips specifically addressing the academic program of the next grade, including suggested family trips and activities, (2) information about nearby summer fun at federal, state and local sites, and (3) special offers from recreation retailers and service providers. A new website, www.edout.us, provides information

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

and opportunities for students, parents and teachers alike to access the wealth of information about ways to make the outdoors an exciting and relevant year-round classroom. Following its successful June 2010 pilot effort, Prince William County is planning to drastically increase the number of its students invited to participate in ED OUT. Expansion of ED OUT to other school districts across the nation is also underway. Pilot locations are under consideration in the Denver, Chicago and Seattle/Portland metropolitan areas. Prince William County Schools' (PWCS) dynamic superintendent, Dr. Steven Walts, who participated in most of the ED OUT planning and the pilot effort, told the event partners that the day had overcome the challenges of making the final days of the school year quality learning time and proved to the students that great fun and adventure can be found beyond electronic screens – where studies now show American youth spend, on average, 7.5 hours daily.

Ah, you had my support until the last sentence. Government + money = disaster and deficit.

Sounds good to me...as long as it doesn't require my tax dollars to employ and/or a government agency to oversee.

Wouldn't this open the door to countless law suits filed in order to delay any action? Law suits that we, the tax paying citizens of the US, would, ultimately pay for? No thanks.

It is no secret that Oregon and the Intermountain West have a terrible pine beetle problem and fires are well outside the historic norms. Could it be attributable to federal forest policy? E.g., of Oregon's non-reserved federal forest's annual growth, 8% is harvested while 19% is lost to mortality (i.e., left to rot, feed bugs, and fuel fires). The remaining 73% is left as growing stock. NO piece of ground has the ability to add that much growing stock year after year after year. At some point it no longer has the moisture, nutrients, or sunlight necessary to sustain that increasing amount of vegetation. It becomes susceptible to drought, insects, disease, and fire. This is known as 'carrying capacity', a concept that explains why a farmer can not feed a hundred steers on an acre of pasture, why a wildlife biologist can not sustain a 1000 deer on a section of land, or why the gardener does not plant tomatoes 3 inches apart. It is simple biology. This concept is not politically correct and is not one a politician wants to hear. To ignore the concept is to wear blinders or to keep the head in the sand. Until our politicians in both the Executive and Legislative Branches have the political gumption to put politics aside and base federal forest policy on biology, our federal forests will continue to decline. Though this is a biological given, I am not holding my breath. Politics (i.e., gaining power and getting re-elected) will ALWAYS trump biology.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The federal land managing agencies serve a critical role in supplying a diverse range of recreational opportunity to the American public. Recreation is a key multiple use value. The federal agencies should seek to enhance recreational opportunities on lands that they manage. Training for local recreation program managers is essential, especially in the area of developing funding opportunities through private sector and federal grant programs such as the Yamaha OHV Access Initiative GRANT Program or the Recreational Trails Program at the federal/state level. Federal agencies can provide many tools and opportunities for all to enjoy OUR lands. One thing I have seen work well is a federal agency supply dumpsters for trail cleanup while local clubs and local users do the work by volunteering time.

Return to a Multiple Use philosophy. Before the great (?) environmental and preservational movements of the '70s, this worked best. We all shared the land with respect for those who recreated on it and for those who produced commodity resources from it. Commodity production creates wealth. If we don't create our commodity resources, we must import them, exporting our wealth in the process. It seems hard for urban America to grasp that land, whether public or private, is the larder from which we derive all our needs to maintain our quality of life, but this we must understand and respect. The chief obstacle now to Multiple Use is the fragmenting of our public lands into special use areas. The Federal Government should cease being intimidated by vocal minorities and return to a Multiple Use philosophy for the common good. Our political leaders can assist in this by de-politicizing our land management agencies. These are staffed by trained professionals that we have hired to manage our lands. Let them do their jobs. One tool that would help in these regards is to allow no more life-time appointments for Federal District judges. Far too often, with no accountability to hinder them, they follow their own agenda, with little regard to the impact their decisions have on those trying to produce raw materials and on the rural communities affected by their decisions. Another tool would be to rescind the Equal Access to Law consideration for all of the professional protesters who seek to inhibit any further meaningful development of our public lands. Our public land management agencies must pay these court costs out of their own budgets. This seriously erodes their ability to meet their more important obligations. A third tool is to amend the NEPA and ESA laws so that only those appeals of public land management programs by folks who have standing and credibility, and whose appeals have substance, will be considered by the agencies. This would do much to inhibit the myriad of appeals filed by bored college students with nothing better to do on Saturday nights. Finally, with regard to public lands conservation, we need no more. We have National Parks, National Monuments, Wilderness Areas, Wildlife Management Areas, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, to name the most common. Enough is enough! It is time we start managing our public lands in a more realistic, responsible, and mature manner, and bring an end to the public land wars of the PAST THREE DECADES. Montana

No we already have this it is called wilderness study area's they need to revert back after 5 years and congress doesn't act.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal Government Role – How can we partner with the federal government to make outdoor education programs available to our disadvantaged and at risk youth groups? We have a part-time grant writer and would welcome the opportunity to bridge grants that make these effective programs available to low income schools and organizations.

Impact studies are the only way land, water, and wildlife will remain sustainable. We are ALL special interests when it comes to wanting a voice for how our Federal, Public, and Private lands are put to use. Sadly, money has been a huge factor. That has to stop. The gulf was the victim in that battle. Please continue to have scientists and conservationists maintain a watchful eye over all the lands. Once they are gone....they are gone forever.

Preserved Civil War battlefields are cultural and historic landscapes that serve as a constant reminder of the sacrifices our ancestors endured to make our nation what it is today. These historic landscapes are true American treasures as well as the last tangible links to our country's most tumultuous conflict. Preserved battlefields become outdoor classrooms for today's visitors and those of countless generations to come. They provide environmental benefits, including the protection of watersheds and wildlife habitats. Further, studies have repeatedly found that visitors to preserved battlefields help generate revenue for local communities by spending money on lodging, meals and other travel-related activities. The need to preserve these battlegrounds is immediate ? the Civil War Preservation Trust estimates that 30 acres of highly significant battlefield land are lost to development every day. Timing is especially critical in areas of the country experiencing rapid growth and development pressures. Time is running out and opportunities are dwindling to forever protect these hallowed grounds. With the Civil War Sesquicentennial just around the corner, now is the perfect time to take action to save our nation's treasured Civil War battlegrounds. The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. The protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation. These lands will be open spaces for the public to enjoy, preserved in their natural and pristine state, allowing visitors to walk in the footsteps of their Civil War ancestors. This experience will be unlike anything they could have read in a book or watched on television about the conflict.

I went to far -- it is a county issue first, a state issue second. Never federal government. This is not a federal issue. I ride places 99%+ of the United States population has never heard of, never seen, never will see and has zero impact on their life. Those who do know and are most impacted are members of my county. This is why it is a county issue first.

I wonder how Rebecca gets into her home without trampling the earth. And what about that home -- it also tramples the earth. Are we to all leave the earth and live on the moon so the earth does not get trampled? I cannot understand why anyone would want the federal government involved in this decision. The closer government (community, county, state) is to the people, the more effective government will be. Each person can have it their way by selecting the community, county, or state for their residence that best represents their stand on land/recreation use.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Let the citizens of their state decide recreation use. The closer government is to the people, the greater it can serve. Citizens in eastern states can decide what recreation needs suit them without enforcing their will on western states. Obama and the federal government with their giant bureaucracy don't belong in this arena. The states created the federal government, not the other way round. Now the creation is greater than the creator. Again, let the citizens of each state decide land/recreation use in their respective states. The federal government's role is foreign affairs and military, not recreation.

By all means this would be a positive step in reconnecting people to Americas Great Outdoors. It is not done nearly enough in my opinion. Most of all current living cultures such as Native Americans and even newly discovered living cultures such as Gladesmen Culture should be portrayed in a positive and uplifting manner. Often nowadays man within a natural landscape is portrayed in a negative manner by many agenda driven entities to suit their myopic narrow set of goals. That breeds hard feelings and contempt towards those entities and their goals. These backlashes can set conservation back years in attaining justifiable goals. Cultural respect and acknowledgement may well be the missing link in connecting Americans to Americas Great Outdoors. Google Gladesmen Culture to find out more.

Federal, Records of Decisions pertaining to National Park Service management plans need to allow adaptive management(am) to be applicable throughout entire ROD's. Currently we are being told am is only applicable to whatever specific topic is near the mention of am in an ROD's text. This situation is preventing folks who are usually diametrically opposed who are wanting to come together on issues from doing so. We are also being told by NPS that the NEPA process causes this. If this is accurate than NEPA should be modified to allow carte blanche use of adaptive management throughout signed ROD's.

Florida and Collier County , Florida in particular is doing a great job of promoting youth hunting, fishing and conservation. At the last minute Collier County actually stopped a plan to turn 2500 acres of conservation land scheduled for only passive use into a hunting area with the help of knowledgeable volunteers, the State wildlife agency and their County Commissioners. It saved the County from having to pay professional USDA hunters to come in and kill feral hogs considered an invasive species there. The whole operation from beginning to end only took a month or so. The Future of Hunting in Florida program is a whopping success with large landowners with large game populations and volunteer hunting mentors for the youth flocking to participate. States and Counties are more appropriate for these type programs though since the Federal government takes years to implement any projects and would inevitably have to overcome HSUS or PETA protests over programs such as these. The other problems would be Federal strings on the money.

Great idea but in these austere economic times it may not be feasible or advisable when so many more necessary programs are suffering for lack of funding. During this difficult economic period of our Nation's history Americas Great Outdoor program should always ask itself prior to funding its ideas "Will our action adversely impact more necessary National programs (e.g. health care, education, social security etc.)?"

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think the 100ft. x 4 mile easement is about 48 acres. One should check and see what 48 acres of land in LaHabra, Ca. is worth. If other property in the vicinity goes for around \$20,000 an acre - the \$1,000,000 fee is reasonable. Union Pacific is a private business that apparently owns this property if I am understanding this correctly. Private property owners rarely give away their land. I feel bad to demote but the Constitution is what it is and serves a very important purpose in America.

I thought NEPA was instituted to improve management in general and provide an avenue for input from citizens. NEPA is a somewhat cumbersome and expensive protocol to work within. Once that process is completed it seems as though NPS or other Federal agencies should have some leeway as to how a plan is implemented based upon research results accrued over nearly a decade. Otherwise why do research when the knowledge gained cannot be applied without a 2-3 year million dollar plus NEPA re-run.

I understand what everyone has said up to comment 7. It is all true but there is another side to this coin. Other tax payers must make up the difference for every tax exemption including a conservation easement. The President may be hearing from many tax payers that do not want to foot the higher bill put on them due to these type easements. He is probably trying to be sensitive to all sides or possibly just believes the government needs every dime it can get because of our wrecked economy. Many amenities available in good economic times are impossible during times such as these.

In a previous comment I made the concern was about living human cultural community members with strong association with their traditional landscapes being accommodated by land managers so as to sustain the old cultures still remaining in America. I believe this would greatly aid in the acceptance of the Great American Outdoor Initiative. Failing to do so will increase opposition and litigation costs of programs, especially when they do not take a Federal actions impact upon cultural resources and cultures into account during the embryonic stages of planning. That is the law and failure to do so will open the door for ESA style lawsuits that supply plaintiffs with a refund at everyone's expense. It is cheaper to do a job correctly the 1st time and have an efficient program.

It is quite accurate to deem this idea as "pretty extreme". No surprise since extremists have seized the opportunity provided here by Mr. Obama to promote many extreme ideas. The bad part is that Obama and his team will use the extreme enviro ideas as a basis to promote these anti-human access policies throughout the Federal agencies. I have actually linked one of the top 5 innovators to a Defenders of Wildlife contractor verifying to my satisfaction that a lot of coordination is going on here. I must admit I wish more of it was going on the other side of the issues. I will commend some very good comments from the OHV community. If nothing else this site is good for identifying the foes. Of course that works both ways. I saw the other day on a different web site a full report on one of the listening sessions associated with this program. They were said to be a sham, mainly providing high officials a speaking platform with little or no opportunity for real public input or interaction from the audience suckered into attending. Thank goodness there were none in my neighborhood since I probably would have gone.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Many very serious albeit very (hidden)subtle problems are associated with the intermingling of environmental priorities within agencies who's name is indicative of a specific priority such as Transportation. A few worth mentioning here are that dollars collected from motorists through Federal gasoline taxes thought to be for improving Transportation are diverted into many projects having nothing to do with improving the efficiency or maintenance of our Nations transportation system and are spent on items such State Scenic Highway Programs which morph as quickly as their proponents can cause it into Federal scenic Byway programs. The sales pitch to sell these programs to an unsuspecting public are all of the freebies that come with the program (e.g. boardwalks, government visitor centers, wildlife underpasses etc. etc.) that contribute not one iota to the efficiency of getting people or goods from point A to point B. In fact these programs prohibit any of the dollars appropriated from motorist contributed tax dollars from even being spent on pre-existing necessary road repairs. If this isn't enough to bring question to programs such as these here is what happened on one Florida highway designated as a National Scenic Byway due the State's own Program Manual. The manual specified that authority over decision making on that segment of the highway was slated to be taken away from local elected officials and transferred to a group mostly comprised of Federal and State land managers along the highway. This was one of the State mandates controlling their program. Luckily in Florida when local elected officials found out 7 or 8 years late that this theft of their authority was imminent they quickly demanded that both the State and Federal designation be removed from the Tamiami Trail in South Florida. Elected officials were totally unaware of the onerous implications of such a nice sounding program they had supported years before. In the end the unimpeachable grassroots opinion was to retain the elected officials control rather than give it to a bunch of unelected folks in a back room called a Corridor Mg't. Entity (CME) with only environmental goals and looking to spend motorist contributed transportation dollars to attain them. Protecting the environment and bio-diversity is worthwhile but the funds to do that should be raised by up front programs rather than programs containing issues that are subtle to the point of being invisible to average citizens much less elected officials. In this particular locale attaining environmental initiatives was set back decades by the exposure of this programs real intentions in my opinion. From my experience with this intermingling of priorities I have witnessed it causing internal conflict at many levels within Departments of Transportation. What I have seen is that most folks go to work in a Tranportation Dept's. to build roads not boardwalks and visitor centers. That is very sad. I don't know how to put a link here but I would suggest participants to google the following topics to gain a better understanding what drives the idea here: The last 2 do not agree with the 1st 3 Agenda 21 Rio Summit The Wildlands Project Freedom 21 Sovereignty International Environmental Perspectives Inc.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One can demote this idea all day long but if the shoe fits the Feds need to wear them. On the other hand local folks with the most at stake must begin demanding exactly what they want in their comments to management plans - no more whining about how it used to be. That means when necessary the agencies must be supplied detailed maps of where desired trails should be located to facilitate hunting, fishing, OHV's, hiking etc. General statements to management plans do not tell agencies what they are looking for. The extremists know exactly how to work the comment system with precise comments demanding EXACTLY what they want and where they want it - LOCALS must do the same. Oh one more thing - don't waste time fighting the junk BS science citations touted by enviros since honest agency folks know it is BS. What the agencies can't do is give you anything you don't ask for specifically in comments because they can't prove you want it if it is not in their legal record of the NEPA process. Your comments are part of that record. We are doing this in Florida and it works. Good Luck.

Sadly but truly these animals are regarded probably as invasive exotics. The habitat they use and consume may be caused to become unsuitable for many native species by the horses. That is probably why the government thinks they are doing the right thing. Penning and auctioning them is better than putting them down - the cheapest option. One might want to consider the glass half full and thank the Feds for not simply killing them and/or turning them into dog food.

So mad over so little. Just so you know - I do not carry a gun on my person and do not possess a concealed weapons permit although one can in Florida. I am ignorant in the sense that I have not allowed the cries of eminent catastrophe on all environmental fronts to totally permeate my entire thought process. I apologize to you and others if you don't appreciate my attempts to bring balance or a different perspective (sometimes facetious) to this site. My belief is that in order to improve the environment it will take support from more than those with an extreme eco-centric viewpoint. Being insensitive to the needs and desires of fellow humans breeds opposition to everything that extreme gaia worshipers desire. Oh by the way the Feds and States have given themselves authority now to declare anything they want to be FERAL. In FL the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's "Invasive Species Working Group" handles that with 8 other State agencies. They have declared wild hogs as feral. They have been here as long as the horses. Fla's. wild hogs are being eradicated by increased hunting opportunity with no size limits and professional trappers that catch them and sell them to hunting leases etc. We have fought the State on this with only minor victories.

This magnificent River is threatened with mining methods that can destroy the wildlife so dependent upon it. The entire area encompassing the Siskiyou National Forest needs to be made into a National Park, at the very least. This is the most bio-diverse region of the entire Pacific Northwest, and its protection must be designated by law. Lets start now! This river is the heart of that region. Protection is long overdue.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's fisheries are not producing fish and fishing opportunities at a rate that is needed to offset development pressures and human needs. There is an initiative that is already started that has shown it can improve fisheries habitat and is "shovel" ready to get fully to work, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP). This voluntary plan is bringing together broad groups of stakeholders to protect intact, rehabilitate degraded, and improve engineered fisheries habitat. The plan is at the edge of full development and only needs to the Administration to: 1) actively support passage of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (current support is on the record, but has not been actively pushing passage); 2) put in place an Executive Order that encourages all Federal agencies to participate in NFHAP; and 3) consider NFHAP needs when proposing budgets for enactment by the Congress. This plan has a broad fish habitat assessment system in development that will provide insights into habitat priorities and allow the measure of success of plan projects. It has an administrative structure ready to go and has a fully science and data backbone. It just needs to be formalized with Congressional action and provide a some federal funding to allow for the operation of the plan and to attract new partner and foundation funding. The time is now for administration action on this plan that is ready to move fisheries habitat forward that will provide new outdoor opportunities for America.

Congress authorized the creation of a National Trails System in 1968. Since then 11 National Scenic Trails and 19 National Historic Trails have been authorized spanning more than 50,000 miles through 49 states. They touch or go through 100 of the metropolitan areas with 50,000 or more people. These trails are managed through innovative public/private partnerships that rely essentially on the contributions of citizen stewards organized by nonprofit trail organizations. These trails involve all of the Federal land managing agencies and numerous State and local park, recreation, and resource agencies. However, after more than 40 years only one of these 30 trails (the Appalachian National Scenic Trail) is fully open for Americans to use, appreciate and enjoy. We need to hasten the work to complete all of these trails for public benefit by providing more operating funding to the Federal agencies that administer and manage them. We also need substantial annual appropriations from the Land & Water Conservation Fund to purchase land from willing sellers to close the many gaps in the National Scenic Trails and protect critical historic, cultural, and natural resources along the National Historic Trails. Finally, we need to support and assist the nonprofit organizations that are recruiting and training the citizen volunteers that build, protect, interpret, and sustain these trails. In short, we need to complete the National Scenic and Historic Trails as corridors that link together the many parks, wildlife refuges, conservation areas, wildernesses, preserves, and historic landmarks into a network of "green infrastructure" that spans across America.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Full, guaranteed annual appropriation of at least \$900 million from the Land & Water Conservation Fund is absolutely essential to enable long-standing Federal projects, such as the 30 Congressionally authorized National Scenic and Historic Trails, to be completed and fully opened for use, enjoyment, and learning by Americans and our visitors from throughout the world. With the great increase in land values since the 1960s, when the Land & Water Conservation Fund was authorized by Congress, the annual appropriation from the Fund should be increased to at least \$3 billion to maintain the buying power that the authorized \$900 million had then. Preservation and restoration of our natural, cultural, and historical resources by local, State, and Federal governments in partnership with private land trusts and other nonprofit organizations is one of the most magnificent manifestations of American democracy and our culture as a Nation. Our investment in preservation and sensitive stewardship of these lands, waters, and resources will ultimately save our Nation from collapse. Parks, trails, wildlife preserves, conservation lands, etc. are not just nice amenities to enhance our communities. Rather they are critical elements of the "green infrastructure" that sustains our lives and our livelihood. The Land & Water Conservation Fund fully funded and assertively and strategically used is one of our most essential tools for sustaining and enhancing our life sustaining "green infrastructure."

Orienteering is a wonderful method for youth and families, and all of us, to become more connected with the outdoors, while learning skills in navigation and problem solving and becoming physically active. In Sweden, about 30 percent of the population has orienteered, and many are avid orienteers. In the United States, perhaps one percent have orienteered at some point in their life, mostly through the military or Scouts. The U.S. government can help by encouraging the use of non-wilderness land for orienteering, where appropriate and within environmental guidelines. Many land use managers are not familiar with the sport and thus are overly cautious in approving permits because of lack of familiarity/understanding. A good start would be for major U.S. land owners such as the Forest Service, BLM, and National Park Service to enter into agreements of understanding with the United States Orienteering Federation that can then be used to facilitate contacts between local orienteering groups and local parks/land areas.

The land can't save itself, it needs our help. When I worked for the Bureau of Land Management I saw the pressures on agency managers to open the lands to development. President Obama can help by directing BLM and the Forest Service to give temporary protection to all federal lands with wilderness character until Congress has decided whether or not they should be permanently designated as wilderness.

The United States has been at the forefront of public lands conservation. Unfortunately, many people who live in urban areas never have a chance to get to the National Parks and Forests. We need to develop a system of urban forests, greenways, parks and trails to enable city dwellers to easily connect with nature. This is where children will learn to value trees, plants and wildlife - in their own backyards. Local governments are so strapped for cash that many are no longer building parks and green space, even though the housing developments continue to be built. Please provide a grants program for urban green infrastructure.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

California's Central Valley is identified as one of America's most completely altered eco-regions with the fewest remaining natural landscapes. Remarkably, many of its last natural landscapes are still intact near the city of Sacramento. These include riparian forests, fresh water marshes, vernal pools, wildflower prairies, alkaline prairies, oak woodlands, and chaparral. Sacramento is also one of the most underserved of America's great cities for nearby recreational experiences in natural landscapes. Even its one remaining natural park, the American River Parkway, is threatened because of its shattered economy. This situation presents a great opportunity to save the Central Valley, provide recreation for Sacramento, and stimulate its economy through development of a regional park system similar to the one Golden Gate National Recreational area provides for San Francisco. Habitat 2020 of Sacramento has initiated an effort to do this called the California Heartland Project. It is endorsed by the Environmental Council of Sacramento, Sacramento Urban Creeks Council, Save the American River Parkway Association, California Native Plant Society, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Save Our Sandhill Cranes, and Friends of the Swainson's Hawk. On behalf of these organizations we urge Federal help to implement this project.

The desire to preserve the Forest, as museums preserve art, is what is driving the Forest agenda and thereby their policies. What is conveniently forgotten is the Forest's original mandate was to manage the forests of this nation for reasonable resource extraction and public access. Environmentalists and their Forest associates, out of their fear of rampant Forest development (which will never happen thanks to protections already in place), have lumped motorized recreation into the drive to stop mining and timber harvest. Reasonable Americans realize that Forest resources are a very important commodity for the betterment of this country, so environmentalists prefer to attack motorized recreation to close roads, as recreation is seen as a luxury that they can make into their poster child for wilderness campaigns. The skewed unsupportable data used to attack motorized recreation make it blatantly obvious that the true agenda is merely to close the Forests to future resource extraction if the strategic needs arise. One look at the volatility in the world today and one can see that that strategic need will be upon us one day and we better not be stuck sitting on our hands!

My suggestion for the organizers of this effort is to choose 20 success stories AND to identify 20 "cases" of concrete environmental problems (usually jurisdictional) as identified in the 20 Listening Sessions. Showcase the success stories. Then have the Obama Administration instruct the relevant departments at the federal level to roll up their sleeves and do their best to solve the problem cases over the next 12-18 months. Then run these solved cases up the flagpole as examples of what the federal government is capable of doing in the area of environmental challenges/opportunities.

I support incentives for the smaller farm product producers. The current subsidy system provides more dollars for the "Goliath" operators. I am not so in favor of regulation because it brings enforcement and I think that is already compromised. Regulation can also be an undue burden on smaller operators forcing them out of business. If there is regulation, the smaller operators need to be "subsidized" to meet those regulations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In the West, there are millions of acres of wilderness-quality, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public land, including 6 million acres in Utah; 650,000 acres in Colorado; over 5.5 million acres in Arizona and over 2 million acres in New Mexico. The BLM should provide interim protection to the lands it has already identified as having wilderness quality until Congress makes a decision about wilderness designation, as prescribed in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). In addition, the BLM should conduct a new wilderness inventory to identify additional wilderness-quality lands and offer them interim protection as well.

I believe many government agencies are trying to satisfy the public's need for more nature projects. However, I think the government should empower more people and organizations to steward lands beneficial to the public. For example, the BLM governs hundreds of thousands of acres and has little manpower to improve these lands. "We the People," need to stop relying on the government to create these projects for our children and force the government to give us back our land. "We the People," can decide how best it should serve the public. We do this by land stewarding and land grants for non-profits that benefit our communities. I am tired of seeing the government give more rights to big companies for drilling oil and natural gas, then using public lands for projects that could help our children.

Ban Off Road Vehicles (ORV or OHV) from National Forests near water. These vehicles are only used by a few but they destroy the trails and streams with mud and runoff. These noisy vehicles make quiet enjoyment of the outdoors impossible and should only be allowed in limited areas that do not have ecological significance.

HistoriCorps is an idea already in action. Its purpose is to save special places on public lands by teaming preservation experts with volunteers to work on the restoration of cabins, ranch houses, and other types of buildings on or eligible for the National Register. Participants get to work on historically significant publicly-owned buildings on U.S. Forest Service lands with the purpose of returning them to productive use as rental facilities that can be enjoyed by hikers, equestrians, campers and others. Along the way, participants learn preservation and building trades job skills, get to work in the great outdoors, meet interesting people and have fun while making special places on our public lands more accessible and useful to anyone who wants to experience them. Colorado Preservation, Inc, the U.S. Forest Service and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado began to pilot this new initiative in the Rocky Mountains in the Fall of 2009 (over one third of Colorado's lands are owned and managed by state and federal agencies). Mandated to preserve the historic resources under their control, our public land managing agencies, like the Forest Service, have core missions that often make it difficult to meet their legal obligation to safeguard our cultural resources. HistoriCorps is a solution to this problem that extends the capacity of our state and federal agencies to preserve historic resources while also reducing the costs, ultimately shouldered by the taxpayers, to get the work done. Although initiated in Colorado, HistoriCorps is an initiative that will work anywhere in the U.S. and with any agency (BLM, DOD, NPS, etc.). You can help by asking your public officials to learn more about HistoriCorps by going to www.historicorps.com and/or contacting Colorado Preservation's HistoriCorp manager, Jonas Landes, at jlandeshistoricorps.org

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Replace government subsidy for timber harvesting and building roads for timber companies with a recycling subsidy. Put this money into subsidies for recycling which help localities create jobs and reduce their landfill space. Recycling Paper also makes us more energy independent and saves forests for wildlife and recreation. Deforestation is endangering the Cerulean Warbler and huge amount of forest dwelling animals and plants.

That should be up to the local cities and counties, not the FEDS.

The biggest challenge I am running into is pollution, and specifically a form of pollution that knows no boundaries: CO2 greenhouse gas pollution. You can draw whatever boundaries you want and say "This is a National Park" or "This is a Designated Wilderness Area" but CO2 will still go there and destroy the environment, and do so a rate which is so fast and so expensive to US citizens that any other effort you take Except real CO2 reductions will amount to vacuaous "Greenwashing." For example, environmental economists have done an inventory of the economic value of the Puget Sound environment to its residents and that value ends up being about \$1,000,000 per citizen. But climatologists are saying that our fossil fuel consumption is destroying the planet at a rate of about 1% a year. This means \$10,000 real economic loss per year per citizen of the Puget Sound Region due to CO2 pollution. Compared to about \$100 a year per citizen to get started with Cap and Trade. This means investments in reducing Fossil Fuel Consumption PAYS BACK to each citizen about \$100 in reduced environmental economic damages per each \$1 invested in cleaning up our act! Climatologists say the planet cannot wait any longer! Let's Go! Use the President's EXISTING Authority under sections 115 and 615 of the Clean Air Act and DO IT!

The Shenandoah National Park, Jefferson, George Washington, and Pisgah- Nantahala National Forests preserve Drinking water resources for many, provide recreation for many and preserve many species. I have counted the Cerulean Warbler in Shenandoah National Park which needs large tracts of land to breed or it will get displaced by the Brown-Headed Cowbird. Many species depend on these lands for survival. It would be terrible to let them vanish because of logging.

Isn't there an Association that could do this and provide trend of use, type of use and useful informational items so that no more govt layers are added?

- The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites.
- Protection of America's remaining War Between the States battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation.
- Battlefield preservation in Virginia, Georgia, and Mississippi where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting local waterways. Parkland created through battlefield preservation near growing population centers like Nashville, Vicksburg and Atlanta and elsewhere can benefit quality of life for residents.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The local community park, trail or natural open space represents the first and most accessible opportunity for Americans to get outdoors and connect with nature. These local park jurisdictions are the grassroots of great American park endeavors. Without the facilitation and financial support of federal resources, local park providers will continue to struggle as the lowest infrastructure priority, competing with other municipal services for diminishing fiscal resources. For the majority of Americans, their first experiences beyond their backyard (if they have one) will be on an urban trail or in a local park. The urban core has been neglected as a focus for land conservation for decades yet the bulk of humans are exposed to nature in the city as their first steps to recreating in natural landscapes outside the urban area. If this Presidential directive to get Americans outdoors is to be successful, it must help bridge the gap between the urban environments where the bulk of Americans reside and the great outdoors of our national parks, forests and larger landscapes. Financial resources need to pour in to local park jurisdictions where dense populations reside and the first steps to outdoor experiences can be encouraged and enhanced.

In many urban environments (such as my hometown of Los Angeles), the problem is not only a lack of parks but equally importantly a lack of good bicycle connections to those parks that do exist. In an era of limited funding, bicycle infrastructure can be provided at a fraction of the cost of new parks. Not only do family-friendly bikeways improve access to parks, they can serve as recreational facilities in their own right. They improve access to schools and libraries. Unfortunately, they do not make good photo or naming opportunities for elected officials. We need a concerted effort by the federal government to require local governments to make bicycle improvements a required component of receiving federal funding.

I have been attending meetings for the US forest Service as they make plans to close off the roads to our forest. We might be successful in keeping 100 of the 400 miles of road they wish to close in one forest alone. If you want people to "reconnect" with the Great Outdoors, you must give them access. For reasons unclear to me, it seems the FS wants to turn forests into wilderness again. We do not have any place to go and play without fear of arrest or impoundment of our vehicles. Leave the forest roads open. You can not maintain them and leave them for 4 x 4 access. If you close all the roads, we will not have a place to camp anymore, no place to be at one with our beautiful outdoors.

Lets do something positive for the country right now and create the Buffalo Commons National Park in Western Kansas. Less then 4% of our native prairie land remains. Lets conserve this for future generations and to honor our western heritage. This will also offer a opportunity to provide bison a home and open range to graze and be observed in their native environment. This will also provide much needed economic development for this area of the country.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is usually difficult to call the different agencies to get information regarding practices such as logging or breaches in conservation. For instance, I noticed on Google Maps what appears to have been logging in Olympic National Park and in the Tatoosh Wilderness Areas. I called to enquire about this but referred several times to different agencies and departments. It would be useful for all agencies to be able to access a mainframe data base to see the bigger picture. Nature is not designed with clean lines of demarcation and we should consider thinking in the way nature depends on the whole instead of sections for healthy habitats. I have written letters to National Parks, the Wilderness Society, elected officials and the White House to no direct answer to my question, 'Has there been illegal logging in our National Parks and Wilderness Areas?' Responses have been, "I'm not aware of any breaches," or "It's unlikely this has occurred." For me, that as a concerned citizen that our National Protected Areas are being misused and any loss of the remaining isolated habitats in protected areas should send warning flags to the agencies to investigate. I talked with Conservation Groups and they said it is very difficult to get any action and that as a private citizen I have to physically go to the site, do some surveying and prove that there is a breach. I am stunned that with all our technology we are unable to review the submission made by concerned citizens using this technology. I would like to see an independent entity set up to investigate these reported breaches and that any people illegally degrading protected habitat are made accountable for these breaches. It's time for the different Dept. such as National Forests, National Parks, National Monuments, State Forests, Dept. of Resources, etc. all communicate with each other and make it easier to access databases to ensure the best outcome for our forests, habitats and bio-diversity.

America's NEXT idea: The Old-Growth Forest Network. In the same way that the National Parks were America's BEST idea, the Old-Growth Forest Network is America's NEXT idea. One forest in each county (where forests grow) will be identified to be part of the network. These forests will not be logged and will be allowed to develop old-growth characteristics. They will be places of recreation and education. Most of them will already be public land, federal or state, and will just be identified as part of the network. Did you know that only 0.1% of Eastern Forests have old-growth characteristics? Less than 5% of Western forests? Yet Old Forests are places of beauty and critical habitat. Let's be the first generation to increase the amount of old-growth forests! Have one close to every community.

I'm glad to see President Obama emphasizing history and heritage in this initiative. An easy first step toward these goals is to fully fund the Preserve America and Save America's Treasure historic preservation grant programs. Funds are used to help national historic landmarks become visitor-ready, safe, well-maintained and interesting for all Americans. Mr. Obama should abandon plans to eliminate these programs, as his staff announced last winter. Also, the administration should support plans to strengthen federal law governing the National Park Service's heritage area program, which promotes heritage tourism. It's a simple way to stimulate our economy and get Americans out to visit our irreplaceable historic sites.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The administration needs to seriously consider economic impact of catering to the whims of eco maniacs. I live in a small town in Oregon that's barely alive due to logging and fishing restrictions I have seen first hand how well meaning environmental concerns can get way off balance and kill commerce, with little or no benefit to the eco systems. Now we have Public recreation lands the BLM is considering closing to motorized use. NOT a good idea! it will only add more strain on the economy! and again with little or no benefit to the actual environment. some folks hate motorized recreation. Let me make this clear..... I am opposed to ANY more closure of Public lands to Off Highway use. While I'm at work earning a living (and paying ever increasing taxes) the folks that are voted into office (you and others) are busy making changes that negatively affect my leisure time. THIS Must stop! A small minority of people believe that any motorized enjoyment of nature is wrong. Therefore these people exploit laws to satisfy their agenda. These type of changes should be put to a vote of the people not slammed dunked by lawmakers or railroaded by department heads. GIVE US BACK OUR LAND !

I THINK THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD START AN AGENCY THAT DEALS STRICTLY WITH ALL ANIMALS (DOMESTIC, WILDLIFE, AND MARINE) AND THE AGENCY WOULD STRICTLY DEAL WITH ANIMAL WELFARE, ALSO AT ZOO'S AQUARIUMS WILDLIFE REFUGES ETC... THE AGENCY WOULD ALSO GO TO SCHOOLS ALL OVER THE U.S. TO SHOW THEM THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ANIMALS AND HOW TO TREAT THEM RIGHT.

Corps programs, such as the California Conservation Corps (CCC), are excellent ways to re-engage youth with nature, teach them employable skills while protecting our heritage, and give them the responsibility of civic duty. I was one of the youth that benefitted from the CCC, and now I have the honor of being a crew supervisor in that same program. Everyday I get to be with urban and suburban youth as they make discoveries in nature for the first time. Most recently, several saw their first bear while we were building a trail near the border of the Siskiyou Wilderness. Corps programs instill so many of the values that we as Americans hope our youth receive. Sadly, however, corps programs are always struggling for funding. We can continue to be arm-chair critics of this recent out-of-touch with nature generation or we can support corps programs that develop these youth into the responsible citizens that are necessary for the perpetuity of our nation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Creative Map Drawing. I've seen it before and I'm sure it will continue on. Years ago I saw was an original "Blue Print" map, sent directly to me from a congressman's Washington office. This was for a soon to be approved (and was) Wilderness and National Park status. I was horrified in that this wilderness was so close to getting approved and so much of the area could in no way legitimately pass as true wilderness. A visit with the Chief Ranger, the map in hand, a small furry seemed to have been put in place. Congressman's staff member asked me to consult with head person responsible for the mapping. This responsible person's answer to my question of how this map could have been drawn up this way – "Creative Map Drawing". In other words they go for everything they can, real wilderness or not, then give so called concessions to get the bill passed. I was discussed with this. It's flat out lying when a group - any group - knows it does not belong yet they include it away. Do you really think the groups that are for wildlife corridors and wilderness are drawing up 100% accurate maps? If you are you are blinded by your desires for what you want. OH! The group that did the Creative Map Drawing – The Sierra Club!

I fully agree with this. Public school educators should not have to jump through hoops to use Public Lands as an extension of the classroom. No permit should be required and all rules and regulations need to be followed.

I would gladly agree with this having used the PCT in the past for years. Now that I have the age and physical problems that often come with age I can no longer enjoy the trails. I now have to use off-road vehicles and ATV's. In these days of lower funding for recreational needs the government should give "more government recognition" and funding to these types of trails. But more importantly is to realize there is a stronger need by larger user groups than hikers in ATV'ers and Off-roading community. Create separate but very similar multi-use trails to be used and enjoyed in a responsible and environmentally sound way.

Provide federal support for trail associations, without taking them over or mandating how they do things. Federal support could be land management agency collaboration, coordination of training for association managers, coordination of a seasonal volunteer system that combines travel with service learning, or other support that helps the association get their mission accomplished while increasing local ownership of the natural resources.

With no net loss or gain, trade away or sell small land parcels that are not attached to larger federal lands and acquire acreage adjoining the large tracts. Be strategically smart- don't just add acreage but improve corridors and be habitat-savvy. Think ahead 7 generations and consider the sustainability of both the new wildlands and the new private lands: both systems need to be more economically and environmentally sustainable for this pattern to be mutualistic

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Connect conservation districts and local school districts through a sustainable, competitive micro-grant program (\$250) for funding environmental education projects in local elementary schools. Conservation districts in both urban and rural areas are local champions for conservation on public and private lands. They are coordination points for many local, state, and federal initiatives and have well developed communication networks. Elementary schools across the nation have audiences eager to learn about the environment and can be the grass roots for a systemic behavior change towards our environment through knowledge and fun experiences with the outdoors.

Each year we see more and more users of the National Trails System, whether it be a through hike, a one or two week trek, a weekend family outing, or day-use. It's imperative that these national treasures get completed, knowing that there will always be issues arise that may find it necessary to relocate segments of the trails. President Johnson's vision for this Trail System in 1968, was a system of trails that crossed this nation, north-to-south, east-to-west, connecting the entire nation. The commitment of the various agencies, along with their non-profit partners, is very evident. Without adequate funding from the government, the task of completing the system will be very difficult.

My idea is quite simple; follow existing laws to protect public and private property, take away corporate personhood and prosecute the officers of those corporations that violate existing laws to the fullest extent, fine those who damage the environment to the maximum allowed. Quit compromising with Republicans on drilling for oil, mining and opening up protected land for development. Protect endangered species, and strengthen the laws protecting them to permanently put lands critical to their survival off limits from development! Do what you promised when you were running for office, pass a strong Global Warming law and ask other governments to join in with the US on these new standards!

Great idea, but I think it needs to be taken a step farther. The federal government should recover land and homes around large urban areas. The houses could then be removed and the land returned back to the way they were before development. This would increase the wilderness areas for those living in major cities and give residents more opportunity to see nature. It would also lessen the massive negative environmental impact large cities have on the land around them. It may result in the removal of a suburb or two, but the environmental gain would be more than worth it.

The people have spoken loud and clear, "No more monument designations!" Take note Mr. Obama, and leave our land alone.

I would like to see an opportunity for serving the US in the National Parks. It could be along the same lines as the Peace Corp, or military service. We have gotten away from having high school / college graduates giving back to their country. Whether it be serving as a naturalist, trail manager, or camp ground manager; students could use their skills and talents for the benefit of the parks and people who visit the parks.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Don't forget full funding for historic preservation! Reconnecting to the great outdoors includes reconnecting to the roots of our history and culture, as well as the roots of natural environment. What makes us fully human includes our physical world but also our historical and cultural values.

Federal lands belong to all citizens but it is the nearby local people who intimately use, know and love their local BLM or NFS lands. It would make sense for policy decisions and implementation to proceed with input from and consensus with local users as well as state fish & game and forestry experts--particularly on decisions that effect land and economies outside the federal land such as access restriction, watershed management, or fire fighting.

Too often have I been in a National Park or other conservation area and noticed that the park ranger's vehicle is polluting the very area they are trying to protect. I would like to see the government leading the way by utilizing the best technology available for their park-based vehicles and watercraft that does not emit fumes, leak oil, or cause unnecessary noise disruption. Apart from the unknown amount of disturbance to the local wildlife, it can be a great nuisance to be casting your fishing line or watching a rare species of bird from your canoe only to be interrupted by the ranger's motorboat passing you at full throttle. I therefore would like to propose that our government sets an example by requiring that their land and water vehicles used in reserves and other conservation areas utilize technology and engage in practices that eliminate or minimize pollution to the area that our tax dollars are paying them to protect.

Farmers need regulations as much as the petroleum industry. Massive mono crops, owed by Goliath will prove to be destructive. Factory size meat corporations the same. The monopolization of farming is making super power giants. They are to big even for their own good. GMO's and chemicals add to the imminent dangers. The industry must be broken apart. Incentives and protections for responsible small farmers is a must. Organic, biodiversity, and sustainability is our only hope for a prosperous future. We need to start living responsibly. We are NOT at the moment.

I think these agencies can be fixed, and oh lordy they need fixed!

More people getting out is a good thing. More cars in the parks, not so great. California is proposing a bill that would put a park fee on our DMV. All CA cars would be pre paid for state parks. I hope if it passes they use some to fund mass transportation into parks. We should also find a way to keep pollution down in National Parks. Limiting personal vehicles, and having a convenient alternative will help in over crowding, and aid in enjoyment.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Some conversations I have had with CA Fish and Game biologists have left me with questions. I have the feeling they are very pro hunting because of hunting revenue. Hunting permits are paying their salaries. I am NOT anti hunting. I am anti hunting of struggling, threatened, and endangered animals. I think hunting should only be done for food, not trophies. I hope with this administration a smarter way of running these agencies will be adapted. From what I understand Missouri is the only state whos funding infrastructure is separate. If this is more a state issue, I would hope for stronger federal protection for threatened species. An audit of the agents and agenesis could help promote a more protective governance.

We need a shake up of the agencies. If you look at who hired who, and under what administration they were hired, you get a better idea of their ideology. It is OK for pro resource abusers to have a voice. I'm hoping in this political climate we promote conservation. We have sweet little time to make headway. Ken Salazar better get his green on, or we are in big trouble!

H.B. 4318 currently in Congress proposes a new conservation corps at the federal level.

Much work has already been done to create national trails that celebrate the parks, wildlife, and historical landmarks that make our country great. We need to continue this work so that the rich history and natural variety that exists in the United States can be appreciated by as many Americans as possible.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I recently attended the President's Great Outdoors listening session in Missoula, Montana. As a professional forester of over 40 years, I appreciate the emphasis on encouraging public use of our public lands; however, I remain dismayed by the lack of attention to the unhealthy nature of much of our national forestlands. Not unlike the BP oil spill that is currently spreading through the gulf waters... insects and disease has been spreading through western forests for over a decade: 18 million acres west-wide, and over 5 million acres in Montana. We are but a perfect storm away from a catastrophic wildfire that will devastate lives and property... yet, Congress and this administration remain ambivalent about this impending calamity. I lay the blame at the feet of Congress because they refuse to give federal land management agencies the financing and manpower they need... and I blame the Administration because they refuse to include adequate funding in their annual budget. Therefore, I recommend the following: 1. Direct the Chief of the United State Forest Service to send a letter to Congress acknowledging that federal land management agencies lack the manpower and financing to manage the threat of catastrophic wildfire near many local western communities. 2. Allow state and local governments to identify national forestland that are at significant risk from wildfire near local communities... and give them the authority to manage that risk through fuels-reduction projects. 3. Set up a fuels-reduction fund—similar to the BP reimbursement fund for the gulf area—adequate to allow state and local governments to address national at-risk forestlands that threaten their communities. I have grown weary of listening to members of Congress—most of which have no national forestland in their districts—refer to our national forests as “national treasures” that need to be managed for future generations... when in fact too many forested acres out west are a “national disgrace” that future generations will be denied beneficial use of. In states like Montana where the forest is largely owned by the US government, it is long past time that federal land management agencies became good and responsible neighbors... and the steps listed above are the best way to move towards that objective.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Multiple Use Management was the catch phrase in the 1960's, when it came to how the federal government managed federal public lands. The whole concept was, and is, a great way to manage public lands. Public lands are critical to the wealth of the nation, as well as local communities whose lifeblood depends on the natural resources on public lands. Range management and forestry have come a long way in the years since their inception and the science is sound and workable, providing the management principles that create the opportunity for multiple use while sustaining and improving the natural resources on our public lands. Unfortunately, so-called environmentalists, politicians and others who have no idea what they are talking about, have actually caused degradation to our public lands by preventing logging and grazing. The Jefferson Fire on the Idaho National Laboratory lands northwest of Idaho Falls Idaho is a classic result of mismanagement. If the 109,000 acres that burned in one day had been grazed, the fuel load would have been much less and the fire would not have been so catastrophic. Granted, high temperatures and strong winds were major contributors to the event but it would not have been so bad if there had been less fuel. I have worked many years in noxious weed control on both private and public rangelands and I understand how they work. Our public lands must be managed properly to sustain them into the future. Let's tell our congressional delegations to support multiple use management and stop the President from doing something really stupid.

Strongly support idea of Civil War Battlefield Preservation as a terrific means of conserving open space, particularly in the highly populated states of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. This will help preserve and hopefully improve the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which has suffered enormous degradation over the past several years, and help provide opportunities to teach and educate everyone on the incredibly important history of our Civil War, whose 150th anniversary will be upon us next year.

Long overdue. We could have a major nationwide listening effort on this idea alone.

The Government needs to use power of Immanent Domain to stop the encroachment of private businesses upon or adjunct to historical sites. Once businesses are established near historical sites it is too late to save it in its natural sitting. The present and future generations can only learn what a site looked like if the area is in a pristine condition when the historical event occurred. A historical site should make you think about what occurred there and why. Rember what George Santayana said "Those who can not remember the pat are condemned to repeat it. Also what Cicero said "History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time, it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity." I know that when I am at a historical site I always wonder why people did what they did there and how did they come together to make the event that changed what the country looked like for better or worse. Please save our historical sites before they disappear beneath a parking lot or a business.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Nearly all of the National Scenic and Historic Trails within the National Trails System have significant gaps in each of these trails. There are multiple existing opportunities for obtaining properties that are strategically located to close gaps in these trails while providing for the greatest recreational opportunity. Some of these properties are facing immediate threat from rural residential and industrial development. The Nation's economy has been harshly affected by the current recession and the rapid rate of land development in many parts of the country has sharply decreased. With this slowdown in growth comes a rare opportunity to acquire essential parcels for national scenic and historic trails if money is appropriated. Now that the cost of land has decreased, it is a "buyer's market" and landowners have renewed motivation to sell lands for conservation and recreation. Unfortunately, land acquisition funds for these trails are not sufficient to take advantage of these motivated sellers. In the absence of Federal funding, the trail program managers and non-profit organizations work with state and local government land acquisition programs to protect these trails. However, these partnership approach is now constrained by decreases in state and local revenue and sharp cutbacks in state funding for land acquisition. Because of: 1) the USDA Forest Service's and the National Park's great success in spending the Land and Water Conservation appropriations to protect the route of these trails, 2) the willingness of landowners to consider a government offer in today's real estate market, and 3) the real-world limitations on protecting these trails through state and local funded programs, Congress is strongly encouraged to appropriate supplemental land and water conservation funding for the FNST. The window of opportunity is open; the time to protect segments of the national scenic and historic trails is now.

Accountability is a huge problem. We are increasingly being asked to "pay to play" on public lands we already own and it's just about impossible to find out what they do with the money.

All of the federal land management agencies face huge backlogs of deferred maintenance at facilities that have already been built, yet they keep building more. They are responsible for the stewardship of hundreds of millions of acres of land, in some states more than half the land is in federal control, yet they keep acquiring more. Given limited financial resources, the federal government should concentrate on taking care of what they already have, not reach out into telling non-federal landowners what to do. The best way to promote conservation by non-federal landowners is for the federal agencies to set a good example and be a good neighbor.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

All of the land management agencies receive appropriated funding from Congress, and a portion of that is for managing recreation. These budgets have gone up steadily, the Forest Service for instance over 60% since 2000. There is plenty of funding to manage recreation. The problem is getting it to the ground. Far too much is sucked up into administrative overhead. The agencies have legal authority to charge for camping in developed campgrounds and for use of specialized and highly developed facilities and they can retain that revenue to manage the site where it was collected. I think those kinds of fees are appropriate. But to say, as one commenter did, "If you can't pay \$3-\$5 to spend a few hours outdoors, then your [sic] not really serious about it" that is so arrogant and elitist it just takes my breath away. There are plenty of people in this country who have to watch their pennies never mind their 5 dollar bills. You would deny them the chance to take a walk in the woods? If the agencies put half as much effort into enforcing the laws about trash, vandalism, and other misuse as they now dedicate to catching people who don't have the right "pass" to be there (Achtung! Papers please!), those problems would go away. In southern California they issue so many "Notices of Non-Compliance" to people without an Adventure Pass that they have had to set up a special website and contract with a private company to collect all the fines. This is a waste of effort that would be much better invested in education and resource protection.

Entrance fees (modest ones) for National Parks, or fees for use of specialized facilities like developed campgrounds, are reasonable and have never been controversial. But charging a fee merely for access to the outdoors was a new idea first tried as a demo program beginning in 1996, during one of the most prosperous economic periods in American history. Fees are not an economic necessity, they are the manifestation of the philosophy that everything is a commodity and should have a price tag. If we want people to love and care for our public lands, they have to experience them. If we want people to engage in healthy active outdoor recreation, it has to be accessible to them. Placing financial barriers in the way works against these worthy and important goals. Several studies have shown that even a small fee deters half of low-income people, and a third of people at all income levels from visiting a National Forest. Yes, managing these lands costs money, and that is why we pay taxes. The Forest Service, and even the National Parks, did not charge access fees through two World Wars or the Great Depression. The federal land management agencies get ever-increasing appropriations from Congress (Forest Service appropriation up over 60% since 2000), but too much of that gets spent on administrative overhead and never makes it to the ground. In regards to the Forest Service for example, the GAO said in 2009, "Regarding its performance, the agency has not always been able to provide Congress and the public with a clear understanding of what its 30,000 employees accomplish with the approximately \$5 billion the agency receives every year." People who want to enjoy some time in the Great Outdoors should not have to buy a pass just to be there.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Many popular areas have used permit systems since the 1970s to limit use to what the resource can support, and I am all in favor of that. However since 1997 almost all of these permits cost money, and I think that is wrong. Also permit systems are being put in place where they are not really needed, just to generate revenue. (Example: Cedar Mesa Utah, less than 10,000 visitors per year - brand new visitor center in the middle of the desert built with permit fee money they couldn't find any other use for since the actual land is managed for primitive recreation which doesn't cost much.) As to BWCA, you failed to mention the \$12 reservation fee to reserve a permit, which is for all practical purposes required because you won't get one without a reservation. The fee started out at \$10 but was raised to \$16 (60%) in 2007. If fees are the tool to be used to limit use, then we can expect the most popular places to soon become affordable only to the wealthy. Is that what we really want our public lands to be? The lands belong to all of us and we should all have reasonable access. Limiting use to what the resource can support is one thing, but using money to determine who gets to go and who doesn't is something else entirely. It's not whether any particular fee is "debilitating" or not, it's the basic idea of selling access to nature. If we want our young people to truly learn to love their public lands, we cannot allow them to be commercialized and privatized just like any other market commodity. It's like the difference between sex for love and sex for money. Do we really want our public lands to be whores?

Consider promoting the idea of fully funding the Historic Preservation Fund, which is the source of Federal support for State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, as well as Certified Local Governments and local Historic Preservation Commissions. The HPF supports the National Register and National Historic Landmark programs, the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit, and any number of other extremely important historic preservation programs. Currently, the administration has expressed its support for fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the HPF's larger sister program. Funding the LWCF is important, but the HPF is equally important - and reaches into every single community in the country. Unlike the LWCF, which is largely a land acquisition program, the HPF works to promote and encourage private investment in existing communities, which is environmentally, economically and culturally sustainable.

So far, the Obama administration does not have an amazing track record for environmental protection. Please don't misunderstand, the emphasis on reducing global warming from the Obama administration has been excellent, but the emphasis on protecting endangered species and funding our national parks has been sadly lacking. While community parks, streams, and other natural areas are also very important, fully funding our national parks and fully protecting endangered species on a federal level is one of the most important roles the federal government must fulfill. I hope we will see better protections for our wild places now that preserving nature for future generations is high on the president's agenda.

The BIm in California should all be fired for inventing a non-existent threat in order to shut out the public from it's public lands. Re-open Clear Creek.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The inefficiency of federal bureaucracy is a significant challenge. Disengaged or uninterested land management staff is also a challenge. The problem known as "analysis paralysis" is a major concern. It should be a priority to review the reasons the U.S. Forest Service is having problems writing Forest Plans. More and more land is being placed into protective designations. The increased focus on conservation in these areas lead to restrictive land use plans. In Wilderness for example, there are many restrictions including a group size limit. These group size limitations hurt scouting and other youth programs. There are two key challenges related to funding federal outdoor programs. One problem is that much too much money is being spent on overhead and infrastructure and not on recreational infrastructure. The initiative should find ways to focus agency budget spending on recreational infrastructure, including roads, trails and winter sports areas (including ski areas). The other problem is the lack of funding, especially appropriated funds. The initiative has ambitious goals but we must face the fact that federal budgets aren't going to be significantly increased, and may be decreased in coming years. The initiative must focus on locally based cooperative efforts to accomplish its goals. An excellent example is leveraging the various State off-highway vehicle programs. Many states benefit from millions of dollars made available for OHV trails and snowmobile areas via these "user pay" programs. The initiative should enhance these programs where they exist and encourage their formation in states where they lack an off-highway vehicle program.

The famous San Juan Trout fishery is an irreplaceable public resource that was once estimated to bring as much as \$40m a year to the regional economy. Much of the fishery is now smothered under sediment/silt caused by a combination of a new low-flow plan by the BOR and increased erosion from rampant oil and gas activities on the surrounding BLM lands. Unfortunately, the environmental impact studies for the low-flows were flawed and misleading and the mitigation goals of no net-loss of in-kind aquatic habitat established by the Fish&Wildlife Coordination Act Report (FWCAR) were ignored. The BOR now says that the fishery is not a priority and the BLM denies that any of the damage is caused by oil and gas operations. Nothing meaningful has been done to correct the problems and things are going to get much worse as the flows continue to be cut. This is an opportunity to show that we can protect these priceless places by practicing responsible water and oil/gas development. To properly address the problems on the San Juan river will require that environmental protection of the San Juan Basin lands, the river and the fishery is made a top priority for the BOR and BLM. And, they must seek federal funding to complete the fishery silt transport/deposition and habitat mapping studies necessary to develop long-term mitigation measures to meet the FWCAR goals. That would be a huge win for all including the sportsmen, state, federal agencies, and our unique natural resources.

When we do our taxes there is a box which if checked automatically gives a dollar to the presidential reelection campaign. We spend an obscene amount of money of campaigns and this dollar should go toward National Parks and historic preservation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

All sixth grade students in California spend one week at a local outdoor school to learn about the natural environment in and around their community. The kids get to go on hikes, breathe fresh air, and gaze at the night sky unfettered by city lights. They learn valuable lessons in conservation, wildlife studies, and the joy of outdoor recreation. The federal government should encourage states to create sixth grade outdoor school programs similar to California's. This program works! People here fondly remember their outdoor school experience for the rest of their lives. It builds a love for the outdoors that can only be fostered by real, meaningful experiences in nature. Plus, the outdoor schools help improve the students' Science test scores by giving them hands-on experiences in Science rather than just reading about it in a text book. What better way to learn about science than to go out in nature and experience what science is all about? Here is a link to the study by the American Institute for Research: { Link } The outdoor schools also serve as a main gateway into nature for the community. Even after the students 'graduate' from the outdoor school, they maintain a connection with the school that encourages them to get outside. Many outdoor schools host community events on their campuses, providing activities such as nature walks and picnic lunches. They also foster volunteerism by hosting events on National Public Lands Day. As a result, the outdoor school becomes a major part of getting the community out into nature. President Obama's administration should strongly consider supporting this model on a national level. This generation of youth is experiencing a greater disconnect with nature than any other in our nation's history. Without the help of outdoor schools, our nation's characteristic love of nature may fade, along with our public lands units. Please follow the link to learn more about the benefits of nature to children's health, yet another reason to provide them with outdoor school experiences: { Link }

The proposal for protecting the Siskiyou Crest as a national monument is generating enthusiasm and receiving widespread support on both sides of the state border. Just this week the North Siskiyou Democrats voted unanimously to endorse the campaign. Shortly before that, Northern California's Redwood Group of the Sierra Club did the same. As has been the case with nearly all bold conservation initiatives in the American West, a small contingent of ultra conservatives have been highly vocal in their overheated, fear based rhetoric. Unfortunately, a great deal of misinformation has been spread to the local communities that bears no resemblance to the actual monument proposal. This will pass. We have seen this before. Klamath County vehemently opposed the creation of Crater Lake National Park, as did the local counties in Washington and Idaho oppose the Grand Tetons and Olympic National Parks. Fortunately, this special landscape belongs to all Americans and its fate will be decided in a national context.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

No topic is more prevalent in hunting and fishing circles than the problem of access – to both private and public land. Even though some of the good ol’ days of healthy wildlife populations, wild trout fisheries, and unfettered landscapes are still here today, thAT means less and less if the pubic cannot get to them. Recreational access is exponentially becoming more endangered. The seriousness of the situation is obvious to even the casual observer. As population grows, hunting, fishing, and recreating on private land will become rarer and the demand for access on our public lands will explode. The solutions to these conflicts will be difficult and many questions must be answered. How many access points to a national forest and public lands are necessary? Do we pay landowners to allow an easement across the property? What is a public road? If the public cannot access a large parcel of land managed by our state or national entities, should a private landowner be granted that privilege? Should he or she be allowed to benefit commercially, by guiding hunters or selling them access to it? Should the public through government assert public trust property rights? The Forest Service (and other government agencies) need to get far more involved with illegal and unreasonable closures of back country roads leading to public land. Here are some things they, congress, and the administration can do: 1/ Generally mandate Federal Land management agencies the mission of increasing access to boundaries of public land. 2/ The agencies need to step up and be party to litigation when roads historically used by the public are closed by private action. As it is now, the burden of litigation is often placed on private parties. (A \$15 padlock can trigger a \$150,000 lawsuit to correct.) 3/ The Forest Service and other agencies must rigorously research and enforce easements for public access across private land. 4/ Roads on public land should be open to everyone or closed to all - no private access roads on public land. 5/ Provide special funds to assist land management agencies in the construction of short new access roads to public land that will circumvent private land which blocks access. 6/ Use Eminent Domain to acquire access to public land when other options are exhausted. This is important for firefighting as well as access and conservation. Landowners often paint the conflict as an attack on private land rights. Even though I am a proponent of upholding private land rights, it is difficult to side with the landowners in many cases. Public property rights and the public trust doctrine of resource management are equally important. The Forest Service and other agencies need to be the point of the effort to enforce and expand those rights. (This is not a one sided plea for more OHV access. That is a separate issue to be resolved after we get folks ON to the public land.)

By a contract finalized on 6 February 2010 the Department of the Interior, TVA, the State of North Carolina and Swain County, North Carolina agreed to a monetary settlement of the North shore Road Controversy. The agreement calls for the Department of the Interior to pay Swain County \$52 million in lieu of building a road in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Of the promised amount, \$12.8 million has been paid. The contract contemplates payment of the balance in installments. Care must be taken to make sure this agreement is not forgotten, or the payments becoming intermittent. The Depart of the Interior should have its budget preparation process programmed to provide of appropriation of an annual installment on this debt.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hold on a minute. The federal government is cutting programs like crazy and you want them (or trust them) to fund sidewalks so you can get to local parks? Lovely idea, just a bit unrealistic. If a community wants a green space or a sidewalk to get there more easily, they should get it built whether by voting on a bond to pay with public funds, raising funds privately or build it themselves. The feds don't need to take us by the hand like children and fund every local project (thereby also giving them the opportunity to also exert more control locally).

I think states need to take their land back and decisions regarding it's governance and preservation should be made by people who live near that land.

Without dissing the federal gov't, I do believe local politics work better for local populations (those of us who live in an area 24/7 and have to deal with what folks from other areas bring with them and also leave behind). I think if land was left to the states and counties to manage, it would prevent the broad brush approach to management that the fed. gov't tends to apply to different situations in totally diverse parts of the country. Perhaps the fed. gov't could then better focus on making sounder financial decisions?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would like to suggest that anyone who is making this suggestion come out to Montana and learn what you're talking about. Just drive the 150 miles between Roundup and Malta and see what it's like to go past one town -- Grass Range that has maybe 25 homes there and then not be able to see more than 10 houses in that drive. Look out and realize that in some places for 70-100 miles on either side of the road, there is nothing but open landscape to the casual observer, but actually know that there are ranches producing beef and farmers producing wheat that may have been part of your meal this last week. You don't need to waste government money taking our ranches to "preserve it" -- we've done it for a 100 years already. Years ago, when I was living in Missoula I had a roommate who was working on a masters in wildlife management. She was from New Jersey and her boyfriend was from back east. She was a nice girl but she got her masters by doing a study on what kind of animals are predators of duck eggs. When she told me she was going to do a study like that I asked her what it was going to prove. "Everyone knows what kind of animals eat duck eggs -- racoons, skunks, coyotes... And what will you do with that -- you can't teach ducks to build their nests in different places?" I asked her. I wasn't upset, but I just thought that if you were at a masters level program that you should be working on figuring out something new not just coming up with something that a 5th grader could tell you. Well, she blew out the insides of 144 eggs, filled them with wax and even "duck scent" to make them real. She thought that when the animal bit into the egg, it would leave a tooth mark and from the tooth mark she would know what animal was preying on the nests. See anything wrong with that idea? Think you're going to learn something that most native Montanans who lived on a ranch didn't already know? Well, first of all those of us who know animal behavior know that if you've got a mouth full of wax, you're not going to carefully extract the wax egg from your teeth and gently set it back in the nest. Nope - you're going to break it up and do whatever you can to get rid of the wax. I asked her what her results were after she had carefully planted these nests of fake eggs all over the state in a variety of reseviors (using grant money of course). The answer: She couldn't get any valid results because the wax was too broken up to tell what it was. (My suggestion would have been to look at the tracks of the animals but that evidently didn't occur to her) . But she's now probably one of these idealistic geniuses who want to play in someone else's backyard and take over their ranch and do nothing more productive than sit on a ranger station with a nice salary and benefits to "watch over the buffalo". Her boyfriend's study was about some kind of ferret that he wanted to transplant to Montana. So he went out to MN, spent 3 mos. living in a cabin and cross country skiing and finally came up with 6 little critters to bring out to the Yaak. Well, he got to stay in a beautiful 3 story cabin and outfitted them with radio collars to see how they'd do. Do you think a radio collar slows down a little animal? Well, one by one in short order they were all eaten before spring -- but he still got a masters degree out of it and is now qualified to make decisions like this. I asked her one time if any of the wildlife majors were Native Montanans and she thought about it and said no. It explained everything to me then -- and it explains why we're having this conversation today. People from back east come from places where development is guaranteed -- populations grow and stay there. But in a ranching area, most ranches don't support more than 2 families. They support the family who started it -- and then the one son or daughter who's going to take it over in the next generation. Those people don't get it -- our growth is limited by the ability of a ranch to sustain a family. And as for wanting to come enjoy it -- well come out during hunting season and you can enjoy our

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

hospitality. I doubt any of them would let strangers onto their land to walk around fairly freely for hours on end. So here are my questions when you're examining feasibility. 1. Exactly how many people do you think are really going to come out here to watch these buffalo? And how long would you actually spend watching these herds? 5 minutes, 10 minutes, maybe 20? My cousin had buffalo on his farm in Illinois for years -- right next to a highway with 10,000 cars a day going by. Less than 10 cars a year ever pulled in to simply watch the buffalo. 2. Did you know that some of the Indian reservations have buffalo herds. Why not offer your money to those tribes to develop and increase their herds. Wouldn't it be nice to give them back the staple of their diet that was taken away when the white man came? I think it'd be cool to see them use a buffalo jump the way they did a couple hundred years ago -- if they wanted to. If the tribes were open to it and were allowed to hunt them and money was given to them to vaccinate them, build fences, even process the meat -- this would become a win/win/win situation. Frankly, I think this is an idea that's used to con people out of their money and then scam our government out of more money. It makes a really cushy job for someone to sit on a foundation, pull down a good salary and benefits and work people up into a lather about a romantic idea of buffalo running on the plains. But if you took those same people out to a buffalo herd, I doubt they'd stay entertained for more than half an hour -- and maybe 3-4 hours for the truly hardcore -- provided they were sitting on the back of their camper, or maybe hiking on a groomed trail looking at some of the great scenery in Yellowstone Park. You can't justify destroying an entire county or two for that.

IN the U.S.A., there NEEDS to be a new Law that states that ALL businesses, restaurants, public and private events such as free music concerts, or and recreational event, or business event.. every movie theater, every place in America... MUST provide recycling.. and they MUST actually recycle plastic bottles, cans and paper. The build-up of plastic in the ocean is appalling. I am shocked and slightly disgusted to see that I have to actually type this idea out. My government should be thinking of these ideas. That is what they get the big bucks for... right? And don't complain about your paychecks. I am certain they make way more than me. I'd be happy to trade my income with theirs anyday. That is one of many easy ideas to make the nation better. Keep track of all the ideas I post. Because it is about to get interesting.

Many ranchers in our area of Colorado have protected their private land with conservation easements, but they are still dependent on grazing permits on BLM and US Forest Service land to produce food and to make a living. If the federal government wants to protect productive agricultural lands, they also need to support the continued use of federal lands for livestock grazing. The two issues are connected. There are ranchers in the region who are concerned that if federal grazing leases are further curtailed or eliminated, they will not be able to continue to make a living. These landowners are reluctant to place conservation easements on their land because of this fear of losing their grazing permits.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A couple thoughts come to mind some of these thoughts may have been mentioned in one manner or another... • Education and Re education - I believe the future of conservation will rely within the will of the people, but unfortunately large aspects of our society are disconnected from the land value of open space/wilderness. There needs to be constant/consistent reminders about the positive values of land/open space/wilderness. People need to understand the linkage between riparian buffers and water quality. I would think that the government could partner with the talent of colleges and university programs to educate the masses. There needs to be a more organized/aggressive effort to encourage people to embrace the outdoors and to support the land/sustainability of the land. • Government organizations/restructuring/promoting cohesiveness – I think there should be some heart to heart discussion about creating teamwork/vision between the Forest Service, the Park Services, the Land Management Bureau, and Fish and Wildlife Services. If there is going to be a national dialogue about conservation in America, the individuals within these departments need to be willing to work together. It seems that the visions of the Forest Service could sometimes go against visions of the Fish and Wildlife Services. One groups “vision/role” could hamper/take away from another departments. If these groups are unable to work together in a fruitful manner, why have these discussions? • Continue to Reward individuals/companies who choose easements. We face the reality that in order to encourage conservation - the private landowner plays an enormous role. I think that greater opportunities/creative economic & tax incentives should be given for small farmers, companies, individuals willing to put their land into an easement. With this said, I believe the government should make sure that organizations caring for easements meet national/state regulations. I would even suggest that open space easements should be encouraged within urbanized regions/near wilderness & national/state parks. Easements provide a great opportunity to buffer between open space and developed regions. • I would encourage the president to expand the national parks and designated wilderness areas. • Eco regionalism and wilderness corridors should be a priority within the focus of conservation/wilderness expansion. Within this topic, I would even suggest finding ways to create conservation routes to link different areas nationally. This will require compromise and willingness to work together. If government organizations are willing to work together, if easements are encouraged, if there are aggressive education efforts, and a variety of organizations like The Nature Conservancy can assist with data...I think there can be great progress towards conservation within America.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Early in the 20th century, Congress recognized that setting aside federal lands from settlement, removed a large chunk of natural resources from private economic development. It also established boundaries on adjacent communities so that they could not grow. This affected tax revenues to support basic services like schools and roads. Consequently, local Counties were given a 25% share of the revenues from federal land use. When timber harvest levels dropped so precipitously following the Pacific Northwest Forest Plan (n. spotted owl,) { Link } so did money to sustain local schools and roads. The Secure Schools and Communities Self Determination Act fiunding goes to backfill that loss. This sunsets soon unless reauthorized. I know our road department budget will be halved. Money will go to maintain roads where populations are concentrated, not for roads to access federal lands. Maintenance/access will soon become a problem and will impact communities where federal staff live.

Federal Land Planning can't just be about landscapes, trees, critters and watershed health. It must consider the local human context of the communities that surround federal land. This is required under NEPA and was highlighted as part of the recent Consolidated Salmon Cases (Wanger.) I recently did a statistical analysis of the impact of state and federal regulation and management policies on the welfare of residents in my county. There is a direct correlation between major federal land managenet decisions and the official statistical increase in poverty, unemployment and the dramatic downward trend of the well-being of our residents during the past 20 years. { Link } Many rural communities and Counties continue to have intimate social and economic dependencies on the continued use of federal lands. Logging, grazing and mining are important to the vitality of neighboring communities. The Forests must coordinate with County governments. They are not islands unto themselves.

I like your idea for promoting managed land use with real outdoor careers. The problem is that what the government promises it refuses to do for political reasons. Look at Anwar - bought to provide the country with oil and other resources. Those activities are supported by the people (both indigenous and new arrivals) yet the federal government won't allow the use for the purpose the land was bought. This is true in CO, WY and other states. Look at the promise of water to the farmers in CA - cut off for a guppy they don't even know if it's a native fish. Look at the 80 mile stretch of about 6800 acres along the AZ border that's supposed to be federal land for camping, hiking and vacations. It's posted with something like: enter at your own risk bandits/drug gangs control the area. You cannot believe in the promises of the federal government. And it's alot harder to take the land back from the federal government than from a state government. The best way to conserve land is through Nature's Conservancy. The land is privately held and cared for. It's traded and used to encourage habitat and common usage. Federal acquisition is not a good idea.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If you really paid attention to the gulf oil spill you'd know it wasn't the lack of regulation that was the problem. It was the combination of being required to use known bad government supplied current information and regulators ignoring that regulation sign-off reviews are not paper in an office. Both BP and THE GOVERNMENT were/are equally at fault. Oh, and sign-off was by an Obama appointee not a Bush one. All lands that are open to the public should be owned/operated by the states and local communities, or subcontract operation to private parties, NOT the over-bearing-it's-good-for-you federal government. Look at the misery the federal land management is causing in many of the western states. If the federal government had it's hooks into proportionately as much land in the east and far west, this new expansion would be quashed summarily.

The federal government needs to be reminded of Constitutional limitations as do the people of this country. The federal government has no allowable Constitutional role in education. In fact, since the Dept of Education has been involved, education has gone downhill. A recent article pointed out that students of the early 60s had 40,000 words they could use and understand while the graduates of the 90s only had 24,000 that they could recognize. Don't even mention math..... And, ethically <10% thought it was OK to cheat and lie for promotion in the 60s and at the end of the 90s >75% thought it was OK. If the federal government didn't suck up all the financing from states (take to give back for social engineering reasons) we could locally manage our lands and get our kids outside. Oh, kids outside - unplug, open the door and say "out". You'd be amazed at the great activities kids can come up with when left to their own imagination no matter where they live.

This sounds as though you are part of an organization, if not the government, promoting land management; Sierra Club maybe. Kind of like the revised "Clean Water Act" that removes the word "navigable" from the waters the federal government controls and opens 85% of the US land mass to Federal government control, which = bye bye private property use. That word is the only reason the federal government has not already taken that control. The word navigable was purposely put into the original law so the federal government could not take that control. While your ideas and presentation sounds good, you need to take it to the private sector, perhaps the Nature Conservancy, to incorporate what you propose. You cannot trust the federal government and the political pendulum to support this proposal in perpetuity. Nor can you expect them to follow their own rules of access and maintenance as we've seen time and again. States working together with private organizations would accomplish more, and more equitably, than getting the federal government to do this. When you deal with a state or local community, you deal with the people who care most about the environment in which they specifically live. Those people are more likely to personally want to meet the goals you suggest.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have two proposals for national monuments in my district - Siskiyou Crest and expanded Cascade Siskiyou. My constituents are concerned that the President could wake up tomorrow and unilaterally create these monuments. The People would have no opportunity for input. The County held hearings where hundreds of people came to speak on the monuments. The people overwhelmingly do not want them! { Link } We are tired of having land set aside and "preserved" by the federal government.

Our nation's heritage of public lands is a national treasure. Ample funding to acquire and protect key inholdings and expansion areas throughout our national parks, forests, trails, refuges, wilderness and BLM areas as well as grant funding for state and local parks is necessary to protect the integrity of these special places. Funding for this purpose comes from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and has been low and inconsistent for many years. The solution is full and dedicated funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This will ensure that Americans will have greater opportunities to enjoy outdoor recreation, wildlife, natural settings, and historical and cultural sites. Consistent and reliable full funding of at least \$900 million annually, as authorized by Congress, would fulfill the goals of the program and protect the American outdoors for future generations.

Education is not the realm of the federal government.

The Federal Government should have no role in education whatsoever!

We MUST have full funding to succeed in preserving the structures and sites of the past.

Historic preservation has consistently not just been a "giveaway" program. It has sought to provide matching funds where needed, often \$2 or \$3 (if not more) for every dollar provided in grant funds. The HPF should be funded at \$150 million, and local communities and NGOs will add many hundreds of millions in private funds to restore nationally important landmarks. This has worked successfully with the Preserve America and Save America's Treasures programs, and would enable HPF to be even more successful than it's been in the past. I've been disappointed in the Obama Administration's level of support for preservation, and this is one place they can step up. With HPF funds originating from oil leases, and the mess BP is making of our country, Mr. Obama should see this is a consolation prize for our nation's communities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

point is an all too common problem. His is only one example of the federal government closing trails and areas despite the presence of organized maintenance efforts. There have also been numerous instances of the federal government blocking these efforts, often due to the onerous requirements placed by the courts and those higher up the chain of command in the executive branch, (and not just the current one) who are often completely out of touch with reality on the ground. In principal, I support the idea, but without significant changes, there can't be anything resembling a partnership.

Just like the rest of our government, the NPS HAS NO MONEY. I have borne witness to many items in disrepair in several of our national parks. I would also argue, however, that many of these items may not really be necessary to the park. Obviously, certain infrastructure has to be provided, but it should be as minimal as possible. If we really think we must have elaborate, climate controlled visitor centers at every attraction, then perhaps concessionaires should be considered as a possible alternative. Additionally, a huge step in cost reduction would be to eliminate some of the more ridiculous federal contracting requirements, such as requiring them to be minority/female owned. Quite often, the most cost effective means of addressing things are eliminating by this and other requirements. Providing an opportunity for individuals and organizations to volunteer their time to help complete repairs and improvements would also be helpful. As it stands now, this can be difficult at best. I am part of an organization that has repeatedly offered to repair a forest road on our time and on our expense. Unfortunately, due to certain regulations the USFS has been unable to allow it, even though it is desperately needed and will likely not otherwise be accomplished. I can only imagine how much worse it is within the carefully managed boundaries of a national park.

This is a fantastic idea and one that is long over due in being pursued!

If land in the Mojave Desert of California, Nevada or Utah is to be used for solar or wind power development, let it take place on already degraded land (not on land that is relatively undisturbed) and near by the urban/suburban areas that could benefit from its development.

Federal Agencies like the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, BLM, should be strongly encouraged, and I stress the point-strongly encouraged-to make sure they are working with, at a minimum, High School level after School Nature Clubs. Each unit could make presentations to a number of schools over the course of a school year, presenting information on the units natural resources and showing them the opportunities available for hiking, camping, birding, etc. It might even work better at the middle school level?

I agree totally with this assessment. I worked many years in the longleaf habitat. One caution. In federal land longleaf management might be made into policy. On private and state owned land the role of government stops at encouraging owners to change, not forcing them.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If there is one thing we need, its updated/fixed/repared infrastucture to our parks, sanctuaries, wildlife refuges, forests, etc. Tweak the old program as many suggest, and lets get to work in our national (and state and local - don't forget about state agencies and urban park systems - where the need is arguably even higher) treasures.

Preservation of our Country's history should be a priority of any administration. Sustaining our nationals parks and perserving historically sensitive areas that are not your protected should be a paramount goal. While they are many short-term gains made through these actions, they pale in comparison to the long-term preservation of our Country's history for our children and children's children. We owe to those who came before us and those who will carry-on the idea America as a beacon of light.

The federal government used to use funds from oil revenues from drilling on federal lands to buy and protect lands for conservation and recreation. The was stopped by Republicans in Congress and the WhiteHouse- even though it maintained a very conservative principal. If we are taking resources from our future generations, we should preserve something for them in return. The writer is correct that parklands do not have adequate funding. This should be corrected by directing more federal funds to the parks.

These are federal lands and should be managed for best use for the country, even though the local yokels may object to restrictions on what they consider their own private backyard.

I agree, The world was a different place in 1933, the cost/benefit of a similar federal-sponsored program today would simply not be advantageous. It would need to be very different if started today. What-if... in place of student loans and federal grants, CCC-type work could be credited toward University tuition or some 'time served'. There are plenty of federal expenses that could be paid through some extra labor. This type of program might also be beneficial to employers to filter through applicants. I for one would be more interested in hiring college grads who has worked in a group trying to achieve a goal vs. one that it great at video games.

I am for multi-use, but not for multi-use of every inch of public land. Certainly we do not want boats in swimming areas or ORVs in playgrounds. Agencies should provide a diversity of opportunities by varying access limitations by area and types of activity. A diversified approach to management policy can provide something for everyone. The demographics of an area - along with available inventory- should provide the legal basis for access limitations and recreational zoning.

The Historic Preservation Fund should be fully funded at \$150 million. In addition, the President's proposal to eliminate funding for Save America's Treasures and Preserve America should be tossed out. These are the only two federal bricks and mortar preservation programs in existance. They are very effective in leveraging federal money to create jobs, preserve historic resources, and support local economies over the long-term through cultural tourism and the revitalization of traditional communities and business districts.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Wilderness Act of 1964 is a wonderful tool for people to use to protect their very special places for them to enjoy today and for our children to enjoy tomorrow. President Obama signed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act to protect 2.1 million acres across nine states and helped citizens to save wilderness for them to hike, hunt, fish, and enjoy America's Great Outdoors. More can and should be done. The President can ask land managing agencies for their wilderness recommendations, and pass those ideas along to Congress to act. Acting expeditiously will help stem the tide of loss -- 6,000 acres a day of open space disappears, according to Secretary Salazar. We need to pass along the gift of wilderness to future generations.

Tom, You are so right! The idea of preservation by removing the ability to access it is insane. When can we make the government realize the benefits of giving people the able to access more area is better than having more people in a smaller area?

Check out what the Bureau of Land Management has done to our supposed public lands. They were mandated to protect wild horses and they are demolishing them in favor of cattle. Our public lands are full of toxic mines that compromise our underground water systems. The land is leased out so cheaply that cattle ranchers and miners use our land instead of their own. In the meantime, despite laws already on the books, the BLM cruelly rounds up the horses by helicopter, running some until they drop--all at the taxpayers expense. The entire BLM should be closed.

Under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, states have access to Clean Water State Revolving Funds (CWSRF's) that may be used to upgrade local water systems but also to reduce nonpoint source (NPS) pollution. Low-interest loans are available to local governments, water systems, and qualified nonprofit borrowers such as land trusts. In some cases there have been 0% loans, and in other cases state agencies have obligations to provide "additionally subsidized" loans; this means that some portion of the loan is, in effect, a grant. For example, in Maryland loan applicants "undertaking an eligible non-point source, green infrastructure, water or energy efficiency improvement or environmental innovation project that does not have a dedicated source of revenue, such as a user charge system to repay a loan are eligible to receive up to 50% of the project costs as grant." (MDE) In other states, the rules may be different (?) Data on this is hard to come by, but it would appear that very little of the CWSRF funds are being spent on land conservation and restoration projects to reduce or prevent NPS pollution. On the front end, private entities, such as land trusts and watershed organizations, do not receive a formal mail solicitation to apply for CWSRF loans - as local governments do. In Maryland a few such loan transactions have been successfully completed, helping to protect the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and restore wildlife habitat lands, but such projects are little known. State agencies need to hear from land trusts and other conservation groups who can bring project proposals to their doors. We need to demonstrate demand for NPS project funding, shine a light on this resource, sit down with the agencies that have the Section 319 money, and work out some land conservation deals.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We as Americans need to preserve Civil War Battlefields. It is important that future generations know about the struggle and the horrible cost of this war. They need to know that people of this time held their beliefs so high that they fought in war to defend them. I believe that most Americans don't know their own Nation's history. This is a very sad thing, we as Americans come from a long line of hardworking pioneers and trail-blazers. Some of these people were the first Americans to go somewhere or to accomplish something. Think of Lewis & Clark, Daniel Boone, Jedidiah Smith, and Samuel Morse. How can we know as a country where we are going if we don't know where we've been? We need to know the past in order to understand the future.

Our Galveston Bay Area Master Naturalist volunteers give thousands of hours towards protecting our natural resources, improving our environment, and educating our local children, and we volunteer with other like-minded environmental groups, such as Audubon, Galveston Bay Foundation, local nature centers, nesting sea turtle beach patrols, and much more. President Obama, because you asked, one of your goals should be the establishment of more Master Naturalist groups, who can help manage and conserve state and federal public lands everywhere.

Close all the tax loopholes on all companies that extract fossil fuels and logging companies and use a healthy portion of the money (say 1/3rd which could be billions of dollars) to help fund the national parks, hire more rangers and hire workers to restore areas degraded by years of neglect due to being underfunded. Then begin imposing fees on oil, gas, coal and logging companies. Charge by the acre and by the amount of damage to the environment their projects commit. Call it a "destruction of the environment fee" and then use the money to restore damaged habitat and forests, to hire workers to restore those areas and to buy land that will then become permanently protected with a special emphasis on buying land near national parks and then turning that land into NP land. This will accomplish many things. 1) It will stimulate the economy by bringing money into the system we do not have now and by creating thousands of jobs. 2) It will restore millions of acres lost to development and ruined over the years by these companies. 3) It will make energy companies think twice before destroying a pristine forests or the habitat of a threatened species knowing they will have to pay an increased fee to do so. They will instead look for areas and ways to extract their product in a more environmentally responsible manner. 4) It will create more interest in our National Parks and forests. As parks become bigger and more diverse with the money gained from these fees more and more people will want to visit them. This in turn will bring even more money into the park system which will create even more jobs and better maintained parks and forests. Some on here will complain that this will cause companies to go elsewhere but that is ridiculous. These companies are making over ONE HUNDRED BILLION DOLLARS IN PROFITS EVERY YEAR and they are destroying our environment and causing many animal species to go on watch lists due to extinction dangers yet they get off with only minimal fees placed upon them and way too many tax loopholes. They are as greedy as any other company and they will go nowhere because there is a lot of money to be made here. They have been destroying our environment and profiting from it for too long, it is about time they started to pay their fair share for the destruction and death they cause.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Do you have nothing better to do than bash everyone's ideas on how to conserve land and promote a greater bio diversity of wildlife? The only ideas you support are ones that either kill animals or destroy our public lands. Here is an idea, since you are so concerned how about putting in an idea of your own. Try not to include the killing of Buffalo (what is it you have against buffalo anyway?) and other endangered species please. I support any conservation of public lands and I would love to visit another national park and having never been to Kansas I can think of no better way to get me there than to preserve the 300,000 acres and repopulate it with wild buffalo, elk, deer and grizzlies!

I 100% support giving national parks and forests more money but I am not sure giving more money to the Dept. of the Interior will do that. As we saw the dept. in the Bush years and even now with Obama the Dept. of the Interior has been more concerned with increasing oil, coal and gas production, expanding logging, building highways and roads and dams than protecting national parks and forests and the wildlife that calls them home. Much like the MMS, BLM and Wildlife services the Dept. of the Interior has become anything but the watchdog for open space and wildlife that it is supposed to be. While I fully support the idea of more money to parks, forests and wildlife unless I were given some assurances that the money would indeed go to national parks, forests and wildlife conservation measures instead of to some highway project or oil drilling scheme I cannot support this idea.

I suggested it before but I will say it again. Close all the tax loopholes for big oil and coal and impose an extra tax on corporations that destroy our environment with the revenue to go to funding national parks, public lands and outdoors education programs for children.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I disagree! For too long America has put economic development first and foremost and what has it gotten us? We have more oil drilling, coal mining and gas extraction than ever before yet prices remain high and corporations scream for more and more access to public lands and wilderness areas everyday despite the fact hundreds of wells lie capped since the recession. Millions of homes lie abandoned or foreclosed on yet developers want more and more public lands everyday. Pristine forest is cut and roadless areas are developed on so resorts can be built for millionaires. Who does this benefit? No one except the developer and the rich who can afford to stay there. Even with the huge push for development of all kinds the last 8 years under Bush we see huge jobless numbers and more and more people becoming homeless everyday. I know what the duties of the BLM are so I do not need a history lesson from you thanks. I also know that the BLM totally ignores existing laws to grant access to our lands and that benefits very few while harming many and completely destroying the ecosystem, biodiversity and beauty the country once had. Many animal species are down to their last 1 or 2% of their range and many, many more are either threatened or endangered of becoming extinct yet time and time again the BLM ignores scientists' recommendations and gives the land away. You talk about responsibility but does that sound like responsibility to you? Corporations have more access to our lands than ever before and yet we are in the midst of what truly is a depression, a quickly dwindling middle class, record numbers of homeless, near record numbers of jobless, deflating wages, increasing energy costs, etc. etc. so how exactly are we prospering now that we have put economic development so high and preservation of land and wildlife so low? Looking at your voting record I can plainly see you are no fan of nature, wildlife or the preservation of either so I am not surprised by your comments but the least you could do is provide a valid argument.

Much like the MMS the BLM has become a corrupt organization. They regularly give away public lands and federal forest land for pennies on the dollar and do very little to preserve the land they are supposed to protect. Like the MMS the government needs to gut the BLM and form a branch of government run by scientists, conservationists and environmentalists that will put animals and plant species, forests, streams, rivers and lakes first and economic development 2nd.

The federal government should NOT make new acquisitions, new designations, or develop new programs unless and until it provides acceptable stewardship for its current holdings. Maintenance backlogs are visibly apparent in many, if not most federal land units. Campgrounds, trails, and other facilities that are closed for lack of maintenance funding certainly do not help in the goal of getting Americans outdoors. Lack of acceptable levels of conservation stewardship in federally-owned forests is resulting in overcrowded stands where disease and insect infestation become prevalent, fuel loads become intolerably high, resulting in dead/dying forests that explode into conflagrations with a single lightning strike, poorly extinguished campfire, a carelessly discarded cigarette, or even a spark from a muffler or train car wheel.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are many counties around the nation where federal government land ownership is a significant factor for the county general fund and budgeting. I live in a county where 62% of the land is held in various federal units, primarily national park and national forest. The federal government does not pay property taxes for the lands it owns. Instead, it makes a payment in lieu of taxes (PILT), which is intended to at least partially make up the difference. Unfortunately, PILT has been fully funded on only one occasion since its inception, to the best of my knowledge. To make matters worse, PILT payments were several weeks late this year, with only a short announcement on the Department of Interior's website that failed to provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. This required considerable consternation and financial difficulties for the county where I live, and I'm sure that was repeated in many other counties. What gets set aside when PILT isn't fully funded, or doesn't arrive on time? Educational services, particularly the outdoor "frills" that AGO is touting sits at the top of that list. Maintenance for county trails and parks is close behind. I've personally made up some of the difference by going out with John (Deere), me, myself, and I to mow along a local trail because the county had to take their mower and employee time off the plate because PIT did not arrive as scheduled. So, full on-time payment of PILT at a rate matching the county tax rate for similarly classed land use is necessary before the federal government acquires more land, makes new designations, or develops new programs. I don't get to have a meaningful decision as to how much I am going to pay for my property taxes this year, or when I get around to sending it in. Why should the federal government be allowed to behave less responsibly than I am required to?

Whether it be the larger, more devastating wildfires, the surge in beetle populations or drought, just to name a few, our public lands, forests, national parks and our wildlife are being ravaged by climate change/global warming. Anyone with a brain can see that climate change/global warming is happening now and is getting worse every year we do nothing about it. Do something now or pretty soon there will be no nature left to connect with and pretty soon after that there will be no human population left to worry about!

While I am all for new and stricter regulations protecting our public lands how about enforcing the laws we do have. The MMS, BLM, US Fish and Wildlife Service and in some cases the EPA have been ignoring existing laws for years. As a result our public lands have been ravaged, given away to energy companies, loggers and developers. Animal species have suffered huge losses, plains have been bulldozed, forests have been clear cut, rivers and streams have become polluted or dammed up and access has been taken away from the public no matter what type of outdoor activity you enjoy. If current organizations cannot handle or enforce the laws now in the books then create a new one that will. Our public lands are there not only for people who enjoy nature and the outdoors or the animal species that call them home but for the entire country because a country without a healthy ecosystem is a country with a healthy anything and they are not for the profit of a few people or a few corporations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

With the Gulf disaster and the consequences sure to follow in form of greater regulations (much needed I might add) some companies are already turning to oil shale as an alternative to off shore drilling. Oil Shale extraction is among the most environmentally destructive forms of extracton, right up there with mountain top removal mining and the tar sands. Large public land areas in Montana, North Dakota and Texas could be lost forever if oil shale production is approved and millions of acres of natural beauty will be destroyed along with the wildlife that lives there. This is also a costly way of production to the oil companies and no matter how much crude they pull from these areas it will only bring a couple pennies of relief at the pump if that. If we are to reconnect to nature and the outdoors there needs to be nature and outdoors left to connect to. Restrict areas to shale production and make the areas that are opened so costly (base the cost on actual loses in habitat and beauty) that companies will think long and hard before proceeding.

We enjoy spending time in our great outdoors with our RV trailer. However, the variety of websites and terminology used in researching and making reservations has been cumbersome. We need a uniform style of website and reservation system, ideally for all campgrounds: city, county, state and federal. At least all the federal sites should be consistent in the website signup procedure. This same concern applies to other outdoor opportunities as well, such as hiking trails. With our current technology available, we could significantly improve our "advertising" and communication to outdoor connection opportunities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Some of the worst devastation in this country (and others) is caused by our insatiable appetite for energy. Even when we talk about "green" energy, we make it wasteful. We want to generate power in one part of the country, then spend millions to construct transmission lines across our public and private lands which kill untold numbers of birds (including hundreds of golden eagles), use vast amounts of fossil fuels to maintain the lines with helicopters and vehicles, require thousands of miles of new roads to get to the lines to maintain them, which results in water quality issues and fisheries degradation. All for transmission lines which lose electricity during transmission and don't generate anything. How green is that? We need to: 1. insist that every home has a solar panel or two built right into it or added to it. We all seem to have the money to afford dishwashers, air conditioners, clothes dryers, big screen tvs - we can afford a solar panel or two that will eventually pay for itself. Something our tv will never do! And there is virtually NO harmful environmental effects to solar panels on a home. No co2, no dead wildlife, no emissions of any kind, no moving parts, no habitat degradation, no excuses. 2. require power generation to occur where it will be used. This results in fewer transmission lines, less energy to make and maintain the lines, no new roads through currently roadless areas. And people are much more likely to CARE about what kind of energy production is happening if it's right next to their home - so coal and oil are not as appealing as other greener energies. 3. and give incentives for conservation. Virtually every household and company building in this country could cut their energy consumption dramatically if a few simple steps were followed. 4. Tax power that has to be imported in, and make it cheaper to use locally produced green power. You'd see a lot more solar panels going up on private homes real fast. This is not rocket science. There is no reason for us to allow big energy companies to destroy our lands by fouling our air, water and soils to make energy for us that we can help make ourselves. And transmission lines are an unnecessary environmental travesty that use power rather than generate it.

Land grant universities are usually designated with a "State" following the universities' name (ex. North Carolina State, Ohio State, Oregon State, etc...). Land grant universities are often at the cutting edge of research in agriculture and have provided many modern farming and ranching practices. Land grant universities also offer many other degrees in areas such as engineering, business, and natural sciences. A list of the top universities in the United States always includes many land grant universities. Funding education is always a great idea and there is no better way to invest in the future. Public universities are drastically underfunded as it is and often look to students to make up for rising costs and lagging funding. Funding state schools would be a very beneficial use for public dollars.

The impact this proposal would have on the local economy and the ability to control wildfires would be entirely disastrous. The people who live and vacation there are clearly in opposition to this monument, and the government needs to abandon this idea before it goes any further.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I live in south central California and have been kayaking the Kern River for most of my life. A couple of years ago the Sequoia National Forest proposed requiring entrance fees for most of the public lands surrounding the town where I live, including all access to the Kern River. The local reaction to this was summed up well by the local paper in their front page article "Mob Scene at Forest Service Fee Workshop." What most everyone was disturbed about at this meeting was the complete lack of accountability, financial and otherwise, on the part of the US Forest Service. Googling "GAO" and "Forest Service" will yield multiple reports to Congress documenting this. What about government accountability?

Yes, not only should wilderness quality land be managed as such, the amount of wilderness should be dramatically expanded. In addition to ANWR, there are approximately 9 million acres of wilderness quality lands in southern and central Utah that desperately deserve--need--protection. If Congress won't pass the America Redrock Wilderness Act, then pieces of it should be designated wilderness, as occurred with Grand Staircase-Escalante and Washington Co. II that passed last year.

Don't subsidize, but quit putting crazy regulations on farmers. The cost of doing business with the rules our gov puts on landowners is a bigger problem than finding a meat packer.

Over the last decade or so, national park units have developed records on the maintenance they do not have the funding to complete but which should be finished to prevent even more damage to built features of the parks. A few years ago, the amount of the deferred maintenance totaled to about \$6 billion for all the 400-ish units in the NPS system. Working with the Facility Management Division, which generates and maintains these records, let's put folks back to work fixing the problems in parks that have already been identified and that need to be addressed to further preserve our parks.

Downed timber creates an opportunity and a cost to National Parks. Excessive fallen timber has considerable market value that could bolster the revenue of the park, and provide work opportunities for local loggers and sawmills. If not removed, the timber can create an extreme fire hazard, such as was created in Yellowstone before their devastating fire. A similar potential exists now in the Olympic National Park which has millions of board feet of timber that was blown down in the 2007 and 2008 storms. Referred to as the 'Asbestos Forest', it burns only once in about every 300 years, but when it does, the accumulated fuel will incinerate even the buried seeds. That condition exists right now. The locals, including the local Indian nation, BEGGED to allow logging to remove the excessive fallen timber but federal managers refused to budge. Of course now the timber is no longer good for prime lumber and much of the value is lost but perhaps someone in the government actually is imbued with common sense and can reverse this terrible policy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal agencies and Congress have at various times and in different ways attempted to extend federal authority outside the boundaries of the area itself using buffer zones and perceived threats to the park as a tool to control land outside the park boundary. The Solution: Federal agencies should focus their efforts and attention on the management of the area within authorized boundaries and on cooperative management with other agencies and landowners outside their boundaries. Attempts at extending federal authority outside area boundaries raises suspicions as to motives and intentions of the federal government, causes conflict and tension with nearby communities, and undermines local and state zoning authority and private property rights. Where federal lands are concerned, buffer zone initiatives tend to cause unnecessary interagency feuding by making the interests of one agency subservient to another. Forcing buffer zones through legislation that has been proposed in Congress at various times, or by national directives, also preempts the proper methods of dealing with common resource concerns, methods based on cooperation and good will among neighbors. Similar buffer zone legislation passed the House of Representatives at various times and caused great controversy and negative feelings from local government, commercial recreation interests and private rights owners in areas adjacent to national parks. This type of legislation raises fears about the long term goals of the National Park Service regarding its neighbors. It turns local communities against the potential for new National Parks because the agency does not have the reputation of being a good neighbor. In the long run, this prevents the creation of parks and other conservation areas and exacerbates exist fears in landowners and user groups. This idea was submitted on behalf of the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Not all designated wilderness decisions are to protect nature, some are political. Clinton put Staircase Escallante off-limits to protect his Chinese campaign contributors. There is as much as \$1 trillion in very clean coal buried there, but it competed with the Lippo Group's plans. When I worked there as a supervisor, the Port of Long Beach canceled part of its expansions when the possibility of exporting the coal to China evaporated. Along with those plans went thousands of union jobs, and the potential boost US exports. So now China burns dirtier coal, the effluence of which gets delivered to us a few days later.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Planning, acquisition and management costs of new park and recreation proposals need more careful scrutiny. Present methods result in huge costs overruns, angry landowners, and high overhead while taking funds away from other important agency needs. The Solution: Require a thorough study of each proposed area with carefully developed cost estimates for planning, acquisition, and life costs of management. An economic impact study should be completed with a full cost-benefit analysis. Recent proposals for new parks and recreation areas have underestimated the costs for acquisition, planning and management. The result is higher than expected costs taking funds away from other projects and priorities. According to a recent Interior Department Inspector General's investigation (E-FW-NPS-5-81-A), when Santa Monica Mountains NRA was created, Congress was told the cost would be \$155 million. The Inspector General found that the Park Service had eight estimates in hand, when the bill passed, ranging from a low of \$242 million, to a high of \$675 million. None of these figures were ever shared with Congress. In the case of Redwood National Park, estimates were about \$250 million. The final cost is not known, but it's presently over \$2 billion and growing, causing a great strain on acquisition funding nationwide. Former Assistant Secretary of Interior Robert Herbst estimated the acquisition backlog was approximately \$3 billion in October 1980. Some estimate that the figure may now be as high as \$10 billion. With complete estimates and proper implementation this did not have to happen. The Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area passed Congress in 1986. \$35 million was the cost allocated to the bill, yet it was common knowledge in the area, and even among some members of Congress that the cost could exceed half a billion dollars. No quality cost estimate has been completed. Costs are not just the funds to acquire interests in land, but in losses incurred to local businesses, local government in lost taxes and in social and welfare costs associated with the lost jobs and economic activity. The Tall Grass Prairie Preserve in Oklahoma was another example. Cost estimates were \$70 million with no plan for the possibility of having to purchase the oil rights of the Osage Tribe underlying the entire area. Those costs could have been in the hundreds of millions. Congress chose not to go forward with the proposal in 1986. While most landowners do not wish to sell, some are forced to by hardship, change in circumstances, or deteriorating living conditions due to ongoing acquisition programs. Poor initial planning and understated costs often leave landowners in limbo, ultimately turning them into angry enemies of the acquisition agency. Before Congress passes legislation, and prior to endorsement by the Administration, a thorough study of each proposed area should be made showing the economic impact and costs related to the project. A clear understanding must be developed between proponents, the agency, and the Congress about expectations for the future project. Without such an understanding, many parks and recreation areas suffer from creeping size, expenditures, and expectations far beyond what was envisioned by Congress. This issue was developed in cooperation with the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Something along these lines are needed. N.E. Ohio has no place to ride with more than 10 miles of trails. Sure Wayne National forest has what 28 miles of trails but for us we have to drive 8 hours away (to WV) to ride trails that have any worth while lengths to them. We have hundreds of miles of horse trails & vacant railway beds that are never use, why not convert some of those to OHV trails? Why not help us open trails here in N.E. Ohio too? We pay taxes just the same as everyone else.....

The Department of Interior created the Land Protection Planning Process for the purpose of protecting more land at less cost, but plans have not been effectively implemented to meet that purpose. The intent was to prioritize the lands that needed conservation the most and acquire the appropriate interest in those lands. The Solution: Land Protection Plans should be rewritten where Department purpose and intent has not been achieved. They should be updated with public involvement every two years. The Land Protection Planning process is one of the most innovative and necessary programs to be initiated in the conservation process. It is a logical approach to the broad question of “what are we buying, why are we buying it, and at what cost?” Land Protection Plans both identify the land and degrees of title to the land needed by the federal government to protect the resource and designate cost-effective alternatives to full federal purchase, such as easements and cooperative agreements. Local government officials need to be part of the public involvement process because of the potential of long term damage to the tax base and development planning options. During times of severe fiscal constraints, this approach is even more valid. Aside from the issue of social and cultural disruption associated with large-scale acquisition of lands, our government can no longer afford to buy lands at the same rate as in past years. We must begin to determine how much is enough. The general Accounting Office, now called the Government Accountability Office, in their report GAO/RCED-86-16 dated October 31, 1985, “New Rules For Protecting Land In the National Park System – Consistent Compliance Needed,” “ found that 25 of 38 Land Protection Plans it reviewed did not implement Interior policy or comply with National Park Service rules.” “If the Park Service implements the plans’ recommendations that do not comply with its rules, it could acquire more interest in land than it needs, incur unnecessary acquisition costs, and deplete the limited funds available for land protection.” The Land Protection concept should be revived with the idea of achieving the purpose for which it was intended. This issue was developed in cooperation with the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The GAO (Government Accountability Office), has been critical over the years of the National Park Service and other agencies with respect to land acquisition. The Federal Agencies, Congress and recreation advocates have largely ignored the GAO findings and recommendations. The Solution: Congress and the Agencies should review these GAO reports and begin implementing the recommendations. The result would be substantial cost savings, better landowner relations, and improved land conservation. Today's readers would benefit greatly from reading these reports. They are as contemporary as if they were written yesterday. In one report, the President's Commission on American's Outdoors was severely criticized for failing to follow the law and the Federal Advisory Committee Act. It is hoped that the America's Great Outdoors Initiative follow in the PCAO's footsteps and will not make these same or similar mistakes. It appears it already is by largely only notifying the environmental groups about Great Outdoors meetings while failing to notify a broad section of landowners, recreation and community groups. In six earlier reports, the GAO heavily criticized the Park Service and other agencies for: (1) not following the intent of Congress; (2) failing to consider cost effective alternatives; (3) buying more land than was intended by Congress or needed to manage the area; (4) failing to prioritize land purchases; and (5) failing to pay attention to the needs of local government, landowners, or local communities. Three of the GAO reports recommended that the Park Service sell back land they had needlessly purchased. The GAO is the investigative arm of the Congress. Their reports, together with the Interior Department Inspector General's reports, are critical of agency activities and clearly indicate that something is wrong with the system. These reports need to be reviewed and their recommendations implemented. A recent GAO report reviewing the Land Protection Planning Process of the National Park Service indicated that in most cases the plans themselves were not consistent with Park Service or Interior Department Policy. It is likely that when a review is made of the implementation of the Land Protection Policy plans, the Park Service will be found not to have followed their own plans, much less Department Policy. They will be found to have failed to update the plans or involve the public. The result is lip service to creative land protection alternatives. "Federal Protection of Wild and Scenic Rivers Has Been Slow and Costly" (CED-78-96) (May 22, 1978) "The Federal Drive To Acquire Private Lands Should be Reassessed" (CED-80-14) (December 14, 1979) "Federal Land Acquisitions By Condemnation – Opportunities to Reduce Delays and Costs" (CED-80-54) (May 14, 1980) "Lands In The Lake Chelan National Recreation Area Should Be Returned to Private Ownership" (CED-81-10) (January 22, 1981) "The National Park Service Should Improve Its Land Acquisition and Management at Fire Island" (CED-81-78) (May 8, 1981) "Federal Land Acquisition and Management Practices" (CED-81-135) (September 11, 1981) "New Rules For Protecting Land In The National Park System – Consistent Compliance Needed" (RCED-86-16) (October 31, 1985) The scanned 1988 GAO report on the Commission on Americans Outdoors, Interior Did Not Comply with Legal Requirements for the Outdoors Commission, GAO/RCED-88-65, March 1988, is at { Link } (17.6 MB). This issue was developed in cooperation with the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The LWCF has become a tool for some special interests to destroy the fabric of rural communities and reduce recreational opportunities for large segments of society at unnecessary cost to the taxpayers. In 2000 there was a proposal, the Conservation and Reinvestment Act, to give the land buying agencies over \$3 billion per year, off budget and automatically. If that had passed it would have meant the end of rural America over time. The Solution: Any future fund of this type must have tight controls and effective and continuous oversight. Any new funds including the LWCF must go through the appropriations process each year and compete with other Federal funding needs. The new direction must be to purchase only sufficient interests in lands necessary to meet the intent of Congress for the area. According to the Government Accountability Office, formerly the General Accounting Office (GAO), to a large extent, no effective priority system has been used with this fund. Lands have been purchased in fee title without considering the need for such purchases, alternatives to fee acquisition or cost-effectiveness of such purchases. For too many years, the federal government has supported the philosophy that we need to buy in fee as much land as possible within dedicated boundaries regardless of: (1) cost; (2) whether the purchase is necessary; (3) whether alternatives exist; (4) the rights of the landowners; and (5) the socio-cultural effects of large-scale purchases of land on local communities and land use patterns. Robert Herbst, former Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks described the result at the 1980 National Park Service Advisory Board meeting as a land acquisition backlog exceeding three billion dollars. Others have suggested that the figure may be much higher. Each federal project must have a limited amount of funding for fee title purchases for public use areas with adequate provisions for alternatives. Each federal area should have an approved Land Protection Plan along with a General Management Plan prior to beginning acquisition. Priorities should be established after full public participation. Only the interests necessary to manage the area and meet the intent of Congress should be purchased. Public involvement must take place at least every two years to update the Land Protection Plan. Without these safeguards, area managers won't know which land to buy or what interest will suit the need of the project. Any increases in the price of land caused by waiting until the plans are complete would be more than offset by the lower total expenditures since only the correct interests and amount of land required to fulfill congressional objectives would be purchased. In other words, will conservation easements satisfy the legislation or could a lesser interest be purchased. Or should the land be purchased in fee title. As of now, the agencies just assume they will buy it all in fee title so why bother with a priority system. If these guidelines were followed, substantial savings would result without the huge cost overruns and needless acquisitions of the past. The cost of management would be reduced. No new funding system should be created without a carefully crafted oversight system that makes sure the funds are spent properly and consistent with the intent of Congress. In addition, any future funds should be available for maintenance as well as acquisition. That way the agency can set its own management priorities. It may be reasonable to move away from dedicated funds of this type and allow competition for funds with other national priorities. This issue was developed in cooperation with the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Benefits of the original CCCs: They constructed cabins, shelters, etc. on public lands that are still used today, e.g. in NJ, in Stokes State Forest: the current School of Conservation and the State 4-H Camp were both CCC Camps, as were many lean-tos and cabins. But this happened in just about every state. Today, those facilities, most of which still survive, I suspect (they were built to last) provide inexpensive places for people to stay! Young people from cities got experience in the Great Outdoors, and learned to love it. Years later, they took their families camping, hiking, etc. in the Great Outdoors, based on their happy memories of their CCC days. They also learned teamwork, discipline, practical skills and had fun! They sent most of their money home, to support their families. Since maintenance is one of the first budget items to be cut, most parks in the country have a long list of maintenance projects that could be started quickly. Many are labor intensive.

The manmade oil disaster in the Gulf is a current example of the need for Federal plans to deal with any and all possible disasters that can affect our wild places. These plans should be detailed down to listing all possible sources for needed materials/resources depending on type of disaster and include logistics for transportation and speed of delivery to affected area. Any and all hands on deck approach. These should also be specific to each area and should be updated quarterly. *Man power and innovations available to deal with current Gulf situation are still being ignored and BP's detailed environmental plans included the Gulf "Walrus". Something is surely needed. If such plans were in place, the Federal Government would not be crying that their hands are tied to address the clean up of the BP Disaster since BP is lax on cleaning up their own mess. We seem more concerned with the money issues here than the oil washing into our marshes and onto our beaches. Instead of trying to figure out what to do now, we'd already have something in place and there'd be no need for states to get permission from the Army Corps to stop the oil from coming ashore. With The Tortugas, The Everglades, Breton Refuge to name just a few National Parks that ring the Gulf, our government should have moved on day one to start protecting and cleaning up. The Federal Government, of, for and by the People, could then bill BP for our efforts.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Currently, Internal Revenue Code section 2031(c) provides an estate tax exclusion of 40% of the value of land protected by a conservation easement. Unfortunately, this exclusion is capped at \$500,000. In the context of rising farm values this exclusion is woefully inadequate. The American Family Farm and Ranchland Protection Act, H.R. 3050, would increase this existing exclusion to 50% and raise the cap to \$5 million – providing a powerful incentive for owners of high-value agricultural, forest, and natural habitat lands to protect these properties in perpetuity. More than 70 percent of wildlife gets food and shelter from our working farm, ranch and forest lands, and the greatest value for wildlife and other public benefits comes from the large, contiguous properties where estate taxes frequently force families to subdivide and sell their land for development. In fact, due to high land values, farmers and ranchers are disproportionately subject to an estate tax at a rate of approximately 4 times that of the general public. On private forest land, the U.S. Forest Service has invested heavily to promote sustainable forestry. As second home development pushes deeper into our forests, inflated tax values make it increasingly difficult for forest owners to hold on to the timberland they've stewarded for generations. In fact, a 2006 study indicates that approximately 2.4 million acres of forest land are harvested and 1.3 million acres are sold annually to pay the federal estate tax. These outcomes are no way to reward a good deed and good stewardship. We can avoid them by expanding the estate tax benefits for landowners who have permanently protected their land. The Joint Committee on Taxation has scored H.R. 3050 as costing just \$132 million over ten years, but its impact would be enormous, encouraging thousands of landowners to work with land trusts in their community to ensure that lands with important conservation values for the public are never lost to development. This provision works well with a deferral of estate taxes on family farmland (H.R. 3524) and we expect new House and Senate legislation in the coming weeks that will combine these provisions. This provision also works well with the enhanced income tax deduction for conservation easements (H.R. 1831) setting up the opportunity for America's Great Outdoors to promote a conservation tax package. For more information please visit: www.lta.org/estatetax.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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America's youth increasingly suffers from both "nature deficit disorder" and insufficient physical exercise. These problems contribute to reduced mental, emotional, and physical health. For example, there is mounting childhood obesity and diabetes linked to sedentary lifestyles and the veritable addiction to electronic media and devices. And the absence of exercise and outdoor exposure is further linked to lower test scores and higher depression. It is therefore clear that we need much more aggressive and effective programs to get young people out in nature for physical exercise. The obvious best place to do that is through kindergarten through 12th grade educational programs. As such, my idea is to have the U.S. Department of Education partner with the Interior and Agriculture Departments to develop these youth programs and to strongly encourage state education agencies and local school boards to adopt and implement them. Programs should be designed to include science or environmental themes and to enable students to accomplish worthwhile results-oriented projects. Academic credit should be provided based on the educational components. Indeed, students should be outdoors and exercising while learning about issues and doing projects to address those issues. For example, students could learn about the energy and resources wasted through excessive packaging, and conduct a community litter clean up or recycling project. Or students could learn about the increasing problems with invasive and noxious weeds, and conduct a weed eradication project. Or students could learn about organic gardening, and then create and maintain their own such garden. The possibilities for positive opportunities to combine learning with exercise in the outdoors should be almost limitless. If these programs are properly carried out, the result should be smarter, healthier, and more connected with the outdoors young people. And by giving them a sense of accomplishment and purpose, they will also likely be well on their way to becoming more involved and productive adults.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is no secret that livestock grazing on federal lands in the West is a controversial subject. For example, there was a GAO report about five years ago indicating that the BLM and Forest Service grazing programs represent over a hundred million dollar a year loss in terms of low permit fees versus the much higher cost of administering these programs. Livestock grazing may also cause a number of adverse environmental impacts, such as degradation of riparian habitats and the spread of harmful invasive or noxious weed species. Some non-profit groups have initiated projects to obtain federal livestock grazing permits from willing sellers. The purpose of these voluntary permit buyouts is usually to protect riparian habitats or improve other degraded wildlife habitats. However, even when a group makes a substantial investment to acquire a federal grazing permit, they must generally continue to run livestock on that allotment or risk losing their permit. This may create an inherent conflict in that a group wishing to reduce or eliminate livestock grazing impacts in an area may need to buy livestock and become a bona fide ranching operation. Many people promote the free market system and that grazing permits are private property rights. If so, why should a group that locates a voluntary willing seller and purchases a grazing permit to reduce or eliminate grazing have to then continue grazing? Is this fair? Such projects of voluntary buyouts may benefit habitat restoration and special status species recovery efforts, and save the BLM or Forest Service the cost of administering those allotments. These are benefits to the American public, both by benefitting federal lands and resources and saving some taxpayer money. As such, I suggest that the federal agencies involved in this AGO initiative recommend to Congress that they amend the Taylor Grazing Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and any other appropriate laws to enable these voluntary grazing permit buyouts to be permanent.

There are many, many examples of multiple-use groups cooperating/collaborating with government agencies (such as the BLM) to maintain and even restore public land with great success. Unfortunately, these stories are generally ignored by the mainstream media. It's a shame, because the public needs to see the positive results of government agencies working hand in hand with recreational vehicle enthusiasts, mountain bikers, hunting and fishing enthusiasts, and even loggers. Bringing together representatives from all stakeholder groups is a common sense approach that balances access and responsible land use with conservation and sustainable land management. These interests are not mutually exclusive. I'm very concerned with this administration's land management approach as detailed in the Great Outdoors initiative. There is something intrinsically wrong with a government arbitrarily restricting access to our public lands without listening to the voice of the users of that land. If President Obama truly wants a long-term solution, then each stakeholder group must be invited to the table with an equal share in the decision making process.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need a comprehensive federal program to restore natural springs and seeps on federal lands in the West. There are many thousands of such springs and seeps in the West, but most of them have been substantially altered. In many cases, the springs or seeps were capped, channeled, or diverted into pipelines to provide water for domestic livestock. Ranchers usually filed for and obtained state water rights for these developments and those rights are private property. Some of these developments provide water for wildlife as well as livestock, but there may be a wildlife drowning risk in troughs or tanks that do not have adequate escape ramps or ladders. Over the years, some of these water developments have not been properly maintained and/or have been abandoned. As these developments deteriorate they may become dysfunctional for both livestock and wildlife. For example, I am aware of two such developments on BLM land in Utah near where I live. They once provided water for wildlife and created modest wetland habitat in an otherwise arid area. They are now dysfunctional, the wetland habitat died out, and any dependent wildlife either moved elsewhere or perished. This is a complete waste as a former natural spring or seep on federal land is no longer serving a human beneficial use under state water law nor benefitting wildlife. Climate change is projected to perhaps cause more prolonged droughts in the West, and this could make the loss of these natural springs and seeps even more significant in terms of harm to wildlife and remnant, localized wetland and riparian habitats. Indeed, wetland and riparian habitats are incredibly important to native species and biological diversity in the West, including for a large number of listed, rare, and/or endemic species. Therefore, a comprehensive, coordinated federal program should: (1) identify those abandoned water developments and dysfunctional springs and seeps on federal lands; (2) work with state water rights officials to obtain the associated water right (as it was abandoned by the previous owner); and (3) work to re-establish the natural spring or seep to a fully functioning condition. Those who abandoned their water rights for many years should not object, and the state and federal officials should recognize the benefits of this program, including in aiding recovery of many special status species and helping wildlife cope with climate change.

I am a lifelong resident of Kansas and have camped, hiked and stargazed in as many places as I could all over the state. I must confess, though, that western Kansas has always held a special place in my heart. The idea of a National Park in Kansas has been contested by many ranchers and farmers in the state who resent big government taking their land and I can't say I blame them. That said, the state and all America could benefit from an American bison refuge and a National Park allowing hiking, camping and providing educational programs to learn about what was once considered the beginning of the "Great American Desert." Perhaps Kansans could even overcome their fear of the National Parks system to learn to appreciate a natural preserve where "the bison and the antelope roam" to paraphrase our state song. For too long, the only place where one could hike and camp were centered around Army Corps of Engineers reservoirs and even those facilities are usually secondary to fishing and water sports. A National Park certainly makes more sense than pumping the Ogallala aquifer dry for irrigation and watching most of the water evaporate.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPs) are required for states to participate in the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Produced every five years these plans are of varying quality depending on the availability of funding and a given state's dedication to comprehensive planning. One thing all SCORPs have in common is an identification of outdoor recreation issues. I'm proposing that these state-identified issues be aggregated into a regular national report on The State of Outdoor Recreation in America. This document would serve to focus attention on the most widely recognized issues and opportunities we face. It could also serve as a showcase for LWCF funded projects and encourage congressional delegations to make state-by-state comparisons. That would help build continuing support for the program.

Develop a coordinating council of resource user groups whose missions support the protection, conservation and enjoyment of our natural resources. Groups such as American Whitewater (moving water river users), American Hiking (hiking), Surfrider Foundation (beach, coastline use by surfers, swimmers, etc.) and the International Mountain Biking Association utilize and draw on the expertise and accomplishment of their staff and volunteers to protect and improve the experiences of citizens everyday. Funnel public participation through these trusted public-minded experts to minimize the influence of those with unfounded cliques and empower those who have already lived for decades in the trenches with underfunded voices. The answers are there if you'll empower the experts. Your challenge will be to simply find them, create a forum for their collaboration and translate their formidable input into action. You will create more positive steps more quickly than you would imagine.

Major wind and solar projects are being proposed on BLM lands in the Mohave Desert region. People need to realize that the BLM is a multiple use agency, meaning that wild farms, wildlife, recreation, water, etc are analyzed in tandem to come up with a way to satisfy the larger whole. Now whether this concept is possible or whether satisfaction of big-business precludes satisfaction for wildlife and water quality is the larger question.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The initial "Wilderness Act of 1964" envisioned about 20 million acres as suitable. Today we have over 120 million acres of Wilderness where Public Access is restricted to non-mechanized means, excepting the use of wheel chairs meeting "Hospital Specifications" which are of no use to Americans who are confined to them but still want to enjoy OUR Public Lands. This also severely limits the activities and hence effectiveness of various Government agencies who are responsible for maintaining these lands. The majority of recreating Americans have been forced onto smaller and smaller areas outside of Wilderness given studies which have concluded that only approximately five percent of recreating Americans use them. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the Great Outdoors we do not need more "Wilderness", "Wilderness Study Areas" or "National Monuments". If the President were truly interested in local involvement in his plan, multiple use groups would have been included or invited to the various "Listening" sessions taking place around OUR Nation, often with little prior scheduling notification. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to OUR Public Lands. My family, friends and fellow OHV enthusiasts spend many enjoyable hours recreating in our National Forests, National Parks and on BLM lands taking in the wonders of nature. My family travels to our chosen destination via a four wheel drive vehicle as it allows us to get away from paved roads and into areas we could not otherwise reach by other means due to our age and an injury I incurred while serving OUR Country. I served OUR Country in part to protect access to these lands for all Americans, not just the five percent who are able to walk into "Wilderness", "Wilderness Study Area" or OUR "National Monuments". As an owner of many acres of private property for decades and an OHV enthusiast for forty years I can say that the cougar, bear, deer, raccoon, possum, rabbit, squirrel, birds and other animals who call my property their home are welcomed, thrive here and coexist just fine with my OHV use and that of my friends and neighbors. The land does not suffer from the OHV use, my woods are properly thinned, healthy and clear of standing and fallen dead trees unlike our National Forests and BLM managed lands. Locking OHV users out of OUR Public Lands (yes, they belong to everyone) via "Wilderness", "Wilderness Study Area" or the "National Monument" designations being implemented Nation Wide, many times in direct violation of the "1964 Wilderness Act" implemented by Congress is not the answer to protecting animals, nature or OUR Public Lands. Only Congress can designate "Wilderness"! The "National Monument" designation has been and is currently being used unlawfully against the letter of the law as spelled out by the "Antiquities Act" to bypass Congressional scrutiny and hence We The People to lock up Public Lands without public debate as are "Wilderness Study Areas". Much of the land being designated as "Wilderness", "National Monuments" and "Wilderness Study Areas" does not meet the criteria set forth in the "1964 Wilderness Act". Many of these Federal lands include roads, bridges, campgrounds, trails, etc. This contradicts the intent of the original "1964 Wilderness Act", which essentially defines "Wilderness Areas" as lands that show "little or no signs of human involvement". These areas are not National Parks, they are lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management and National Forest Service and should be managed as such. Most importantly, the President and Congress should honor the established protocol of respecting State and local rights by not imposing "Wilderness", "National Monument" or "Wilderness Study Area" designations on people whose elected Congressional delegation are not in full support of the designations. The OHV community supports conservation efforts including support of the

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

“travel limited to designated roads, trails and areas” paradigm as outlined in the Forest Service travel management regulations and BLM’s planning directives. The OHV community also supports conservation through environmental review and analysis in route designation processes, as well as ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the OHV infrastructure. The OHV community supports conservation efforts by contributing substantial funds to implement OHV management and volunteers tens of thousands of man hours in volunteer work projects. Much of this funding is made available to federal land managers via state OHV programs. These programs exist today because years ago motorized recreationists voluntarily “taxed ourselves” via state OHV registration programs. Some of these funds are used to supplement the agencies’ law enforcement efforts. Recently, Governors of many States have raided these funds in ill fated attempts to fix the budgets that OUR Public Servants failed to balance and in doing so have removed this important funding source from the agencies responsible for managing OUR Public Lands. The majority of we OHV users are motorized environmentalists and good stewards of our Public Lands. The failure of the BLM and National Forest Service to maintain public lands in the manner they are charged to is the problem not the OHV Community. This is in part due to a lack of will, the theft of the OHV funds previously mentioned and the absence of Congressional budgetary support for these land management agencies. Back in the 60s development of America’s wild lands and backcountry was a threat. Now the threats are the Wilderness Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and many other environmental protection laws passed by Congress due to the way they are being used by Wilderness lobbies to lock recreationalists out of our public lands via “Wilderness”, “National Monument” and “Wilderness Study Area” designations. Public lands are important recreational opportunities; there are other alternatives such as “National Conservation Areas” or “National Recreation Areas” which would provide the same level of protection from development that these various designations carry while still preserving a diverse array of opportunities for recreation. While I understand that non-controversial bills can be lumped together to make the legislative process easier, Omnibus initiatives like the “America’s Great Outdoors” are far from non-controversial. I am concerned that any Omnibus initiative such as this would include measures that are both controversial and will not received a hearing or proper vetting in one or both Houses of Congress. Public lands bills and initiatives have a significant impact on economic development, recreational opportunities and the day-to-day lives of people who live and work near the areas in question. As a result, it is imperative those most affected have sufficient opportunities to provide input on any Public Lands legislation. The “America’s Great Outdoors” initiative process should allow for Congressional review, State, local government and public input before any designations take place.

Utah’s red rock country is one of our nation’s most magnificent wild landscapes and a great treasure. Unfortunately this wonderful land is at great risk from oil and gas exploration and rampant abuse by off-road-vehicles, which destroy vegetation and leave tracks that can last for a generation in the fragile desert ecosystem. Let’s protect it for the benefit of wildlife, air, water and future generations of Americans.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Require that all new roads or road improvements that use federal funding include pedestrian and bicycle friendly facilities (bike lanes, side walks, or seperated paths from streets). And to get federal highway funds, states/cities must have included pedestrian and cycling in their transportation plans. The benefits are multifold. Decreased air pollution from reduced car use. Better health of the population with increased walking and biking. People that are walking and biking are connecting to their community and to the outdoors in a different way than people driving in cars. Urban green belts are very popular and help to start the process of connecting to natural spaces. Some additional ideas: Currently many urban areas have sidewalks but don't provide sufficient space for bike use. There are too many bike-car fatalities and there is actual hostility on the part of motorists toward bicyclists. Many suburban and rural areas don't provide for either pedestrian or bicycle use. No sidewalks means walking and riding on the shoulder of busy roads. The Great Outdoors is not just the wilderness, the desert or the forest. It is also our neighborhood parks, and our county and regional parks. We need connections (physical and mental)to these local areas. These parks and paths are where we can provide for the first taste of enjoying the out of doors and improving our nation's health.

NPS actually does have a facilities program in which this is one element. And ARRA stimulus funds are moving some of these projects forward this year. But this is a far bigger topic than USFS, BLM and NPS. Shouldn't this goal apply to all government facilities? Is the technology really available? (show me how you're gonna heat Wrangell NP HQ & VC overwinter) Responsible stewardship of public lands isn't carried forward by merely dumping unfunded mandates upon already over-stretched land management agencies. If you're really serious about making a contribution, not merely bumping your posting count, think further before posting?

Please read about the Nature Conservancy's Ellsworth Creek Preserve { Link } and Lomakatsi { Link } thinning projects. Please read the Environmental Assessments for USFS projects to accelerate the development of old-growth characteristics in formerly clearcut areas, now being managed as Late Successional Reserves under the Northwest Forest Plan. I mention this because your proposal reads "These forests will not be logged and will be allowed to develop old-growth characteristics." That's fine, if the stand has never been logged. But Congress set a much more ambitious goal under the 1994 NWFP: the goal returning millions of formerly clearcut acres to old growth conditions. That requires thinning, removing the smallest trees to release the growth of the largest, removing the monoculture of replanted fir and releasing more a more diverse forest of cedar, pine, maple, etc.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here's my best idea for how we could achieve large scale restoration of longleaf pine forests and other similarly endangered ecosystems in the USA: provide a federal incentive for landowners to voluntarily restore their land to natural longleaf conditions (and keep it that way). Instead of just handing out the money to anyone who applies for it, the process should be based on competitive proposals from groups of landowners. The larger the contiguous land base represented in the proposal, the more money per acre each landowner would receive. I would set the incentive scale such that really good rewards kick in at the 10,000 acre plus range, and then truly outstanding benefits could accrue at the 100,000 acre range. Existing protected areas and identified high priority linkages and corridors would count in the proposal scoring process as well, so that the newly restored forests would help expand habitats for current populations of rare plants and animals. Fund the system via an expanded and revamped version of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Funds could also come from carbon mitigation markets if those get established. There is an urgent need to restore several more million-acre blocks of longleaf pine forest habitat in the southeastern coastal plain, and the Federal Government (and states) need to commit the funding to make it happen.

I am pro-hunting in general and I don't agree that hunting should be banned from all public lands. White-tailed deer are driving native plants to extinction in numerous small parks and protected areas, especially in suburban areas where predators are scant and hunters few. That said, I don't think National Wildlife Refuges should be managed as deer and duck farms, that is just as destructive to native biodiversity. I agree that grazing livestock on public lands needs a serious overhaul - the federal government should charge higher rates and use the money to monitor for over-stocking and overgrazing. Wild horses are already overpopulated and need active management, at least until it can be shown that native predators like wolves and mountain lions can control their populations (it might take african lions to do the job!). Otherwise I agree with most of your points.

I feel very strongly that the federal government needs to take back on a leadership role in protecting land, water, and wildlife. In fact, my top two priorities for federal spending would be 1. funding national and international family planning programs in order to stabilize human populations, and 2. buying large tracts of land (and large conservation easements from private landowners) to expand the base of natural habitats around the country. We need to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation fund, so that we can buy up (from willing sellers) crucial inholdings and linkages that exist in and around our national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges. The money should be targeted towards major ecosystem types that have been the most destroyed - longleaf pine in the southeast and tallgrass prairie in the midwest are two great examples. With a month's worth of DOD operating expenses in Iraq and Afghanistan (~\$15 billion, right?), we could protect and restore enough habitat to permanently remove hundreds of species from the Endangered Species list. This funding would also create an outstanding legacy of outdoor recreation space and cleaner drinking water for future generations to enjoy. Specifically, I would love to see the creation of several new million-acre longleaf pine forests in the southeast. We could put together the land base with purchases and easements, and then a revived Civilian Conservation Corps jobs program could take on the task of planting the trees and restoring the longleaf forests of old.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It would be great if we could expand one or more of the existing national forests in the southeast coastal plain to the point where the center of the forest could be restored to wildfire-maintained longleaf pine. I'm thinking of a wilderness pine savanna covering a couple hundred thousand acres or more - perfect for reintroducing red wolves, florida panther, and bison, all of which used to call this habitat home before it was destroyed. Even a million-acre addition of longleaf pine acreage would only represent less than 1% of the original range of this ecosystem. Instead of crisscrossing the core forest with dusty roads and tiny burn blocks, which is currently the standard management technique, the new wilderness could be road-free and let alone to burn as droughts and lightning dictate. Only at the margins would firebreaks be needed to keep the wildfires from spreading too far. Removing roads and planting trees and wiregrass would be great job-creation devices, suitable for the new CCC if we can bring that institution back online. Providing such a large roadless area of longleaf would also provide superb protection for endangered reptiles like indigo snakes, eastern diamondback rattlesnakes, southern hognose snakes, pine snakes, and gopher tortoises, all of which are severely impacted by road mortality. And you can only imagine the beautiful scenery that would be available to the public for extended hiking treks and horseback rides into the wilderness savanna. No one alive (old-timers correct me if I'm wrong!) has ever heard the breeze whispering through the tops of a million acres of mature longleaf pine, but if we think big it could happen in our lifetime.

Just returned from SE Utah last month. I'll gladly drive 2000 miles every year to immerse myself in this place of spectacular beauty! The Monticello BLM oversees more than 1.8 MILLION acres of some of the most scenic, fragile and culturally rich land in America (Canyonlands, Cedar Mesa, Grand Gulch, Comb Ridge) - and much of this land is designated as wilderness quality by the Utah BLM. However, 'wilderness quality lands' in Utah are caught between State and Federal politics because of the 2003 'No More Wilderness' policy. Repeal the 'No More Wilderness' policy that keeps Utah wilderness-quality lands in limbo. Wilderness designation could provide the additional level of oversight and funding needed to protect these fragile areas for generations to come.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The best available scientific information clearly indicates that top carnivores play essential roles in maintaining the health of native ecosystems. We've known this since Aldo Leopold wrote about it back in the 1950's, and recent analysis of the impacts of returning wolves in Yellowstone (and cougars in Zion) confirms that you just cannot expect to have high-quality nature preserves without the big predators. In the southeast, except for a small pocket of red wolves in eastern NC, and a small band of panthers in southern FL, we don't have much in the way of top predators anymore. The official US FWS recovery plans for both species call for restoration of an additional two populations each so that the wolves and panthers can be delisted. Now would be a great time to carry those reintroduction projects out. Otherwise, all of our efforts at protecting natural habitat in the southeast will continue to be ruined by the deleterious impacts of overabundant deer, raccoons, possums, and wild pigs. President Obama could set the process in motion with a quick memo to the relevant federal agencies, and this would provide a much-needed conservation success story for his administration. Likely candidate locations for top predator restoration would include Okefenokee NWR-Osceola NF, Ft. Stewart, Francis Marion NF, Croatan NF, Apalachicola NF, Great Smoky Mountains NP, Pisgah NF, Nantahala NF, Ozark NF, and Ouachita NF. The goal of the projects should be to establish large, interlinked populations of the predator species so that they can be delisted from the Endangered Species Act and carefully managed (like other wildlife) by the states.

Not only do private land owners have a vested financial interest in taking care of their land, they also pay taxes. Every time we add acres to our public holdings, we decrease the local tax base. And, it is apparant in MT that the government does not have the resources to properly manage the huge amounts of land they currently own.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Public Statement for “America’s Great Outdoors Initiative” Good morning, my name is Rosalyn LaPier. I am an enrolled member of the Blackfeet tribe. I came here today to offer my voice to the discussion regarding public land use in the United States. I come with a unique perspective and background. I grew up in a family that gathered plants on a seasonal basis for medicinal and edible purposes. Until this past year when my grandmother passed away at the age of 95, she oversaw our family’s efforts to gather and process plants. My grandmother was taught by her grandmother, Mary Spotted Bear, about the use of native plants. For the Blackfeet, plant knowledge was taught through the generations from woman to woman, usually from grandmother to granddaughter. Not only was the knowledge of gathering plants taught, but also how to process, preserve and prepare plants for future use. Archaeological evidence suggests that humans have lived on the northern Great Plains for at least 10,000 years. And that throughout that time humans have used the numerous rich natural resources found on the landscape. The Blackfeet used at least 200 different plants from a variety of habitats. The Blackfeet collected these plants all over what is now the State of Montana and the Province of Alberta. The Blackfeet went to specific places each season to gather and collect specific plants. Despite the stereotype that the Blackfeet “followed” the bison, the Blackfeet strategically traveled to certain places at certain times of the year specifically to gather plants or other natural resources and to also hunt animals. My family has gathered plants on the northern Great Plains and on what is now Montana for generations. I have spent my entire life helping my grandmother gather plants. It is something I continue to do (even after her passing) and that my family continues to do. However, I have found that we are an invisible presence on the land. Even though we continue to go to certain places to collect plants during certain times of the year, just as our ancestors did before us, no one recognizes that we have been there. This is in part because we do not harm the land or over-harvest it. Because of this we are often overlooked as a stakeholder in the discussion of public land use. And we are rarely, if ever, asked our opinion of issues related to public land use. Today, I would like to make you aware of a few of the challenges we face and the obligations that we believe the federal government has toward traditional cultural resource use. Challenges to traditional gatherers: 1) Each year it seems that there is more public land that is being leased for natural resource development, logging or for livestock use. Because of this there seem to be more roads, more ATV’s and more erosion on public lands. 2) Each year it seems that there are more pesticides and herbicides being used on public lands and that I have to ask where and when they are being used. We try to avoid places that are being sprayed but sometimes it is difficult, especially for older or elderly gatherers who cannot walk far from roads or far away from the car to gather plants. 3) Each year it seems that there are more noxious weeds on public lands. These seem to be near roads or development and they greatly impact the growth of native plant species. Sometimes it seems that we have to travel farther and into more remote places to avoid noxious weeds. 4) Each year it seems that there are more commercial harvesters on public lands. I have seen areas where commercial harvesters have over-harvested and have literally stripped a site of all natural resources, leaving nothing for either animals or other humans to share. 5) Finally, it seems that whenever there is a discussion of conversing land in Montana that it is said that the land needs to be restored to the way it was when Lewis and Clark arrived. People forget that when Lewis and Clark arrived there were numerous tribal groups in the region who had lived here for thousands of years and who

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

utilized the land. There seems to be a perception that “no one was using the land”, when in fact, people did use the land and continue to use the land every season and rely on that land for their health. America’s Great Outdoors Initiative should work toward: 1) Increasing and protecting access to traditional cultural resources on public lands for traditional gatherers. 2) Limiting development, the creation of roads, leasing for livestock use, and controlling erosion on public lands. 3) Limiting the use of pesticides and herbicides on public lands. 4) Restoring natural areas impacted by noxious weeds or erosion. 5) Protecting traditional cultural resources from over-harvesting by commercial harvesters. 6) Ending using the language of “restoring the land to they way it was when Lewis and Clark arrived” as if no one was here and no one was utilizing its natural resources. 7) Asking if traditional gatherers use public lands before allowing projects or leasing to occur. 8) Promoting the perpetual use of traditional cultural resources on public lands by traditional gatherers. For years my grandmother helped people on the reservation by providing medicinal plants for their illnesses and for their health. On Memorial Day I was on the Blackfeet reservation decorating graves. While there an elder (who is a veteran) came up to me and asked that now that my grandmother was gone, if I could make some medicine for him. Gathering and using plants has been a vital part of my life and the life of my family for many generations. We collect plants in a wide range of habitats – both on the reservation and off the reservation and both on private and public lands. I hope that I can continue this practice and so can the rest of my family. However, unlike commercial harvesters, we do not gather plants to sell them, we use them for our own family use and also for members of the community. I hope that my public statement will provide some awareness of how these issues impact individuals, like that tribal elder. Although this man does not gather the plants himself, he relies on others so that he can continue to live a healthy life. Ultimately though, he relies on the federal government to provide protection of public lands so that he can continue to benefit from that land. Just as his ancestors did for thousands of years. Even though our presence on the landscape is invisible I hope that my voice is heard today. Thank you for your time.

I suggest that we cut timber again in California. Our roads are in serious deterioration due to the lack of harvest. The dollars generated from timber sale receipts allowed maintenance and repairs in the past. Current road conditions are rapidly approaching dangerous due to the neglect caused by environmentalists stranglehold and control of our national forests. I did a 100 mile paved road stretch yesterday and found horrendous conditions: potholes, root surfacing, line of sight restricted by overgrowth, slumping and general road maintained ignored. At the core of this situation is the Endangered Species Act. The endangered species act should be repealed and modified. It has been used to stop actions rather than to improve habitats. Habitats of our NF's are deteriorating with many lost to wildfire. Let's not continue to allow the minority voice direct actions for us all.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increase or remove limits on charitable tax deductions towards conservation easements targeting highly degraded or fragmented landscapes, endangered ecosystems, or threatened or endangered species; as determined by the Secretary of the Interior. Across the country, our primary conservation challenges are habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, which all contribute to loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Conservation easements are an invaluable tool for addressing conservation challenges on Private Lands. The DIO has already identified the ecosystems and species that are threatened or endangered within our country and encouraging conservation easements to target these Private Lands challenges is an excellent form of support from the Federal Government. A Task Force should be created to identify these priority areas. Charitable tax donations to organizations purchasing conservation easements within the priority areas should not be limited or the limits should reflect the level of priority the DOI believes is necessary to achieve it's Private Lands conservation goals.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Today life is filled with noise, distractions and stress; all leading to reoccurring health problems. People have forgotten how to "detoxify" their life by living within their means, conserving and most importantly reconnecting to nature and outdoor recreation. As life gets more complicated, it becomes absolutely important to protect our remaining wilderness through the Omnibus Land package (H.R. 146) for generations today and in the future. If "lasting effects" is what President Obama is seeking, then passage of the Omnibus bill is the way to go first; this is what would work!!! It's the concrete foundation needed to administer the President's declaration of creating strategies and programs to reconnect people to our earth! As a representative and future educator (currently an education student at New Mexico State University) of the newly organizing "Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness," I am in support of proposed bill S.1689 which would protect our sacred Organ Mountains and surrounding desert wilderness areas. Our groups goals and mission are to reach our community about the importance of protecting our wilderness through education, awareness, advocacy and youth wilderness or nature programs. Our biggest challenges are creating knowledge, understanding, and support in the community. But it's the Understanding that's important to get across; that the effect of protection is great!!! Continued Life!!! As you can tell, My love is Nature, the Great Outdoors; the master works of God. I enjoy taking my family hiking and exploring into the Organ Mountains and surrounding areas every Spring and Fall and times in between for tranquility and harmony with the lands of my ancestors. My Apache (and Special Forces) father gave me a love of the wild-lands and what the lands can teach us by studying it. Exploring the lands of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness and seeing its beauty gives me a longing to deepen the roots of my Apache heritage and needing to share it with my children and future students. I'm a new grandmother and I want the opportunity to be able to share with my grandson the legacy of beauty, wildlife and history of our lands & wilderness; the same that my father shared with me. Many people come to our southwestern lands (Las Cruces & Dona Ana) because of the beauty and tranquil air it brings. If our remaining wilderness is left open for developments, etc.; Where shall our future generation go? Will they walk the sands of a beauty forgotten as the Sahara? Our natural beauty will no longer be, and we will no longer have the attraction and breath-taking valley of green. When the air is no more, our Mountains and indigenous wildlife will die. We need to protect as much of the wild as possible for future generations. If our remaining Wilderness is left unprotected, what is affected is our ecological systems that sustain us and give us life. Our wilderness carries many values. There is a high diversity of plant and animal life as well as a diversity of geographical lands and rock formations. It carries historic values of prehistoric markings and cave dwellings; footprints of our past. So Not only does our wilderness preserve our very Life, Protection of our remaining wilderness aides in physical, emotional and mental well-being as well as aiding in our children's educational studies; giving us our future generation geologists, doctors, environmentalist or physicists and allows them to dream of possibilities for a better future. It is imperative that we protect our remaining wilderness, such as our Organ Mountains and surrounding desert areas (Bill S.1689) through the passage of the Omnibus Land package (H.R. 146) so that our future generations may have continued life and continue to enjoy the Great Outdoors!!! Thank you very Much

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

People are twice as likely to be killed by a stranger with a car than a stranger with a gun. In urban areas that boomed after the automobile became the primary transportation mode, low income areas also lack sidewalks and safe street crossings. Federal transportation dollars should be made more available for projects that facilitate short trips on foot.

The federal government also needs to provide more transportation funding for sidewalks so people can get to local parks.

Regarding the 3rd and 4th paragraphs, government enforcement agencies must be sure to focus as much or more on unseen environmental harms -- ie depletion and degradation of groundwater resources and subterranean and atmospheric pollution.

Please consider the creation of a Buffalo Commons National Park in western Kansas. "Kansas defines the American prairie, the world's most endangered ecosystem. the prairie is also environmentally important. It both hosts a wide range of plants and animals." Kansas City Star A visit to the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in Kansas gives you just a glimpse of what the prairie once was. Kansas farmland can be turned back into its natural state. It is the last chance for the survival of not only the land but of the communities of western Kansas.

Here in Hawaii we have a very successful program called the Hawaii Association of Watershed Partnerships (www.hawp.org). Local, state and federal landowners sign a memorandum of understanding to protect the forested lands that are the source of our water. This means providing habitat for rare and listed species, managing invasive plants and animals and providing educational stewardship opportunities for local residents in the watershed lands. The best part is that conservation happens across ownership boundaries, and the newest partnerships are forming with the idea of the Hawaiian ahupuaa in mind - meaning that conservation happens in the ENTIRE watershed, not just parts of it - from the mountains to the sea - because what happens upland will affect the lowlands. Look to watershed partnerships as a successful cooperative agreement between all types of landowners, private and public, and that are supported by all levels of government and private granting organizations and as a way to include local residents in the everyday tasks that are necessary for successful conservation.

Any plan that does not give as much control as possible to the real people, "on the ground", who are living there (within an area reasonably described as local)--is just another special interest agenda getting played out; some of which are good--some are not. The real priorities for rural or urban communities is to recognize that their best interests are served by becoming sustainable. (Sustainable living is visibly discernible from non-sustainable attempts to get ahead in life, damn the consequences.) Moving 350 million acre feet into the desert does not sound sustainable. Lets just be sure all pertinent information about every proposal is wholly and accurately depicted and thoroughly disseminated to everyone whose lifestyle or livelihood may be affected. (Thank goodness we live in the information age. This would not have been so possible 5 or ten years ago, but it is now, even in rural areas) Let it suffice to say that every federally produced improvement program should be implemented by and for, (and be somewhat self-regulated by), the people who have the most "priority" vested in the outcome, because it affects them locally.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Good information is key--even if it is debatable. Sustainability is becoming more and more prescient all over the world--but it is hotly contested--for anyone who gets in the way of big money is automatically labeled a radical fanatic and an enemy of capitalism; even if they are only pointing out obvious flaws with how things are done and suggesting alternatives. A national conservation effort would need good consistent signage, with science that stands on its own and advocates with enough capital to stand up to all the special interest money that will flood in to dispute, defame or obscure that good science. It would be nice if the USDA or other Govt. organizations who serve the interests of average Americans could be funded as well as the charlatans on Wall street. Imagine a \$500 billion project to disperse and defend accurate information!

Lets: Give communities the tools they need to reclaim power over the surrounding landscape, particularly where water or mineral rights are concerned. Support Organic Farm science and promote rural regeneration by aiding new and transitioning farmers to supply healthy food and jobs to communities. Give incentive to young, (-45) skilled and educated applicants to relocate and function as entrepreneurs and consumers of diverse service and goods in rural communities. Re-test aquifers and publish an official US water report. Call out Polluters; be clear about the spirit and letter of the law, and let good science and public conscience serve as judge. Be sure culpable entities pay for clean-up and submit to regulation. Protect peoples' right to choice and increase their access to fair and accurate information. Eliminate the power of misinformation campaigns regarding harmful products, by-products, and practices. Allow consumers the right to examine and compare true and full costs to decide what stays, what changes, and what goes.

There is so much more to communities: Shelter, safety, and good nutrition (which can and should be abundant) Education for children, work for grown-ups Goods and services that are easily available and equitably distributed with minimal violence Health care and information providers Areas to recreate in and out of doors and enough time to enjoy it These are the priorities for communities; any other initiatives labeled as "sustainable, community ..." have to be able to reflect the attitudes and preferences of actual communities of real people. Any plan that does not give as much control as possible to the real people, "on the ground", who are living there (within an area reasonably described as local)--is just another special interest agenda getting played out; some of which are good--some are not. I am not inferring anything about this or any other idea submitted here I am just clarifying what the real priorities are for rural or urban communities, whose best interests are served by becoming sustainable. (Sustainable living is visibly discernible from non-sustainable attempts to get ahead in life, damn the consequences.) The only way to do this is be sure all pertinent information is wholly and accurately depicted and thoroughly disseminated to everyone whose lifestyle or livelihood may be affected. (Thank goodness we live in the information age. This would not have been possible 5 or ten years ago, but it is now, even in rural areas) Let it suffice to say that every federally produced improvement program should be implemented by and for, (and be somewhat self-regulated by), the people who have the most "priority" vested in the outcome, because it affects them locally.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

FS to promote an email list to give out current information on proposed projects in the idea stage, allow public to participate in the ID team meetings. By the time a project gets to the public comment stage it is way to late. FS should have round table discussions and work groups with conflicting user groups so we get to know each other. After all the local community usually has ownership in what is going on in their back yard. When the logging was shut down the forestry companies were to get restoration work. However, those in the rural community did not get those jobs because the county they lived in did not qualify for HUB zone jobs. Federal Gov. is too slow to correct this. It has been 15 yrs since the Forest Plan came out and no work in out own back yard. So where is the local rural community support?

The positive side of our economy is that people return to places where memories were once created, places that are familiar, places that are affordable, and places that offer true intrinsic benefits that are not tied to anything that is man-made, material-oriented, and/or technologically 'advanced'. I believe that all federal agencies that manage public land need to review their mission and values, develop clear goals and objectives for future management and then be given the resources to be able to implement management strategies that will protect our lands while allowing access to the land. We need more professional federal (non contracted) staff to enforce laws, implement interpretive programs, oversee use, limit use (many of our parks allow WAY too many visitors in a given time frame) and manage land systems. Further (random), commercial concessionaire agreements need to be terminated; professional federal staff should be managing gift shops (with original, local and US made gifts), lodges, and everything commercial in parks, forests, and other federally 'owned' lands. I'd like to see partnerships for land conservation and preservation however would appreciate close monitoring for there affectiveness. I feel too much money is given to non-profits and it is then poorly managed. Several NP's do amazing things but there are some bad apples out there. More money for parks, recreation and open space, period - however that money needs to be managed from within by creating more jobs to protect and educate the public.

And neither of you have been to a state park or forest. Contained in the Rocky Mountain West are vast areas of "PUBLIC" land managed by the states. As a rule the state is more responsive to environmental problems. Currently the radical enviromentalist has stopped all efforts to slow the spread of Mountain Pine Beetle on National Forest land. The BLM and the State of Montana are light years ahead of the FS in managing their lands. When I commented on the Forest Service Planning NOI, I took it one step further and suggested that the county level is where land management decisions should be made. Unless you have stood in the middle of 1.6 million acres of red, dead beetle killed forest (I have)you can't understand the need to take land management away from Washington and give it to the people that have to live next to these lands.

Grazing on federal lands is a great deal for the cattle ranchers but a disater for our wilderness areas. It's misuse of public lands, it polutes streams AT THEIR SOURCE, causes erroision, breeds flying insects and insect borne diseases and makes for a very unpleasant experience for those of us who like to explore the great wilderness areas in our country. Proper, responsible management of these lands should not include grazing in any form.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I don't disagree with hunting and fishing; but we don't need to be hunting and fishing everywhere. I'd prefer to see isolated parcels remain isolated.

I'm in favor of designating additional wilderness areas, and I promoted this idea. However, it is the same as the one submitted by ____ on May 7. This website has an abundance of duplications.

Our kids' shortcomings at outdoor play and natural history awareness are becoming well recognized and are reflected by many AGO ideas about these subjects. It's a good bet that our government is listening.

Several years ago, the late Dale F. Lott, a Professor Emeritus of Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology at the U. of Cal, Davis, wrote a book entitled "American Bison, A Natural History". His concluding chapter in this book was called "A Great Plains Park". Professor Lott suggested that such a park be at least 5,000 square miles in size and include both upland and river bottom habitat. He suggested a location in northeastern Montana, directly across from the two units of Saskatchewan's Grasslands National Park. This still seems like a good place to me; but I'd also like to see additional park units be located in the central states, like Thomas Gould comments above.

The BLM should be run by people who are motivated to protect, restore and connect their land's diverse ecosystems.

To all: It would be great to have a Buffalo Commons National Park in western Kansas. Those of you who are residents of that region should contact your local politicians regarding it. Please also be sure to "promote" this idea and the other ideas in this website that are closely related to it, like the "Great Plains National Park" and "Tallgrass Prairie Conservation". With your determined efforts, we can make this happen.

Very well said, Kristen. I agree with you completely. It could be argued that our President's personal background leads him to think of the environment as a balance between economics and social justice, more so than as an issue of Nature for Nature's sake (ex. endangered species). Our Secretary of Interior has a ranching background that may make him sympathetic to protecting the outdoors from harsher forms of resource extraction (ex. mining). However, ranchers are not always sympathetic to wildlife and wilderness. Clearly, we are much better off, administratively, than we were two years ago; so I don't want to be critical. Still, as a country, we can and should do much better than we currently do at protecting our natural heritage.

Your idea provides a good summary of the kinds of actions that are needed to address this serious problem. This issue is part of the Federal Biodiversity Protection idea that I suggested a few days ago. Because exotics exist across state lines, federal coordination makes lots of sense. Thanks a lot!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Limited access to federal public land often has frustrated and disappointed hunters, anglers, and other naturalists and undermined the relationship between land owners and the general public. Some landowners are reluctant to provide access across their land to isolated parcels of federal public land through agreements with the federal government because those agreements invariably require perpetual access. State and tribal governments frequently secure access on or across private land through short-term agreements, contracts, leases or easements, and are not required in all cases to secure only perpetual access arrangements with private landowners. The Recreational Trails Program provides funds to the states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The authorized funding level for the program for FY 2009 under SAFETEA-LU is \$85 million. Establish a voluntary federal public-land-access (Open Trails) program under which States and tribal governments may apply for federal grants to encourage owners and operators of privately-held land to voluntarily make a portion of that land available for access by the public to federal public lands for non-commercial wildlife-dependent recreation that shall include but is not limited to non-commercial hunting and or fishing, under programs administered by the States and tribal governments. Current law provides funding for the development and maintenance of trails that are used by anglers, hunters, wildlife viewers, and hikers annually. However, millions of acres of Federal public land remain either inaccessible or severely limited in public access opportunities. I believe the Recreational Trails Program should be strengthened by opening trails to sportsmen to address these needs in the following ways: Open Trails • Establish a voluntary Federal “Open Trails Access Program” under which states, tribal governments, and conservation organizations may apply for grants to encourage owners and operators of privately-held land to voluntarily open trails for access by the public to Federal public lands that is either inaccessible or severely limited in public access opportunities for non-commercial wildlife-dependent recreation that includes hunting and or fishing under programs administered by a Federal agency, state, tribal government, or conservation organization. • The Recreation Trails Program (within the Federal Surface Transportation Bill, SAFETEA-LU) in general, and the “Open Trails Access Program” more specifically, should allow states, tribal governments, and conservation organizations to enter into property leases to open trails to enhance non-commercial public access to isolated parcels of Federal public lands. • I propose that the Federal agency responsible for administering the “Open Trails Access Program”, should give priority to those applications that propose to: o maximize participation by offering a program the terms of which are likely to meet with widespread acceptance among private landowners; o ensure that private land enrolled under the Federal, state, tribal government, or conservation organization program provides open trails access to Federal public land that supports fish and/or wildlife populations and that provides or can be made to provide regulated, non-commercial hunting and fishing opportunities to the public; o ensure that any access secured across private land (road, trail, etc.) through the program is maintained at a standard necessary to protect adjacent private and public property and public safety; o strengthen wildlife and fish habitat improvement efforts on Federal public land accessed by the program; and o use additional Federal, state, tribal government, or private resources in carrying out the program. • The Transportation Bill should establish that the use of funding through the existing Recreation Trails Program generally, and the “Open Trails Access Program” more specifically, will allow Federal agencies, states, tribal governments, and

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

conservation organizations to enter into property leases to enhance non-commercial public access through open trails to isolated parcels of Federal public lands as a permissible use of funding. • I believe \$110 million should be dedicated annually to the Recreational Trails Program of which a minimum of \$20 million will be allocated to the "Open Trails Access Program" in order to begin implementing the program with Federal, state, tribal, conservation organizations, and landowner partners.

Many parks never completed the acquisition of lands authorized in their enabling public law. Using funds from existing land leases and fees fully fund the acquisition of these critical resources. For example Ocmulgee National Monument in Georgia was authorized at over 2000 ac in the 1930s at a time when the local citizens were required to pay for the land. As a result, many important natural and cultural resources remain on private lands that in some cases were destroyed by development including an entire Woodland village (Swift Creek). It would a wonderful time to save the remaining unspoiled cultural and natural landscape. This would provide protection and recreational opportunities for an entire region. In addition to the cultural resources it can provide a haven for the 3rd large black bear population in the southeast and as well as protection for many bald eagle nest sites.

The nation's outdoor interests are growing increasingly competitive. On one side there are those who would like to protect and preserve things as if no human had ever set foot there. On the other, there are those who would like to travel some of the vast open spaces on an ATV. Somewhere in the middle is the correct solution. I propose the federal government recognize that our public lands have many uses and interests. In an effort to reduce the "I win, you lose" mentality of modern politics, the government should not consider setting aside any new wilderness without setting aside an equal amount of dedicated OHV area within a reasonable proximity.

President Obama has said that he is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple-use groups have been invited to meet with his representatives. The initial plan has been scripted by a small segment of special interest groups seeking to limit access to our public lands. President Obama needs to include the three largest forms of recreation; off highway vehicle recreation, mountain biking & horseback riding. By excluding millions of Americans from having any participation in his plan, President Obama is declaring that it is acceptable to ignore those elements that he finds objectionable. Additional lands need to be made available to these groups to recreate.

So much public lands are managed by the government. I would like to see a government role to enhance and add to outdoor, active recreation, and figure out ways that we can enjoy the outdoors. Provide education to protect the outdoors. Provide education how people can learn to share the outdoors rather than shut other users out.

What does this land need to be preserved from? If the government acquires private property, will the government need to provide reservations, like those of Native Americans, when you remove the people from the land?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Your steps 1 and 2 are very consistant with a communist country. Poor idea

I'm not in favor of the "government" grabbing more from us if he...I mean they, can't deal with what currently needs attention at the nations parks and monuments.

Western Kansas would be a perfect location for a Great Plains National Park. It has been stated that less than 4% of the prairies, tallgrass, mixed grasses and short grasses is left. Due to the federal government owning less than 1.2% of Kansas, we receive very little help for land development compared to states such as Nevada where the governmnet owns 84% of the state. Kansas is known for it's prairie and historic image and it would be a shame not to protect and preserve it for future generations. Presently the endangered ecosystem of the prairie could be sustained with bison, plant and wildlife. This could be a wonderful way to pay respect and remember how the pioneers, early settlers, farmers and ranchers lived and paved a way for us.

The Pebble Gold Mine is proposed for Bristol Bay, Alaska. It would be the worlds largest gold and copper mine in the world. It would destroy the worlds largest and most productive salmon fishing grounds in the world and forever polute all the surrounding fresh lakes. The massive open-pit, hard-rock mine known as the Pebble Project calls for the creation of 10 square miles of "lakes" to contain an estimated 2 billion to 3 billion tons of contaminated mine waste at the head of salmon spawning streams. Opponents warn that a single earthquake in this seismically active region could release a poisonous stew that would take generations to clean up. "It's a region with huge, off-the-charts biological value," says Tim Bristol, Trout Unlimited's Alaska program director, noting that nearby Katmai National Park has the world's highest concentration of brown bears. Audubon Alaska has identified four large Important Bird Areas at the head of the bay that are major migratory waterfowl flyways for the Steller's eider and other federally threatened species. Plus, the watershed accounts for a third of all salmon caught in Alaska; its sport and commercial fisheries together earn about \$350 million a year.

Use OHV funds to restore backcountry wilderness. These people need something motorized and vibrating to sit on, can do it at home.

At the cabinet level, the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior and the appropriate undersecretaries should use the America's Great Outdoors Initiative as a launching pad for an interagency effort to develop a long-term strategy for public land management. The natural landscape does not recognize jurisdictions or agency boundaries, so it's important to plan for the future in a coordinated way. A vision for our public lands would be an important tool that our organizations could organize around and find our place in. It could give appropriators in the House and Senate the confidence that when they fund programs, they'll be doing so in a way consistent with agency priorities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While volunteers can shoulder important projects, it's incumbent upon the federal government to set priorities, balance competing interests and adequately staff their agencies. Without a clear vision for what needs to be accomplished on our most treasured landscapes, we run the risk of attacking the many problems we face piecemeal. That's why the America's Great Outdoors Initiative is so important. It could create the framework for managing public lands for decades to come, providing predictability and government impetus to move us forward. But it won't succeed without stable and predictable funding. We need a six-year transportation budget re-authorization that includes funding for the National Recreation Trails Program (N RTP). The FLAME Act has to be authorized for at least a decade with funding attached so that recreation funds are not raided to fight increasing catastrophic wildfires. And, federal appropriators need a consistent vision that they can plan funding around.

National Forest and National Parks have lost control of many camping areas to concessionaires. These controlling parties have not served us campers well. Fees have gone wild with no upkeep. Those of us with Access Passes are not getting the discounts we are counting on as we did in the past. Gates are locked, fees are up, and something needs to be done.

- Climate change is the largest threat our fish and wildlife have ever faced. Temperature increases, altered precipitation patterns, and declining water supplies in the Western U.S. are already adversely impacting many fish and game species sportsmen cherish. Bird migrations are becoming more unpredictable, numbers of caribou, moose, and bighorn sheep are dwindling in some regions and fish kills resulting from rising water temperatures are becoming more common. The Fish and Wildlife Service said, "the warming of the earth could potentially have more far reaching impacts on wildlife and habitat than any challenge that has come before us."
- The only way to stave off this crisis is to dramatically alter the way we think of land and wildlife conservation; we must focus on building resilience into ecosystems to help them adapt to a warming world. The Treasured Landscape initiative should be structured specifically to address the challenges of climate change, and should include as a major strategy protection of crucial areas of habitat and connective migration corridors.
- Public lands in Montana are going to be critical in maintaining viable populations of game and non-game species and in providing high-quality public hunting and fishing opportunities for the public. Their management can be directed towards climate change amelioration by federal authority. All relevant land management operating units within Department of Interior must have explicit mandates to manage their lands for both present and future climate impacts, and all decisions should be based on sound science.
- The Department of Interior is responsible for the majority of our country's federal lands. The National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Fish and Wildlife Service collectively manage about one fifth of the land area - some 507 million acres - in the United States. The Great Outdoors Initiative should begin by ensuring that all 507 million of these acres are managed for climate change.
- The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, in addition to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, should receive dedicated funding to implement natural resource measures and strategies adaptive to climate change.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Civil War changed us from The United States are to The United States is. it made us an united country. the Federal Govt should appropriate funds for Battle Field preservation and preserve as much of this Hallowed Ground as possible. Do not allow it to be lost forever. Bill Yankowsky

Our country is fortunate that we still have some lands of wilderness quality that are not now protected. We should protect these lands while they are still undeveloped.

create more marine reserves (no-take areas) in coastal areas, science shows these are effective in restore fish populations. I fish and see populations declining, catch is down and size of fish caught are down. Reserves work and the feds and states need to work together to create reserves

Establish a Great Plains National Park. When you look at the park system this is one of the major ecosystems that is not well represented in the system. The park needs large enough to allow the plains species (bison, wolves, grizzly bears) to be returned to the plains.

The first thing I respectfully ask Secretary salazar to do is to direct additional law enforcement resources to Region 2 for use in this investigation

Second, I ask him to request the cooperation and assistance of all federal agencies-and in particular, the Federal Bureau of Investigation-in the apprehension and prosecution of these egregious violators of the Endangered Species Act. Allowing this situation to continue seriously undermines federal authority and jeopardizes the very existence of the Mexican gray wolf.

Expedite the Environmental Assessment (EA) on direct releases into New Mexico to allow more releases in 2011. Right now, Mexican wolves can only be released into Arizona directly from captivity. The Fish and Wildlife Service should move forward quickly with an EA to allow wolves to be released from captivity directly into New Mexico as well.

Request Mexican Gray Wolf SpeCies Survival Plan cooperation in preparing more wolves for release in 2011. The USFWS and the SSP captive breeding facilities must prepare now to release additional wolves in 2011 to help offset the disastrous effects of recent illegal killings.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Bureau of Land Management is mis-managing our public lands to death and costing hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars in the process. They aren't supposed to be the Bureau of Livestock and Mining but that is what they are doing. Organic grass fed beef produced by family ranchers is a good thing but that is not what is going on. Less than 3% of US beef is produced on the range. Large corporations like Hilton and millionaires like Ted Turner own most of the grazing rights. The grazing program loses hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The price charged to graze on public land is decades old as is price charged for mining and drilling. Our public lands are being eaten and drilled/mined to death and we aren't even making any money on it. The Bureau of Land Management spends millions of dollars needlessly rounding up wild horses and holding them in pens in the Midwest and killing animals across the West. They pay to have coyotes, wolves, cougars, bobcats, foxes, badgers, prairie dogs, raccoons and other wildlife trapped and poisoned because it might cause harm to a cow or sheep. The BLM just killed a bunch of wild horses in Nevada removing them from the land that British Petroleum (BP) wants to put the Ruby Pipeline through. They ran them in the heat for over twenty miles with a helicopter and over a dozen dropped dead of exhaustion and dehydration. They killed over 200 last winter in the Calico round up. They are in violation of the Free Roaming Wild Horse and Burro Act and they are also acting with extreme cruelty. Water holes are being fenced off so they can say the horses are dehydrated and must be removed for their health. Horses do not have the same negative impact on the ecosystem that cattle do. There are also less than 30,000 in the entire West compared to close to 10 million cows and sheep. The numbers speak for themselves and there is no documentation that horses are causing any damage and they are very healthy animals. Horses actually evolved in North America and spread to Asia and Europe via the same land bridge people came here over. Unfortunately, their temperaments that made them so easy to domesticate in Asia led to them being easily killed and eaten in North America. Eaten to extinction. Hundreds of horse bones have been found here with spear and club marks on them and cliffs have been found with thousands of horse bones below where they were stampeded off and then cut up. The Conquistadors were actually returning the horse to North America, not introducing an invasive species. Many mustang herds in the West have been DNA typed to prove they are of Spanish descent. They are gorgeous, healthy horses and when adopted become extremely hardy, healthy, trainable riding horses yet the BLM would have everyone believe they are jug headed, skinny and worthless. That they are pests and have no value. We should be promoting our mustangs to the world rather than rounding them up. Land areas set aside by Congress in 1971 specifically for horses have now been reduced by more than half. There are less than 200 wild horses left in all of Montana yet the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Refuge continues to be emptied. Even Cloud, the wild stallion made famous by three PBS Nature series documentaries is rounded up every year and members of his family taken away. If such a beloved mustang isn't safe, no mustang is safe.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Your proposal confuses and conflates too many issues. Yes the grazing program gives away too much for too little, and damages the environment. And while wild horses and burros may not cause exactly the same problems as domestic livestock, they are nevertheless having a negative impact on public lands. The BLM wild horse policy IS a disaster, because it spends a lot of money for a very debatable purpose: treating horses and burros as wildlife deserving of protection when in fact: 1) many of these animals (burros especially) are feral, not wild. 2) if we do classify them as wild, they have overpopulated their habitat, just like deer, in many areas, and need to have their numbers managed HUMANELY. I agree that the federal land agencies must stop causing these animals to suffer, starve, die of thirst. We need to change the policy to allow the BLM & other managers to control equine populations humanely, rather than adhering to a sentimental idea about horses which ties the land managers' hands, and leads to the use of cruel techniques like stampedes and roundups. Sorry I have to demote your idea, even though I COMPLETELY AGREE that livestock grazing and timber production policies and mining law are all badly in need of reform.

I agree that BLM is not adhering to either the rules or public opinion. They are way out of line in many areas and need an overhaul and perhaps investigation into exactly who is supporting all the grazing of public lands that is practically 'free', and why! Not only are wild horses suffering but also the endangered desert tortoise. The cows are eating all the wildflowers these tortoise need to survive when they emerge from hibernation in the spring. Something is wrong with BLM and they need to be investigated!!

I also agree that BLM needs to be investigated & completely overhauled. We definitely should not be subsidizing mega-corporate ranching & farming & allowing them to abuse our wildlands. I am not sure about how the treatment of wild horses should be handled, but it needs to be one of the things addressed in the investigation & overhaul so very needed! So I am voting YES on your idea.

The BLM is in the pocket of corporate ranching and farming. They are a disgrace and need to be overhauled. You have my vote.

Agreed. Eohippus was native to North America. If you compare the numbers cited by Ms. Goen, 30,000 wild horses compared to 10 million cattle and sheep is a minority indeed. The BLM definitely need an overhaul, and most Americans agree that wild horses need to be protected. (How many movies are there about Moo, the Wild Bull of the West? I haven't seen any.) You have my vote too. Well said, Ms. Goen.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In 1971 Congress set aside approx 50 million acres as wild horse sanctuaries. Today, there are horses on about half. Wild horses are not starving anywhere, there are not too many of them anywhere. 200 in the entire state of Montana? Look on a map, Montana is huge and just happened to have an anti-wild horse senator, Conrad Burns for years. The Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Refuge contains one of the most documented wild horse herds in the country and there are books, videos, photos and three documentaries available for anyone to see that the refuge is almost empty of horses and in excellent health. The BLM's says there can be 2600 horses in the herd management areas in Oregon alone but there are 2300 horses again, according to the BLM and yet they rounded up 120 two weeks ago with some deaths. This was reported in the Oregonian newspaper recently sourced directly from the BLM. Why did they round up those horses at all let alone in the July heat? No wild horse groups or observers agree with the BLM's tally of wild horses, they all insist there are far less. Actually, ten million cattle and sheep is very conservative, I read yesterday there are 15 million cattle alone but I of course, have not counted the cows. Not just Eohippus was native here, Equus was here until ten thousand years ago and all the evolutionary steps in between the two were here in the preceding years as well. Equus spread from here to Asia and Europe. At the very least the BLM needs to stop rounding up horses and shipping them off to corrals in the Mid West. 35,000 horses in pens, it is ridiculous, costly (millions annually) and cruel. With no valid plan to solve the problem and American's have demonstrated very clearly that slaughtering them all isn't valid, round ups need to stop. Now.

I realize I didn't finish a comment: The Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Refuge is almost empty of horses and in excellent health and could support many more as it used to. Cattle are not grazed there BTW, it is too rugged. The horses were removed for political gain and nothing more. I urge you to watch the Nature specials available on PBS.org on Cloud and his herd. There are three and they are spectacular.

It should be obvious to everyone by now that republicans no longer care about the environment or our wildlife. While republicans of the past have done marvelous things with an eye to conservation that is no longer true and it seems most, if not all, republicans would just as soon see our forests and wildlife disappear altogether. If it were up to republicans we would sell our national parks off to logging, mining and oil companies and would sell hunting licenses for endangered species. If they are not voting down bills for climate change or holding up legislation for oil drilling safety they are trying to promote mountain top removal mining, logging in pristine, old growth forests and getting rid of the ESA. Bush underfunded our parks for years, opened some up to mining, logging and drilling and closed dozens if not hundreds of wildlife refuges. He and his cronies tried their best to get rid of the ESA, the roadless act and many more environmental laws, now the holdovers in congress and the senate have taken up right behind him. If you are someone who loves and respects nature, has a fondness for wildlife and would like to see both around for your children and grandchildren to enjoy get out this November and vote for the representative that will do his best to preserve and protect what little is left of our forests and wildlife.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think this is just the forum to bring this to light. The policies under Bush, Cheney and the republican lead senate and congress did more damage to our forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and overall environment than all other factors combined. It is imperative that we get representatives that will protect what wild lands are left or there will be no places left to connect to.

I don't know how this turned into a political agenda but I agree that things need to change back to taking care of the Environment. Since the Republicans are the ones that screwed it up then I think the Democrats need to be given a chance to fix it. The President cannot fix all the problems we have in 18 months, it took longer than that to cause them. I think President Obama is doing the best he can under the mess he took on, and I truly believe he cares about this Country. We need to get past Racism and Bigotry that has taken over this Country, we are just showing the World our BAD side. Let's stop all the HATE and give President Obama a chance, if it doesn't work than there is always the next election, that's the way America works best.

Agree with #10, but partly in hopes that the GOP can return to its old strengths, one of which was conservation.

1) Restore lobo the federal protection that Interior Secretary Salazar removed as one of his first implementations. 2) Use volunteers to remove & prevent invasive species from getting a toe hold. A stitch in time saves 9. 3) Eliminate ORV/ATV from the majority of wild spaces. Noisy, polluting, degrading of the eco system. There is NO place for them in wild places. They must be confined to restricted areas of private operations or designated areas. They also introduce invasives on their tires. 4) Encourage folks to pick up one piece of litter. After all these lands are the face of our nation. Cigarette butts do not belong here. Or anywhere actually. 5) Enforce quiet in the campgrounds. No music or radios etc. without headphones. The wilderness experience should not include the media without headphones. 6) Keep it dark. That we may see the Milky Way once in a while. 7) The National Parks are in disrepair. I saw sewage running from the bathrooms, thru the parking lot, into the earth, in Sequoia National Park. Fund our national jewels appropriately. 8) Pursue poaching avidly. 9) Promote catch & release programs in fishing. 10) Promote quiet sports such as bird watching & identification. 11) Protect the bio crust by insisting people remain on the trail. I saw German tourists running all over off of the trails in Arches National Park. 12) Encourage loud mouths to tone it down & listen. We are not in the city anylonger. 13) Prominent recycle bins which can be removed upon bear sitings. 14) No food or cosmetic products such as toothpaste in camping tents. Bears have enough trouble keeping away from humans without scent enticements. 15) No feeding of the wildlife. Keep 'em WILD! 16) QUIET!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree that Federal Land Management Agencies routinely exceed their Congressional authorities. However, I doubt that requiring managers to read the legislation will fix the problem. Here are a couple of suggestions: Just as the MMS is "too cozy" with Big Oil, the FS and BLM are far too cozy with wealthy, influential conservation organizations. Effectively, this relationship has resulted in top-down, "one size fits all" policies that reflect the agendas of a few wealthy special interests. The AGO initiative is a prime example. All Federal Agencies need to have an "arm's length" relationship with wealthy Beltway special interest groups, and should be required to do so. Revise the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJE). The original intent of this Act was to provide a means for individuals who cannot afford lawsuits to redress their legitimate grievances against Federal Agencies. Exceedingly wealthy conservation organizations should not qualify. Organizations like the Wilderness Society and Sierra Club have more money than God and their frequent lawsuits should not be supported by public funds. Doing so simply invites more lawsuits. Revise the Appeals process for USDA and DOI. Currently, the Appeals process for these Agencies is dysfunctional. Appeals are virtually never granted or upheld, and individuals and organizations only appeal in order to preserve their opportunities for litigation. Establish an independent, non-partisan Appeals Board composed of real experts in environmental law.

Update and strengthen the technical guidance for preserving cultural heritage. Create market research that identifies the top ten issues that property owners and contractors have regarding work on historic properties and create best practices documents. Think outside the Sec. 106 box to actual tools needed to implement the Secretary's standards. Get more specific.

One of the most critical things the Administration can do to protect and enhance wildlife in national parks across the country is to restore the landscapes and watersheds surrounding the parks. Restoration efforts underway in the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Everglades, Columbia River Basin, and other major watersheds should be supported and sustained. Restoration of these systems brings the added near-term benefit of thousands of American jobs on American lands, and the long-term benefits of clean water, recreation, tourism, and other values that are the economic backbone of countless communities across the country. Development, pollution, invasive species, and the changing climate are taking a toll on our national parks and their wildlife, from the coral reefs of Biscayne National Park in Florida to the salmon that migrate through Olympic National Park in Washington.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal enforcement resources are limited due to pressure on the budgets of the BLM, National Park Service, and other agencies will patrol and protect our federal lands. It is unrealistic to increase the allocation of resources for appropriate enforcement efforts. The penalties for those who are caught by federal enforcement agents on the ground need to have more "bite" to really discourage encroachment on federal wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, and other proposed wilderness land. Sanctions can include much higher fines; and the seizure of equipment used in wilderness areas, including ATVs, trailers, and vehicles that trespass on federal wilderness land. A public awareness campaign about new "very high fines" are needed to create awareness of the new penalties. Without increasing sanctions, and in the absence of increased patrol and enforcement resources, wilderness areas will continue to be disrespected and irreparably harmed. Additionally, more power can be given to citizens to record illegal activities and report them to federal authorities. On the basis of this evidence, federal prosecutors can pursue known violations with vigor.

The federal government needs to focus on three things: 1-rampant off road vehicle use is damaging and fragmenting our public lands and harming watersheds and wildlife. The feds need to focus on controlling these OHV users and closing environmentally sensitive areas to OHV riding. 2-renewable energy may do extreme harm to our public lands and wildlife. The feds should not be promoting renewable energy on intact public lands, but should be steering renewable development onto rooftops and in the urban core, and onto disturbed, formerly agricultural or industrial lands that are not currently being used. 3-grazing is also damaging our public lands. Very few areas that are grazed would qualify as being healthy ecosystems. The feds should severely reduce, if not ban outright, grazing on the public lands. This is a program that loses money for taxpayers and hurts the ecosystem in this short and long-term. All of these threats reduce low-impact recreation opportunities on public lands, and should be addressed as part of any recreation-management strategy.

Take the US Forest Service out of the Department of Agriculture which has a culture of extraction and environmental degradation and put it into the Department of Interior with other agencies that have stronger conservation objectives.

???? This only makes sense!!!!

Great idea !! You go!!!

This is a great idea unless you have a Bush era Secretary of the Interior. There needs to be a Conservation Department and along with it a far-reaching energy policy that takes into account how all our resources will be used and maintained.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need another "department" whose ONLY agenda is that of conservation, protection and long-term planning for open spaces and wilderness. Agri-business pollutes waterways--aquifers, rivers and areas like the Gulf of Mexico (yes, all those farmers growing corn for alternative fuels have fertilizer pollutants flowing down the Mississippi into the Gulf. Before the BP disaster, there was a huge dead zone due to this). Same with cattle and dairy...the run-off from dairy farms is huge, and pollutes the same aquifers and rivers. Department of Agriculture oversees these businesses. Department of the Interior, besides "stewardship" of Federal lands, also must adhere to the Mining Act of 1872, which states that all mineral resources (gold, silver, uranium) are available for mining to anyone. These commercial priorities take precedent over other existing Federal law. (I'll paste in the reference below) . Ken Salazar does not have a history of being pro-environment, either. There are over 10,000 claims for uranium now staked on the edge of the Grand Canyon. Even if Congress overturned the Mining Act of 1872 today, these claims can still be worked. So, placing faith in the Department of the Interior may not be a good idea. In fact, there is no existing department within the Federal Government that does not represent those that have a commercial interest in our wilderness areas and the environment. "MINING LAW OF 1872 30 U.S.C. §§ 22-24, 26-28, 29-30, 33-35, 37, 39-42 and 47, May 10, 1872, as amended 1875, 1880, 1921, 1925, 1958, 1960 and 1993. Overview. This Act authorizes and governs prospecting and mining for hardrock minerals such as gold and silver on public lands. A brief summary of the Act is included in the Handbook because application of broad provisions of the Act allowing for purchase of and mining on public lands has an impact on wildlife. "Lands Open to Purchase. The Act provides that all valuable mineral deposits in lands belonging to the U.S., both surveyed and unsurveyed, are free and open to exploration and purchase by U.S. citizens. The Act further provides that the lands in which the minerals are found are open to occupation and purchase by U.S. citizens. § 22. "Mining Claims. The Act provides that locators of all mining locations on a mineral vein, lode or ledge on the public domain have the exclusive right of possession and enjoyment of the surface included within the lines of their location, and of all veins, lodes and ledges throughout their entire depth. The Act sets forth the method to obtain a patent for land claimed and located for valuable deposits. The Act also provides the manner in which adverse claims are to be handled."

There are many restrictions, and widely varying policies depending on what agency manages the land. In California, it is illegal in most state parks, only a few allow it. In National Forests, it is generally legal, but there are different policies and permit requirements in each forest. The attitude of forest, park, and other agency personnel (rangers, etc) seems to vary in an arbitrary way. A national policy for federal lands would be a good idea.

We should have something along the lines of a Civilian Conservation Corps, available for environmental activities requiring large numbers of helpers anywhere in the world. This plan is not only a way to foster appreciation of nature, it is also a jobs program and an international assistance program since the Corps could be used as the Peace Corps is used today. Corps resources could be used for clean-ups, data gathering, small farm support, natural resource protection and enforcement, endangered species protection and enforcement, agricultural improvement, and related infrastructure.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I completely agree with the idea of something like the CCC. If the Federal government is either unwilling or cannot afford what it takes to keep our National Parks and other federally managed land in good order, we must find an alternative. Something like the CCC could fill this need. I would certainly be interested in volunteering if such an organization was put in place.

I completely agree with the idea of something like the CCC. If the Federal government is either unwilling or cannot afford what it takes to keep our National Parks and other federally managed land in good order, we must find an alternative. I agree !! An alternative would be to use folks that have been on unemployment for over 26 weeks , dope addicts , and other non violent criminals .

To protect wildlife migration routes and give national park wildlife the freedom to roam, the Administration should require measures to enhance current and projected wildlife migration routes in all federally funded transportation and energy transmission projects, and in leases for resource extraction on federal land. Throughout history, Americans have worked to save national treasures in their own backyards to retain what they find special for our children and grandchildren. At Yellowstone and Grand Teton National parks, pronghorn have seasonal migrations, but fencing and road development outside of the parks have threatened migration routes, limiting access to winter habitat, and leaving the park's pronghorn at risk. To further protect wildlife, the Administration should create a multi-agency wildlife habitat and migration corridors information sharing network; push for new revenue sources and prioritize existing resources for the acquisition or protection of vital wildlife migration corridors. National parks are not islands and their humanmade boundaries are not recognized by wildlife. As the climate changes it is widely expected that wildlife will migrate further from their park homes in search of suitable habitat.

The feds should have to start paying both state and local property taxes on all wilderness and other lands that they are refusing to allow ATV/UTV access to. If we can not have access then the exemption of property taxes should be ended. We grant this exemption because this is property that we share in common and can use. If we are no longer going to be able to use it then this is a violation of the agreement and they should start paying taxes. I would also include all land they do not allow OIL and GAS drilling on. If they are going to lock it up then they get no exemption. I think this would be a good policy that would allow some land to be locked up but prevent to much of it from being locked up because it would cost to much.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Currently, Internal Revenue Code section 2031(c) provides an estate tax exclusion of 40% of the value of land protected by a conservation easement. Unfortunately, this exclusion is capped at \$500,000. In the context of rising farm values this exclusion is woefully inadequate. The American Family Farm and Ranchland Protection Act, H.R. 3050, would increase this existing exclusion to 50% and raise the cap to \$5 million – providing a powerful incentive for owners of high-value agricultural, forest, and natural habitat lands to protect these properties in perpetuity. More than 70 percent of wildlife gets food and shelter from our working farm, ranch and forest lands, and the greatest value for wildlife and other public benefits comes from the large, contiguous properties where estate taxes frequently force families to subdivide and sell their land for development. In fact, due to high land values, farmers and ranchers are disproportionately subject to an estate tax at a rate of approximately 4 times that of the general public. On private forest land, the U.S. Forest Service has invested heavily to promote sustainable forestry. As second home development pushes deeper into our forests, inflated tax values make it increasingly difficult for forest owners to hold on to the timberland they've stewarded for generations. In fact, a 2006 study indicates that approximately 2.4 million acres of forest land are harvested and 1.3 million acres are sold annually to pay the federal estate tax. These outcomes are no way to reward a good deed and good stewardship. We can avoid them by expanding the estate tax benefits for landowners who have permanently protected their land. The Joint Committee on Taxation has scored H.R. 3050 as costing just \$132 million over ten years, but its impact would be enormous, encouraging thousands of landowners to work with land trusts in their community to ensure that lands with important conservation values for the public are never lost to development. This provision works well with a deferral of estate taxes on family farmland (H.R. 3524) and we expect new House and Senate legislation in the coming weeks that will combine these provisions. This provision also works well with the enhanced income tax deduction for conservation easements (H.R. 1831) setting up the opportunity for America's Great Outdoors to promote a conservation tax package. For more information please visit: www.lta.org/estatetax.

1) We want wilderness designations for all qualified lands on National Forests in Utah, specifically in areas currently under consideration like the La Sal Mountains, Elk Ridge, and Abajo Mountains in San Juan County and the Marysville Peak and Tibadore Canyon proposed Wilderness areas on Monroe Mountain on the Fishlake National Forest.

This program while not ideal is essential to protect critical lands like those inside established wilderness areas. I would generally oppose any lands going back to development interests, but since Congress and the Admin won't step up to the plate to do the job that needs doing, this is a workable alternative.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Park management can go a long way toward promoting appropriate, low-impact access by the visiting public by providing informative programs, such as slide shows, campfire talks, and guided naturalist tours; and well-defined venues for conservation-appropriate activities. The latter include, but are not limited to, interpretive Nature trails with signage and brochures emphasizing flora, fauna, ecology, geology, hydrology, etc.; designated kayaking and canoeing runs; cross-country ski trails; birdwatching trails and brochures; scenic hiking trails; and kayak, canoe, and bicycle rentals.

well said. Government promotion of cultural and scientific progress doesn't have to be at odds with economic and organizational efficiency. American citizens are expected to multi-task every day. No reason our taxes can't be used as efficiently as we manage our own paychecks.

Our Parks are non negotiable National Treasures ! Our National Parks were never meant for any one era. To manipulate them in anyway during any one era is to augment the prescribed purpose of such. No such era should ought to vie lien on any such National Treasure in lure of personal provocation ! I urge we denounce any such lien on our National Parks and preserve them for future generations lest the selfishness of our day be unto the future.

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If you want people to get out and visit the parks, talk about how CHEAP camping can be!! you don't have to spend a million dollars at Disney to have a great family vacation!! It is amazing what the kids learn being away from the TV and their toys. They have such great imaginations and will be totally stimulated by nature once they arrive at the campsite!! They will find a million things to do they never even knew they loved!! In today's economy, people need some help finding ways to escape the stress of life and camping is almost as cheap as staying home!!! Pack your food, go somewhere close by and pay less than \$20 per night for the whole family!!

Support federal legislation to avoid permanently protected lands during the siting of utilities. If protected properties cannot be avoided, utilities should be required to mitigate the damage. LTA is sponsoring a National Utility Infrastructure Coalition and working with Congress to pass legislation to ensure that our permanently protected lands are safeguarded forever.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Recreation in the Salmon Challis National Forest is not going to be an issue soon, as the Forest is dying. I would call the attack of the Western Pine Beetle a National Emergency! Hundreds of thousands of trees are dying daily. Every summer that goes by we see more and more forest dead, and new trees dying, and yet we see nothing being done. Mother Nature isn't going to take care of this one. I was recently in Canada and stopped to read about how the beetle had come to their forests near Revelstoke, BC. The Canadian government realized they had to take action and they did, with aggressively cutting down, spraying and whatever it took to eradicate this destructive pest. I can't understand why nothing is being done in this country. I'm frightened that we won't have any forest left in Idaho, not to mention the fire threat these dead trees pose.

If the country is broke, we need to make a choice on what our spending priorities are. What are your priorities? 1. Accomplishing worthwhile conservation goals while providing training and employment opportunities for young adults 2. Providing more subsidies to private companies (forcing citizens to give their wages to private business), in the hope that this time they will do what we want instead of just increasing their profits Tax money is not "your" money - our democratically-elected representatives have voted to levy taxes on workers and allocate the money as they see fit. That's how our government works. I'm sorry if it's not in your best (financial) interests - welcome to the working class's world for the past 30 years. If you don't approve, you're free to leave!

In economics, free goods are one justification for government. Because the good is "free" most people have no incentive not to waste or destroy the resource. National Parks, wilderness areas, national monuments, national forests, etc fall into this category. The government MUST regulate users of these resources in order to maintain its natural state. Roads and especially off road travel severely damage the resource. If off roaders want to damage a resource, they should damage their own property not the publics.

Cheatgrass and other invasive species are gradually destroying the natural habitats in the West. These invasive species are expanding and reportedly collectively now cover an area larger than the state of California. Cheatgrass crowds out native vegetation, and creates excessive fuel loads when it dries out in the summer. When fires occur, these excessive fuel loads can change what was once a natural and beneficial disturbance process (fire) into an unnatural agent of destruction. Cheatgrass thrives on repeated fires, but the frequency and severity of the fires may gradually remove the natural vegetation and even the natural seed bank in the soil. Eventually, the permanent outcome can be an alien, annual grassland that is largely sterile for native wildlife and ugly to look at. This is a relatively quiet ecological crisis. Can you imagine the public outcry if many millions of acres were strip mined in the West? In my view, the response thus far by federal agencies and other stakeholders has been proportionally small compared to the enormous magnitude of the threat posed by invasives. Indeed, in most places, the invasives are still expanding. The challenge will be to aggressively apply the best science and tools to stop and reverse this expansion, and to better educate the public about how they may be inadvertently aiding in this expansion.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I strongly support the Obama administration's efforts to establish new Climate Science Centers (CSCs) and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). I believe that these CSCs and LCCs could be very effective in making sure that federal agencies have and hopefully apply the best and most timely scientific information. While the primary emphasis is and should be climate change, and how federal agencies can best adapt to those changes, I believe that the CSCs and LCCs could also play pivotal roles in coordinating research on other important and likely related issues. These are issues that tend to go beyond the traditional governmental agency roles or political boundaries. These issues could include: improved control of cheatgrass and other invasive species; improved coordination of various land use and resource management planning processes (BLM, NPS, FWS, Forest Service, etc.); improved coordination of management of landscape linkages and wildlife movement corridors; and improved coordination of water and energy transport systems. There is already a lot of wasteful redundancy in federal management programs, whereby each agency tends to address common issues in its own somewhat separate way, or conduct land use planning in a somewhat different format. Since federal agencies' budgets are likely to remain flat for the coming years, the only way to increase the capacity to do more is through greater streamlining and efficiency. As the CSCs and LCCs work with staff from many agencies, I hope that some of the institutional barriers will be broken down and that government can learn to work smarter and better. The challenge will be to advance CSC and LCC work so that it "adds value" without creating any new bureaucracy for its own sake.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As someone who has followed federal lands issues in the West for many years, I believe that federal agencies need to be much more consistent and effective in how they respond to illegal or trespass livestock grazing situations. I have heard or read about BLM or Forest Service livestock grazing trespass situations that have lasted many years. For example, there is one publicized chronic situation near Mesquite Nevada where the trespass has reportedly occurred over the past fifteen years, and in critical habitat for the threatened Mojave desert tortoise. I believe that federal agencies can charge the offending rancher for the administrative costs of enforcement against the trespass, for the resulting resource damage, and, as a last resort, for the agency to round up, impound, and auction the trespass livestock. These cumulative costs should add up to a large bill hanging over that rancher and his family/heirs, and so I wonder why these chronic trespasses continue. Are the agencies not adding up these costs or submitting these bills? Are the federal managers afraid of the ranchers or their possible political connections? Are there no ways to track these chronic trespass situations so that the managers and ranchers can be held accountable? I recommend that the Obama administration establish a consistent program for tracking and monitoring the status of all federal lands trespass grazing situations. This would bring accountability from outside the local areas, and perhaps motivate more managers to do everything legally possible to stop the trespasses and recover the costs. The general data showing the status of trespass cases around the nation should also be available to the public, as part of the Obama administration's commitment to greater government transparency. Where there is a substantial delay in stopping a trespass or recovering costs, this program could flag those delays so that the manager could either provide a reasonable explanation for the delay or be disciplined for dereliction of duty. The BLM and Forest Service are supposed to manage livestock grazing as a multiple use, consistent with a variety of laws, regulations, plans, and policies. Allowing trespass grazing to continue violates all of those, and should be a huge embarrassment for these agencies. As such, the agencies themselves should support greater transparency and accountability to help shield them from the local pressures that may otherwise undermine prompt compliance.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As someone who has followed BLM issues in the West for many years, I believe there is a pervasive, unwritten "culture of secrecy" in some BLM offices. This occurs where managers unofficially let employees know that they should not put anything in writing on sensitive issues unless they obtain prior approval from the managers. This can have a chilling effect on any employees who may want to document a concern in writing on a sensitive issue. This can also include when an employee wants to document something that they reasonably believe may be improper or illegal. BLM resource professionals are hired because of their substantial academic training and practical scientific experience, but that expertise may be diluted or lost if they are too intimidated to put their actual findings and recommendations in writing. This secrecy would also seem to frustrate the Obama administration and Interior Secretary Salazar's professed commitment to greater government transparency and accountability. If managers are successful in preventing anything in writing that they may disagree with, what is the point of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests or discovery requests in litigation when everything in the official files has already been "sanitized" (like a motel room toilet seat) for the managers' protection? If President Obama and Secretary Salazar want to walk their good government talk, they need to root out this de facto BLM "culture of secrecy" wherever it exists, and discipline any managers who seek to maintain it.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dude, There isn't room for all the studies - hey and try to be a little civil with your tongue. Here's a start on your query. Currently, hundreds of thousands of miles of routes give off-road vehicles abundant access to our parks, forests, and other public lands and waters creating an imbalance between the amount of land available to off-road vehicles and the amount of land available to non-motorized users. For example, off-road vehicles are allowed on 93% of the 264 million acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Although ORV users represent only a small percentage of the total number of people recreating on public lands they are having a disproportionately large and harmful impact. Since the roar of motors can be heard by people and wildlife miles away, these vehicles can ruin the experience for those who choose to experience the outdoors without motorized vehicles. 3. Federal agencies have failed to enforce laws designed to protect our wildlands and drag their feet on implementing important new regulations. Exacerbated by inadequate or no route planning as well as severe lack of monitoring by these agencies, illegal and inappropriate off-road vehicle use has continued largely unchallenged. Americans want to experience natural quiet to camp, hunt, hike and fish with their families on their national public lands free from the roar of engines and the pounding of pistons. The Federal government has an abysmal record of enforcement of even established regulations barring ORV use. My personal experience comes from Arizona and the Coconino National Forest where ORV users transit signed/prohibited areas regularly. Repeated calls to Forest Service Law Enforcement brought zero results. The excuse given was insufficient resources. There is NO reason to believe that the situation for FOREST SERVICE is any different. Now in Williams, I hike an area where it is clearly signed "No Motorized Access", but ORV use takes place there regularly. 4. ORVs also emit large amounts of pollution, including carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and carcinogens such as benzene. The small, inefficient two-stroke engines of some of these machines spew out as much as 30 percent of their fuel unburned polluting the soils, air, and water of our National Forests, National Parks, and other public lands including Oregon FOREST SERVICE holdings. With 36 million registered all-terrain vehicles and 12 million registered snowmobiles in the U.S. alone, these machines are a significant source of pollutants. They run on inefficient two and four-stroke engines that emit several dangerous gasses and chemicals including carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons (HC), nitrogen oxide (NOx), and particulate matter (PM) (US DOT 2001). These emissions have all been shown to affect human health. Despite this fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has yet to establish emission standards for off-road vehicles. Carbon monoxide binds to the hemoglobin molecule in blood and inhibits the transportation of oxygen in the body. High levels of carbon monoxide exposure have been shown to lead to visual impairment, reduced work capacity and mental dexterity, poor learning ability, nausea, headaches, dizziness, and even death (USEPA 1991). Carbon monoxide is especially dangerous to the elderly, people with cardiovascular disease or other circulation disorders, anemic individuals, young infants, and pregnant women (USEPA 1991). Hydrocarbons are volatile organic compounds that include benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes. While these compounds can cause dizziness, headaches, and loss of consciousness, the EPA has also identified benzene as a carcinogen and those exposed to benzene have an increased incidence of leukemia. Nitrogen oxides can cause shortness of breath and chest pains and increase a person's susceptibility to respiratory infections and asthma. Long-term exposure can cause chronic lung disease. Particulate matter, also found in off-road vehicle

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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emissions, is detrimental in fine and coarse forms as it accumulates in the respiratory system, and can lead to decreased lung function, respiratory disease and even death (Janssen and Schettler 2003). Of the pollutants emitted by ORVs, particulates are of special concern because their small size makes them easily respirable and thus deliverable directly into the lungs, causing any number of the aforementioned maladies (NPS 2000). The EPA found that ATVs emit more than 381,000 tons of hydrocarbons, 1,860,000 tons of carbon monoxide, and 11,000 tons of nitrogen oxide each year across the country (USEPA 2001). While emissions from on-road vehicles decreased 56 percent over the last 20 years as a result of emission control programs, there was a 42 percent increase in ATV emissions during the same time period (Grambsch 2002). The list of greenhouse gases continues to show the impact of these vehicles. For example, on-road vehicle emissions of nitrogen oxide were virtually unchanged during the same twenty-year span, while emissions from off-road vehicles increased 56 percent (Grambsch 2002).

Anthropogenic emissions of nitrogen oxide account for a large majority of all nitrogen inputs in the environment and off-road emissions are a large contributor (Grambsch 2002). The EPA went even further to research individual ATVs: they showed that a two-stroke ATV or motorcycle could emit as much pollution as more than thirty automobiles operating in the same time frame. Even more shocking is that the ATV took a distant second from two-stroke snowmobiles, which can emit as much as nearly one hundred automobiles in the same time frame (USEPA 1996). It is well-established that off-road vehicles contribute a large amount of pollution to the air.

According to the EPA, if left uncontrolled, off-road vehicles will contribute 33 percent of hydrocarbon emissions, nine percent of carbon monoxide, nine percent of nitrogen oxide, and two percent of particulate emissions nationally by 2020 (USEPA 1996). The Environmental Protection Agency has yet to establish emission standards for off-road vehicles and the engines on which they run. The off-road vehicle industry has been slow to adopt technological changes that could lessen the impact of its machines on air quality at the local and, even the global, level. And while the industry has been sluggish, government regulatory and enforcement agencies have been all-too complacent in allowing continued degradation. References Cain, C.J. and J.

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Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

riding is against the rules in Montana and has been since 2001. Over 28% “sometimes or never” avoid riparian areas and wetlands, in violation of rules for federal and state public lands in Montana. Sixty-four percent of those surveyed have used an off-road vehicle while hunting. The majority of this hunting subset admits to riding cross-country — over 58% have traveled off of legal routes to retrieve downed game. Colorado A 2001 Colorado study cited the state of Montana’s off-road vehicle public education program as a model to emulate. According to the Colorado study, Montana’s “On the Right Trail” program “provided a list of key behavioral traits that define an ‘ethical hunter’ — with several of these related to proper OHV use.” However, as discussed above, the more recent Montana study revealed a significant disregard for the rules among many off-road vehicle riders, pointing to the ineffectiveness of the state’s education program. This supports the key conclusion of the Colorado study: “information and education per se – will not result in substantial behavioral change” (emphases in original). Monaghan and Associates, a marketing research firm, conducted the 2001 study at the behest of the Colorado Coalition for Responsible OHV Riding, a coalition of off-road vehicle representatives, environmentalists and public officials. Researchers surveyed Colorado off-road vehicle riders through a series of three focus groups. Monaghan and Associates found that the majority of off-roaders understand that staying on designated routes is “fundamental trail etiquette” and that going off trail is not “correct” off-road vehicle behavior. The survey revealed, however, that regardless of this knowledge “as many as two-thirds of adult users go off the trail occasionally.” A significant percentage of riders, 15-20%, admitted to frequently breaking the rules and riding off of legal routes often. Survey participants also stated that “others” ride off-route and cause most of the damage. Utah In a separate study, the Utah Division of Parks & Recreation commissioned Utah State University to survey riders to determine their “OHV uses and owner preferences.” The university conducted a telephone survey of 335 riders from a random sample of the 50,676 people who registered off-road vehicles with the state in 2000. The Utah report reveals that a high percentage of riders prefer to ride “off established trails” and did so on their last outing. Of the ATV riders surveyed, 49.4% prefer to ride off established trails, while 39% did so on their most recent excursion. Of the dirt bike riders surveyed, 38.1% prefer to ride off established trails, while 50% rode off established trails on their most recent excursion. When surveyed on issues affecting off-road vehicle use in Utah, survey respondents recognized the need for enforcement but not the need for protecting the natural resources where they ride. This questions the assumption that off-road vehicle riders will stay on-route if educated that cross-country travel is illegal or damaging. One-third of the respondents said there should be more law enforcement presence in OHV areas. Only 6% cited “resource management conservation” as the most important issue affecting off-road vehicle use in Utah. Nevada The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found a near universal disregard for motorized guidelines when the BLM experimented with a “voluntary off-road vehicle route system” in Nevada. The area in question serves as a refuge for the disappearing Sand Mountain Blue butterfly, a species proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act. A 2006 monitoring report compiled over a three-year period found that “98 percent of all existing routes continued to be used and new routes were created, indicating an ongoing expansion of habitat degradation.” The study also found that half of the places where riders violated guidelines were near signs that discouraged them from proceeding into sensitive butterfly habitat. The cumulative impacts of such “noncompliance points” were

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

four-fold as each discouraged route experienced multiple incursions. Conclusion One can assume that many folks will not tell the truth when asked if they participated in a behavior known to be illegal or generally perceived to be in conflict with social norms. This tendency is known as the “social desirability bias” and defined as under-reporting undesirable attributes and/or over-reporting desirable attributes due to the tendency to present oneself in a favorable light (Groves et. al. 2004). Therefore, the percentage of off-roaders who violate the rules is likely even higher than revealed in the survey results discussed above. Many public land managers assume that designating additional off-road vehicle routes will lead directly to greater compliance, less cross-country travel and, as a result, less resource damage and fewer conflicts among incompatible uses. Some believe that off-road vehicle riders will quit creating renegade routes once more routes are designated “open” and riders are educated as to where they are and are not allowed to ride. In contrast, the research above shatters the myth that damage and conflicts are being caused by an insignificant percentage of off-road vehicle riders. The findings of these studies suggest that even if the “demand” for more off-road vehicle riding opportunities is met, riders will continue to fulfill their preferences by riding off legal routes. They also conclude or at least strongly suggest that education and information alone are not effective strategies for changing off-road behavior. Instead, Monaghan and Associates offers the following recommendation: “In order to be successful and actually influence behavior, OHV users must be motivated to behave properly.” While more social science research is needed to determine what will motivate users to behave properly, anecdotal research (Wildlands CPR 2007) argues most strongly for increasing enforcement, and especially increasing the consequences for breaking the law, through mechanisms like vehicle confiscations, increased fines, and closing areas to all motorized users when motorized trespass occurs. References Archie, M.L., H.D. Terry, B. Walder, and N. Jackson. 2007. Six Strategies for Success: Effective Enforcement of Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands. Wildlands CPR, Missoula, MT. { Link } [1] . Fischer, A.L., D.J. Blahna, and R. Bahr. 2002. Off Highway Vehicle Uses and Owner Preferences in Utah (Revised). Institute for Outdoor Recreation & Tourism, Department of Forest Resources, Utah State University for Utah Department of Natural Resources’ Division of Parks & Recreation. { Link } [2] . Frueh, LM. 2001. Status and Summary Report on OHV Responsible Riding Campaign. Prepared by Monaghan and Associates for the Colorado Coalition for Responsible OHV Riding. { Link } [3] . Groves, R.M., et al. Survey Methodology. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2004, p. 208. Lewis, M.S., and R. Paige. 2006. Selected Results From a 2006 Survey of Registered Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Owners in Montana. Responsive Management Unit Research Summary No. 21. Prepared for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. { Link } [4] . Nevada

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Many Native American Tribes are committed to restoration and protection of natural resources that have always supported their people. These efforts complement Department of the Interior and other federal agency goals articulated in “America’s Great Outdoors.” The Department of the Interior and other federal agencies should use existing programs to leverage the contribution of Tribes toward the protection of wilderness, endangered and threatened species, at-risk ecosystems, and other priorities. Recent agreements to remove the Klamath River dams provide one of many examples where Federal agencies have worked with Tribes to achieve mutual objectives. One of the key contributors to dam removal negotiations, the Yurok Tribe of Northwest California, is engaged in a related land acquisition effort on the lower Klamath River. The acquisition provides another example where principles articulated in “America’s Great Outdoors” coincide with Native American priorities. The Yurok Tribe subsisted on fish runs and other forest wildlife on the lower Klamath for centuries prior to the arrival of European settlers in the late 19th Century. In the decades that ensued, however, intensive timber harvest drastically altered the landscape. Like much of the California Coast, harvesting practices threatened endemic species, old growth forest and water quality. Consequently, many of the natural resources that the Department of the Interior now seeks to restore (resources once, and still, essential to the Yurok People’s healthy and prosperous way of life) disappeared. When the Federal Government recognized the Yurok Tribe in the early 90’s, the Yurok Tribe established a constitution that requires tribal government to establish policies intended to “restore, enhance, and manage the tribal fishery, tribal water rights, tribal forests, and all other natural resources” and “provide for the health, education, economy, and social wellbeing of our members and future members.” To help achieve these ends, the Yurok Tribe and Western Rivers Conservancy are in contract with Green Diamond Resource Company to purchase ~47,000 acres within the Yurok Tribe’s Ancestral Boundary. The acquisition would increase protections on approximately 29.3 miles on the eastern watershed of the lower Klamath River, and four important tributaries: Blue Creek (24,861 acres), Pecwan Creek (16,719 acres), Ke’pel Creek (1,015 acres) and Weitchpec Creek (4,503 acres). The Yurok Tribe has published a Yurok Tribal Park Plan which lays out the general objectives for management of these properties. More specific management will focus on cultural resources, and the recovery of endangered, threatened and at-risk fish and wildlife species. The Tribe is in, or seeking, partnerships with: the United States Department of the Interior, the State of California Water Resources Control Board, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the US EPA, the California Department of Fish and Game, the State of California Department of Forestry, NOAA Fisheries, the Climate Action Reserve, Western Rivers Conservancy, Green Diamond Resource Company and others. Of most importance to the Yurok Tribe and its many of its partner federal and state natural resource agencies, the acquisition boundary includes the remaining unprotected portions of the Blue Creek watershed. As the westernmost cold- water tributary to the Klamath River, the perennial Blue Creek is one of the best salmon streams remaining in the Klamath Basin. It is also likely to remain cool in the face of climate change, as upstream tributaries become increasingly too warm for salmon and steelhead. The Tribe will manage Blue Creek primarily as a preserve for the benefit of endangered fish species that have traditionally provided a staple for the Yurok People (including the Southern Oregon / Northern California Coho, and California Coastal Chinook). Through this management -- which will complement US Forest Service Management in the adjacent Siskyou

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Wilderness -- the Tribe hopes to restore historic salmon runs to Blue Creek and maintain the watershed as the most reliable cold-water source for anadromous fish species in the Klamath Basin. The Lower Klamath Restoration Plan – a document itself resulting from broad local input -- addresses means of restoring riparian and instream habitat for fish protection. The vision for properties outside of the Blue Creek watershed includes sustainable harvest. Specifically, the Tribe will manage Phase 1 lands according to longer rotations that reflect Yurok cultural and Constitutional priorities. Among other actions, the Tribe will initiate an uneven-aged management regime that increases species diversity, extends riparian zone restrictions, sets aside late seral carbon reserves (enhancing marbled murrelet, spotted owl, and other endangered, threatened and at risk species habitat), and restores grasslands. The Regional and State Waterboards are key partners in this effort, as is the U.S. EPA. Throughout the property, the Tribe will also restore historical meadows to invigorate populations of elk and deer for hunting purposes and to restore natural forest complexity. The restoration of grasslands will revitalize possibilities for traditional practices like gathering and basket weaving. The Tribe also seeks to reclaim and protect important culturally important sites, allow for public trail access, and improve regional management with adjacent publicly managed lands. Western Rivers Conservancy, a 501(c) (3) dedicated to protection of outstanding river ecosystems in the western United States, is working with the Yurok Tribe to acquire the property. In the course of our dealings with them, we have discovered several useful tools, but have two recommendations: • Expansion of the USEPA's State Revolving Fund to include more loans and grants dedicated to the reduction of non-point source pollution. Currently, the State of California dedicates 5% of its State Revolving Funds to Non-Point Source projects, and a few other states have similar efforts in place. The initiative taken by these states is commendable, and effective. More can be done with a small increase in resources, and duplication in other states. • Use of Land and Water Conservation Fund, and other conservation land acquisition programs, for acquisitions within and adjacent to protected Tribal lands, and management agreements that help ensure protections in cooperation with Tribes.

I like it. This concept is already in use at Cape Hatteras National Seashore to support ORV closures for bird and sea turtle nesting sites, under a court-ordered consent decree. A closed area expands 50 meters for the first violation, 100 meters for the second, and 500 meters or more for the third. Violations are subject to as much as a \$5,000 fine and/or imprisonment up to 6 months.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is so ironic that the Historic Route 66 Bridge in Eureka, MO was added to the National Historic Register last year only to be added to the demolition list by MODOT shortly thereafter. The Historic Route 66 bridge was built in 1931 and is one of the few remaining reverse trestle bridges left in America. This bridge is now the link between the Route 66 State Park Historic roadhouse Visitor Center and the Route 66 State Park. Since the bridge closure the visitor center and park staff have been cut off from the remainder of the park making visitation difficult for both local and foreign travelers alike. Travelers come from all over the world on a daily basis to visit our historic roadhouse and bridge. How is it then that we can deem a site valuable enough to add to the National Historic Register but not valuable enough to maintain and preserve. MODOT is trying to give the bridge away due to the public outcry to save the bridge but no one has the money to fix MODOT's failure to properly maintain the bridge. MODOT wants to demolish the bridge unless someone steps forward to take ownership and responsibility to repair the bridge. This bridge is also an important link to other trails in this area. There is a National Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program but there are no funds available to preserve and maintain this historic bridge. What is the purpose of these historic preservation programs and National Registers if our government is not going to see fit to maintain and preserve sites on the National Historic Register????? We need our President to champion the cause to save the National Historic Route 66 Bridge. Perhaps the National Parks and Sites should assume ownership of the bridge and see to its preservation. SAVE THIS AMERICAN ICON!!

Trees all across the west are dying due to climate change. Warmer winters and longer summers allow insects of all kinds to live through winter and produce more offspring. Rainfall is down, temperatures are up. Dead trees and increased fires are not caused by poor forest management. They are caused by climate change and will continue to increase if we don't work to mitigate our impact on the environment. There is not enough money in the world to manage all the forests that will be affected or fight all the fires that will occur if we don't deal with the fundamental problem: climate change. Read Bill McKibben's book *Eaarth* (2 a's because it's not the same planet anymore). He provides some staggering statistics on forest lands in the west.

Protecting private lands FROM 'park sprawl' is the larger danger in this country. There is a law of diminishing returns as larger parks (in rural areas with over 10,000 acres) get larger and smaller parks (near urban centers) are under managed.

Agencies do not need MORE land to manage. They need to manage the land under their jurisdiction more productively. In place of "acquisition", agencies should promote private land conservation.

Maureen, Most, if not all of the land involved in this proposal would involve redesignation and management of lands already within federal, and in some cases, state, ownership. It would not incorporate a significant amount of private land, and where it did, the government would likely enter into a management agreement with the owners, affording them assistance or tax advantages for participating.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Letting locals decide how to use federal lands would be an abrogation of federal responsibilities and obligations to the citizenry as a whole. Locals always want to have dibs on federal resources because they think they own them, personally, and should be able to develop and exploit them because the local monied interests almost always control the local politicians. I've seen it all before. Forget it. My tax dollars, and those of my parents and grandparents paid for their acquisition and management just as much as anyone's and all Americans have an equal say. The feds employ scientists and professional managers to follow the federal law. That doesn't mean enriching local power brokers.

you are right on, here. I'd go further: You have a kid and you end up on welfare, you get sterilized. We need more tax incentives to not have children, and to adopt instead. Even if you buy into the mythology that God somehow told us to go forth and populate the earth, the corollary is that "He" gave us a brain big enough to figure out when we were done.

We are putting increasing amounts of CO₂ into the air. The CO₂ does not stay in the air forever. Some of the CO₂ is absorbed by the ocean. The ocean is becoming more acidic. The increasing acidity of the water harms life forms that build shells. Whatever the cause, the atmosphere is warming. The heat does not stay in the air forever. The biggest heat sink is the ocean. The ocean is becoming warmer, more slowly than the atmosphere. As the ocean warms, the volume of the water expands, raising the sea level. The rising sea level covers land that people used. The warmer surface water prevents the upwelling of cold nutrient-laden water that supports phytoplankton. The loss of nutrients has caused the phytoplankton to decline by 40% since 1950. Phytoplankton is the base of the food chain. The smell of the sea is the respiration of phytoplankton. Phytoplankton breath includes sulfur. Sulfur particles are a nucleus of raindrops. Phytoplankton produced 50% of the oxygen in the atmosphere. The warming atmosphere melts the tundra, releasing methane, a more powerful greenhouse gas. The warming ocean melts the methane hydrates locked in the continental shelves, releasing more methane. Methane caused the extinction of the large animals once before, leaving the world open to the dinosaurs.

Bring all agencies under USDA including Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, etc. as well as Army Corps of Engineers up to date so that their mission regarding the environment is more future-thinking. This country is not all-about 'building' as much as preserving. Americans may be ahead of the government and the civil servants who carry out the mission of these agencies. I have worked for the Forest Service [Range and Experiment Station/Moscow, ID] and appreciate the work everyone does -- we need to forecast into the next millennium.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Oh yes, Let us have the Federal Government take charge of just everything. Or better yet, why not have all the IMPORTANT people just tell the rest of us where we can live, how we are to live, how much money we must contribute to the whims and wishes of the IMPORTANT people. Then we can all wait in anticipation while the yellow school bus brings everyone lunch - this in light of the fact that Mom gets food stamps but is too stoned to make the kids a P&J. Then because we are all becoming fat off the yellow school bus we will have to pay more so the IMPORTANT people can steal people's land and homes to make parks so we can go and work off our fat. Children will grow up to believe that everything is brought to them by the Government - Oh wait - it already is.

I might not get to visit wilderness areas because of the cost for me to travel to them. There are not any anywhere near my home. Just knowing that they exist gives me piece of mind. I think more wilderness should be saved. There should also be more multiple use federal land set aside.

"we are the worlds worst polluters" Really, what about China and India? "european nations have cars that get 60mpg" True, and did you know most of those cars run on small effcient diesel engines? The reason we dont have the same cars here is because they are diesel and the EPA will not allow them. Plus the oil companies wouldnt want us to start getting good mileage. "we are responsible for the loss of 110,000,000 trees every year" In the state I live in (Idaho) more trees die and rot every year than are harvested. If you cut trees they can and will grow back most of the time. How many trees are planted every year by the Forrest Service and by timber companies?

Federal land agencies should implement a system where designated routes are monitored for ORV user violations. They should then close routes where there are violations beyond a set standard (say for example, two violations a month). This system is already in place on USFS land in the cottonwood canyons above SLC for dog use. This would give users an incentive to police their own, and compensate for the agency's lack of enforcement capability.

I believe the Feds already have the authority once the rule is in the land manager's compendium and/or 36 CFR.

The federal government should financially support and encourage the development of quiet off-road vehicles (SUV's, trucks, 3 and 4 wheelers, snowmobiles, jet skis, etc). These could be dual powered, gasoline/diesel and electric. They would be certified for off-road use in specifically designated sensitive areas. Since the majority of people objecting to OHV's is due to the noise that they create, this would satisfy both groups for the most part.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This sounds like a great idea, on the surface. I do not trust the federal government and the Obama administration especially has shown that their interest lies in more government control. We have a very large national park in Northern Minnesota, and there are areas of wilderness, that if logged and hunted would show an improvement in the overall health of wild life. Deer, grouse, rabbits and other wild life do well on a new growth forest, and right now, the only new growth in the park is the result of wild fire or controlled fire. There is no logging or hunting in the park. I also believe that local control of waters and land is always better for the environment and the tax payers. Any government project always cost many times that of a local project, and the results of the local program may take the local population in to consideration. Federal restrictions usually mean stricter restrictions and more rules for the sportsmen and women to follow. Any use of public lands and waters is becoming so complicated, that I believe many people are getting discouraged. So when I say "watch out for the feds", make sure this is not just another power grab.

In Southern Oregon nearly three times as much State money goes into expanding OHV opportunities than enforcing the law. It is virtually impossible to catch a trespasser without a violent confrontation. Violators on both public and private land have repeatedly maintained to me that they "don't carry identification" when they ride. Often law enforcement is miles away. We need a way to identify these miscreants. We also need local law enforcement to quit looking the other way, to pursue these violators vigorously and no longer dismiss their actions as "minor."

Most off-road vehicle routes were not created with resource sensitivity or public land/national forest management in mind. Route designation is necessary on all public lands and national forests where multiple use management is an objective to determine what existing routes can sustain continued vehicle use along with the management of non-motorized uses and appropriate biological resource management. This is called or per the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and various statutes relative to our public lands and national forest lands. Route networks need to be closely monitored and managed, with open routes signed as such and designated closed routes put to bed with vertical mulching and other revegetation methods so they do not look like vehicle routes open for use. These efforts need to be fully funded by the government, using young adult labor where possible, to be completed in a timely fashion and promote awareness of our shared resources. There must be penalties for use non-compliance and the creation of unauthorized routes. Non-Compliance with a designated network needs to be fostered in the offroad vehicle use community to ensure these networks are available for use into the future.

The BLM needs a fiscal and policy overhaul desperately.

Thanks for great comments and information, Barbara - couldn't agree more strongly about the importance of the Great Lakes, and need for more protection and cooperation re: fresh water resource.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Good idea but I think the closed area should double every time an infraction is committed. 1st offense =1 mile, 2nd = 2 miles 3rd =4 miles 4th =8 and so on. Also a limit should be placed on the number of times an area can be damaged before it is closed permanently.

Good idea and I promoted it but I do not know if it would help. Many of our senators need their hands greased through "campaign contributions" (a nice name for BRIBES don't you think?) in order to vote a certain way so unless there is a grizzly bear or moose holding \$1,000,000 for them when the senator arrives I cannot see a visit to view the beauty of nature overtaking their greed.

National parks and wilderness lands in general need to be protected from ever-threatening noise, construction, and traffic pollution. The federal government, in concert with local municipalities and land-conservation non-profits, should provide economic incentives (grants, tax breaks) for smart development near pristine spaces.

Hmmm...not so sure that I'm really excited about exposing our President and his family to a highly publicized vacation in the outback with the ready access to high powered rifle-toters who are of extreme and dangerous political persuasion. Easier for the Secret Service to shore up a hotel than a 50 mile stretch of river. Allow the First Family to choose their own vacations while their security is at risk.

The time has finally come to have Congress designate all of ANWR as official Wilderness, which would put this spectacular Alaska wildlife refuge off limits to oil and gas companies and all other industrial uses.

National Parks are the perfect place to learn about our natural environment. All children deserve an opportunity to learn in nature's classroom, see up close what they are being asked to preserve and protect, and understand the connections these wild places have to their communities back home. We cannot create a sustainable future without education. People don't care about what they don't know. The government can help make this possible by collaborating with strategic partners that have proven success, streamlining processes to encourage these partners to grow and serve more youth in more national parks, and actively working with states, counties, and local school boards and communities to find ways to fund participation in these experiences for all students. What do you think?

With today's seemingly growing environmental calamities, it is ever more apparent that our youth today will be the guiding force for the preservation of our environment. To help facilitate their actions, it is imperative for them to experience nature first-hand through an educational lens. National Parks is a prime location for learning and observing pristine nature sites. It behooves the government to partner with educational providers and be a part of the movement for a sustainable future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The President and Mrs. Obama should go camping in National Forests and National Parks. Look what Teddy Roosevelt did by camping with John Muir, even Jimmy Carter floated the Snake River. Give up the Ritz hotels get those kids in the woods. What a boost that would bring to the "get outdoors" initiatives and "child in the woods" type initiatives in the great outdoors of the USA.

Is it just me or does the Cape Hatteras closure expansion seem wimpish. On a OHV I could run over fifty turtles before I even had to speed up for the get away.

Establish an Ancient Forest National Park that connects over 100 wilderness and roadless areas into one manageable whole forest for the protection of wildlife migrations, and mitigation of climate change. The park would provide a solid block of ancient forest habitat stretching from the Yolla Bolly Wilderness in California to the Rogue and Elk Rivers in Oregon. It would also include all of the proposed Siskiyou Crest National Monument and Cascade Siskiyou National Monument, the Smith River NRA and the Oregon Redwoods. This is the forest where the myth of Bigfoot began. It's wild, wooley and outstanding, renowned for its biodiversity.
www.ancientforestnationalpark.org

I keep hearing that the fed has no right to own land, bla bla bla. The legal system in this country relies on precedence. Over the years, the lay of the land and rights of ownership have changed. Get over it. When the constitution was written, there we're almost no people in the US and not nearly as much land. It's a different country now and to try to reduce everything to the original definition is absurd. The fed obviously has a right to own land because..WE DO!

Local politics and prejudices can make it difficult to ensure state and federal laws are enforced. State officials are hesitant, and don't have the power in some cases, to punish infractions even if they are continual and blatant. It takes concerned citizens to ensure state and federal laws are enforced in a municipality and often times the citizens are ostracized and punished by the local officials. There must be some protection for those citizens who take on local governments.

I think a lot of people lack motivation to go out and take the steps to becoming more environmentally friendly. Giving rewards such as tax breaks to those who have "gone green" would be a huge incentive to take the steps necessary to change our earth. These rewards could be given to people who use solar panels, buy hybrid cars, consistently buy organic foods, install energy smart appliances, and to those who do similar things to help make this world a cleaner place to live in.

US Senators and Congress members should be invited and actively encouraged to visit federal lands already designated as wilderness lands or seeking wilderness protection. For too many members of Congress, wilderness is a vague notion. Without direct experience and personal appreciation for lasting value of wilderness lands, there will not be the passionate support needed to protect appropriate federal wilderness lands forever. The visits will benefit other federal land programs, including the maintenance of the National Parks operating budgets, and the public outreach programs to ensure use of parks by those most in danger of Nature Deficit Disorder.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Transportation Enhancements – Federal support for transportation initiatives that link destinations with each other and major transportation hubs are needed while ensuring access for all ages and abilities including: •physical trail connections that link urban areas with nearby open spaces and waterfronts; •transportation programs to support pedestrians and bicycles; •funding to inventory and convert abandoned rail beds into trails, and improve existing trails for pedestrians and bicycles; •increase flexibility in highway design to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

Development of the “Smart Park” – In a world of new communications technologies, alternative energies, and integrated systems, many nature preserves lack the capital for investment in planning and design that will make them more efficient, effective, and sustainable in serving their missions. Assistance upfront can leverage investment by donors in the implementation of strategies that will reduce the bottom line while enabling organizations to provide better service to more people.

Hey here I am. I live about as close to fed lands and the Crest as peopel in Siskiyou County. I WANT A MONUMENT.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Estate taxes can undermine important conservation values by forcing the break-up, sale and development of family-owned farm, ranch and forest lands, even when those lands provide important resources for the public, including open space, clean air and water, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, carbon sequestration and local food and fiber production. The Family Farm Preservation and Estate Tax Act, H.R. 3524 or H.R. 5475 would indefinitely defer estate taxes on working family farms and ranches - unless these lands are taken out of production or sold outside the family. If this legislation were to become law, no farm or ranch family would be forced to sell or subdivide working lands just to pay estate taxes – but would also ensure that if working landscapes are sold or converted to other uses for any reason, estate taxes would be paid. This is an effective policy for promoting continued family ownership of farms and ranches and ensuring that the lack of estate planning or cash resources does not result in the breakup of large farms and ranches, which provide critical wildlife habitat in increasingly fragmented landscapes. Federal, state and local governments are investing billions of dollars to protect and restore these resources, and it makes good sense to amend current tax policy so that it doesn't undermine these efforts. In the coming weeks we expect a new Senate version of H.R. 5475 to be introduced, carrying a much smaller price tag and including the provisions of H.R. 3050, a separate bill which increases the estate tax exemption for lands protected by a conservation easement. Ultimately, this provision could be enacted as part of a conservation tax package along with the enhanced tax incentive for donated conservation easements (H.R. 1831). For more information please visit: www.lta.org/policy/documents/hr3524-packet This idea was originally posted in the Private Lands Conservation category where it had a total of 60 votes. The following comments were posted before that idea was "archived" in late June: Comments: 1) (11 May 2010) This is a good idea so long as it does not open loopholes for estate tax evaders to invest in farm properties solely to protect their wealth. On the surface estate taxes seem crude and unnecessary, especially for the average American; but when you consider the vast difference between the rich and poor nowadays, and you recall why the founders of this country despised landed, multi-generational wealth and the entitlement and undue influence in politics and business it affords you can see why all the implications of any changes in estate taxes laws should be well spelled out and transparent for all to understand. Yes farmers and holders of open space should be allowed to keep these things in the family, so long as it is not just a tax-evasion strategy for those unconcerned with conservation or sustainable agriculture. For the original list of votes see the archived idea here: { Link }

Ohio is one of the most underserved states in the nation, in terms of the amount of public land per capita. The federal government should work with land trusts, the state, conservation organizations and private citizens to expand existing public lands and create new federal and state units around the state. One example would be to start building a "Tecumseh National Forest" centered around the Mohican State Forest in north central Ohio. Ohio should have a recreational public land system to rival those of Pennsylvania and Michigan. Right now it has nothing of the kind. The Federal government should help to build a green infrastructure for Ohio in the 21st century.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Programs like this are an excellent idea because, like all science, environmental science is best learned in an authentic, hands-on manner. Alas, it is true that because there is no state-mandated test for science, all science curriculum is becoming marginalized. Also many, if not most, teachers feel anxious about taking time out of the classroom until the state tests are completed. In our state that means no one is interested in big field trips until May. May may or may not be the best time to observe any given ecosystem or to integrate those observations into the curriculum, but certainly no state park, hatchery or watershed district can handle every school in the region in just one month. So I would agree with the above author that the current educational policies do interfere with the schools' attempts to utilize our national natural resources. Could something be done?

Often designated Wilderness Areas include parts that do not qualify as a TRUE wilderness. DON'T drop the standards that make a wilderness, just to change a title of an area.

The Feds already regulate OHV activities and everything else. This idea is way moot.

A public transportation system of electric, hybrid, or natural gas vehicles in some of our most popular national parks (e.g. Yellowstone) would reduce congestion, noise and pollution from private cars. People who insist on driving their own cars could be charged a hefty fee for the privilege.

Funding for horse trails across each state with linking trails would add so much to our nation. As of now, the horse showing industry is about the only way to safely go and ride a horse. There are very few areas to ride, and to have an adventure with a horse without being run over by a car. I would recommend that the land that was purchased by our Great Smoky Mountain National Park in the state of TN to build the foothills parkway, that may never be built, be designated as the beginning of a national horse trail with watering tanks every 5 miles, tethering and backcountry camping areas for through riders. We have our Appalachian Trail for hikers...let's make a trail for horseback riders that is not treacherous but fun for families and riders of all ages. This would be a benefit to the horse industry and add a safe riding area other than the show circuit for children and adults interested in trail riding.

Giving humans more access has never been a good thing for animals or forests. Leave Wilderness lands wild and free of humans. We have so much area yet animals have so little.

We need to protect more wildlife habitat by designating more of our open spaces as wilderness. It is important for the enjoyment of future generations and for the health of the planet. We need more land that is not used for anything but the replenishment of life. Places where streams can run without polluted run off, where the air is clean and where creatures other than ourselves can live.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The proposal to add 1 acre of OHV land for each new acre of wilderness land unnecessarily pits those who favor preservation and/or restoration of wilderness lands against OHV enthusiasts. Both groups favor increased recreational opportunities and designation of lands for public use, and therefore could work together to achieve their common objectives. At this point, there is no need to redefine the proportion of new recreational lands will allow OHV use. There is an existing precedent, so for the time being, let's follow it: keep the proportion the as it is in existing lands, and as new lands are added, maintain the same proportion. Designation of lands for OHV use can be considered on a case-by-case basis. The proposal seeks to force the government to disproportionately allocate new recreational land for OHV use. Since the current proportion is far below 50%, this has no appropriate basis, and asks that the government favor OHV users over all other groups in the future. Given the environmentally destructive nature of OHVs, this would lead to a proportionate degradation of public recreational lands.

Leg-hold traps are dangerous to humans and pets recreating on public lands, and do not discriminate among species not approved for trapping, endangered or not. The practice is inhumane in the same way cockfighting or dogfighting is inhumane. There is NO EXCUSE for this sort of barbaric practice to be allowed on public land.

I know we have shirking recourses and both groups have legitimate concerns But I think one of the biggest problems is developers buying up land and building big projects in the middle of what should be reserved land for all including the animals that have an equal right to it. This is not going to happen unless the government starts buying the land and does a better job of management for all to enjoy. I really enjoy the out doors I use to hunt and fish and miss both a lot but now the only way for me to enjoy the out doors is use my OHV and I except most limitations the forestry and fish and game have come up with however I see more trails being closed to me. There are different types of disabilities and age is one that affects me I also have other friends that are affected by the same disabilities that depend on OHV's to be able to enjoy the out doors as well. Destroying the trails and back roads is not what we are about but when I see another trail closed because someone in good health wants it just doesn't seem fair. It is a law that you can not discriminate against disabled persons but no one thinks about it when it comes to the out doors. I hope the forestry takes this into account when making future changes.

Outdoor recreation and equipment has evolved dramatically since the Wilderness Act was enacted in 1964. While the Wilderness Act is valuable and has been a net benefit, it often unduly restricts otherwise quiet or otherwise low-impact activities. Mountain biking, climbing, and ski touring are all examples of low-impact activities that are banned in designated wilderness areas. There are only a select few wilderness areas where this level of protection is justified; there is a need for a less stringent forms of protection for lands that we wish to preserve, yet enjoy. The new designations should be tiered - for example, there might be a zone that allows only human-powered activities (such as backcountry skiing) and another that allows motorized activities (OHVs, boats, etc).

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Climate change is already drastically affecting the earth's climate and causing damaging mega-storms and drying out tinder dry forests causing them to be extremely vulnerable to fire. Motor vehicles in the United States are now on about every available road and trail through out the country. This type of vehicle adds to the pollution that the US Government needs to begin reducing. Animals are being pushed further and further into smaller and smaller spaces by the intrusion of motor vehicles into their realm. The recreational use of motor vehicles on federal lands is destructive to the land, destructive to wildlife habitat, noisy, polluting and has reached a stage where it needs to be curtailed and reduced. They have a limited role in a forest environment if the forest is to protect water, wildlife, and soil.

Food for thought: the last time the earth went into a long solar minimum (prolonged lack of sunspots), the earth went into a mini-ice age. We just started coming out of a long solar minimum in January. Yes, we had a harsh winter, but there certainly is no ice age, with glaciers visibly melting all over the world. We thought we would have wars over petroleum? I fear wars over water. When the fresh water glaciers melt, what then? We have got to stop basing energy usage on carbon. There should be a carbon tax on all carbon used. We must start paying the REAL cost of what we are doing to the only planet where we can live! Preserving wildlands helps absorb some of the carbon, any way. It will take a lot more to "fix" what we have destroyed, if we can! How about some stewardship of creation here? How about renewable/sustainable energy? Bark beetles are caused by stresses in the environment. Wake up before it's too late.

How did I fool you? That is exactly what I was saying, we need to enforce the laws we now have on the books instead of looking the other way. I was more talking about grand scale like enforcing the road-less forest laws, environmental safety practices for drilling, mining and logging and strictly enforcing the ESA but sure fining or arresting people for dumping trash in forest areas would be a great thing.

Park rangers play a key role in educating the visiting public about appropriate park uses and in enforcing regulations on inappropriate uses. Interpretive programs that do not incorporate the message of appropriate, low-impact use miss a crucial opportunity to educate park visitors as to what activities are compatible with the objective of preserving and protecting a park's natural resources for the appropriate use and enjoyment of future generations. All possible opportunities should be utilized to promote the concept of appropriate, low-impact access to the visiting public.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands Southeast Oregon is home to the most remote expanse of the Great Basin desert found in the continental United States: the Owyhee Canyonlands. The Oregon Owyhee features red-rock canyons, spiraling volcanic columns, and sagebrush plateaus that offer scenic beauty for visitors and provide homes to a variety of native plants and wildlife. The largest herd of California bighorn sheep can be found in the Owyhee, along with Rocky Mountain Elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse and pygmy rabbits. Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy thrilling whitewater rafting trips in the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River, while bird watchers can scan the skies for soaring golden eagles, prairie falcons and red-tailed hawks in the Canyonlands. Hikers revel in the magnificent solitude, exploring canyons and creeks for days without running into another person. Fisherman cast flies in search of world-class brown trout, small mouth bass and redband trout. The Canyonlands is also host to an array of vivid wildflowers including Indian paintbrush, lupine, and arrowleaf balsamroot and at least 28 endemic plant species like Owyhee clover and Packard's blazing star. Over 2 million acres of wilderness-quality land in the Owyhee remain without permanent protection-- an idea noted by the Department of the Interior when it named the Owyhee as one of fourteen possible landscapes eligible for National Monument designation. Our future generations need the opportunity to enjoy this place in the same way we do today.

Set size goals for parks and public lands so that they are big enough to provide territory for a variety species to eat, live, and breed--as well as corridors for creatures such as turtles to move in-between areas. Connect public lands and parks physically, through such quiet avenues as bicycle trails, and psychologically, by educating people about a network of natural areas that supports life seen and unseen. Help people to grow in respect and love for nature, as they make room for their neighbors, from black bears to dragonflies, who have no voice in this process.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A Call to Protect a Monumental Landscape The Siskiyou Crest is a land of superlatives, a place that evokes excitement from scientists and poets alike, attracting hikers, botanists and outdoors people from around the world to visit, research and explore. (Please see www.siskiyoucrest.org for a full campaign description) Gaining meaningful protections for this ecological and recreational centerpiece of the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion is a primary goal for KS Wild. We are now embarking on a journey to create the Siskiyou Crest National Monument, and we need your help.

A Land Bridge at a Crossroads The crest is geographically and geologically remarkable, consisting of high ridges of complexly varied rock types criss-crossing the Oregon/California border. While almost every other montane system in North America is positioned north to south, the Siskiyou Crest stretches east to west. This unusual orientation gives the crest a vital role as the only high quality habitat corridor connecting the Coast Ranges of Oregon and California to the Cascade and Sierra Mountain systems, creating a “land bridge” much like the crossbar in a giant “H” on the west of the continent. Sitting at the crossroads of so many far-flung ecosystems, the crest contains species from all of them, leading to an exceptional array of life forms living side by side, including many endemic species found nowhere else on earth. The crest is home to the highest concentration of plant species in one area in the state of California, making it a globally significant hotspot for botanical and butterfly diversity. This land bridge effect acts as a travel conduit for wide-ranging mammals to migrate and disperse between populations. Wolverine, marten, lynx, fisher, mountain lion, bear, and elk currently inhabit or have been recently sighted in the area. The cool, clear waters flowing from the crest into the Rogue, Klamath, Applegate, and Illinois basins are a refuge for endangered wild salmon, and provide drinking water for many local communities, including Ashland.

Biodiversity at its Best The Siskiyou Crest contains ancient forests, high elevation meadows, spectacular peaks, free-flowing rivers, native grasslands, oak woodlands, pine savannahs and lush streamside forests. The Siskiyou Mountain Salamander lives only on the slopes of these mountains. Over 20 conifer species grow along the wildlands of the Siskiyou Crest, and the area is associated with numerous rare and unique plant species, including Brewer spruce, Baker cypress, Applegate gooseberry, Siskiyou lewisia and Siskiyou fireweed (see page 13). While hundreds of thousands of acres of the landscape surrounding the crest remains wilderness-quality, very little of it is substantially protected. Industrial logging, road-building, intensive livestock grazing and off-road vehicle abuse have taken a toll on significant areas of the crest.

Why a National Monument? Climate scientists are adding urgency to the calls of conservationists to protect intact habitats immediately. The threats global warming presents to the survival of America's wildlife requires the protection of landscapes that connect critical habitats. While protecting the best, we should also focus on making the degraded landscape more resilient to changing conditions. A national monument designation on the Siskiyou Crest would offer full protection for the most pristine places, while allowing for active management and restoration on already impacted areas. We envision job creation for restoration projects ranging from small diameter thinning to road decommissioning and fire hazard reduction.

No Invitation Required Monument status also encourages public access and provides for continued recreation use, including hiking, camping, hunting, fishing and back-country skiing. Nearly 60 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail pass through the proposed monument, and the main access roads to the area would remain open. Visitation to the area is already a boon for gateway communities as outsiders inevitably spend money in local food and gear stores, restaurants and hotels. Private

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

landowners within the boundary of the monument would see no affect to their property rights, and may witness increased land value. Please visit www.siskiyoucrest.org for much more.

America's public lands are meant for the American people--not special interests like mining, drilling and logging companies. Therefore, the government should promote recreational uses of public lands, and should give priority to the American people whenever there is a conflict.

Designate certain days of the week as non OHV days. That way hikers and backpackers seeking the sounds of the wilderness and encounters with wildlife won't be frustrated by listening to motorized vehicles and raised voices. You're not gonna see many animals with that racket. Hopefully this would reduce the antagonism between the two groups

Do us hikers not drive to trailheads? Do we not live longer if we are healthier? I think instead of alienating the OHVs, who will never completely go away, we can increase public OHV education regarding personal safety and local environmental safety. We can remove OHV trails that cross back and forth over stream bed and riparian habitat, as they recently did in Georgia. We minimize greed by recognizing the number of existing miles of ATV trails and the number of existing areas of Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area, and wilderness-character lands and try to keep them balanced. There are many more ways we can deal with climate change because the ATV-guzzlers are not the ONLY ones to blame, even though they do use a lot of gasoline. How about a hybrid ATV? Solar panels and local noise factor! That would be a great way to improve the industry.

Existing park space should be fully usable by the people, not preserved and made inaccessible. We have millions of acres here in NYS that the government cannot afford to manage, but they try to keep the people from having the full usage. The governments role should not be in purchasing additional land for preservation with tax dollars.

In the interest of safety for the many families enjoying wilderness and other areas of National Parks & Monuments, please do not allow anyone other than park rangers to carry firearms of any kind--whether openly or hidden. I am one of many, many people who hesitate to hike in our local national parks because we are afraid that we may run into someone with a gun. This needs to become law, and it needs to be enforced.

It would be far better to require recycling of the old tires when new tires are purchased and placed on a vehicle and not allow the old tires to be removed from the premises. If someone wants to use those tires on another vehicle, they can bring said vehicle in and have the old tires mounted. A deposit is not the way to go.

My idea of Cap and trade is to tax heavily all offroad vehicles as well as speedboats , motorhomes , giant pickups and suv's , Also houses over 200 Sq ft but that is another subject .

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

No, I'm sorry but we Americans as a group have rights too. What do you mean by full usage? We don't have "full usage" on most all public property. No ORVs in grave yards, no boom boxes in concert halls. No camera's in area's of national security. No mining for copper at the Statue of Liberty. Use must be compatible with the mission for the public ownership of the property. Government acts as our representative to do the jobs that no one one else will or can do. One of those jobs is preserving some of our land as God created it.

OHV trails are an excellent use for abandoned strip mines, clear-cut areas, and other sites of environmental disasters. If they're willing to use those places, and we designate those places as public parks, I'm fine with that. Just keep the machines (but not necessarily their owners) out of the as yet undamaged areas, or those areas on their way to some kind of recovery.

OHV use is a legitimate use of public lands, but due to it's impact on soils, water, wildlife and other users OHV use does need management. Trails are great for OHVs, but some riders choose to ride off trail. The default management of BLM lands in the west is that land is open to cross country travel unless designated otherwise. While this designation made sense when user numbers were small, with growing popularity of recreational OHV use, management needs to keep pace with usage. A portion of BLM lands should be designated for cross country travel. If land is not designated for cross country travel, it is not open for cross country travel. Designating lands as open to cross country travel should remove much of the confusion that results in riders leaving the trail when they are supposed to stay on the trail.

One of the worst problems any generation will ever face is the one we face now - global climate change. All forestry policy and wilderness policy should be shaped to protect the planet from further global climate change and the destruction that will come from it. We need to get OUT of our vehicles and we certainly do NOT need to be driving all sorts of little personal gas guzzlers all over what wilderness and wildlife habitat we have left. We need to guard against more pollution and more greenhouse gases - and most especially this is so in sensitive lands.

The federal government could encourage states to place a five dollar deposit on tires. This would ensure tires are brought to recyclers and lead to less people dumping their tires in the woods. When you buy new tires your old tires would cover the deposit so there would be little or no added expense for the average citizen, but people who have been saving tires, unable to afford to recycle so many at once, would be able to receive a little financial boost which they would put back into the economy instead of the forests, streams, and trails.

It stops new road construction in national forests in areas that don't already have roads. There are already way too many roads in national forsests. More than can be maintained.

Global Warming is definitely a national and international problem. I have just recently begun to visit national parks in the USA. In 2011, I plan to visit Glacier National Park. From information I received from Glacier NP, the glaciers have receded at an alarming rate. Not only have the glaciers receded, but polar bears are affected also with the global warming. Other wildlife are also affected by global warming. Legislation needs to be passed to deal with global warming.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Public lands should be quiet harmonious places, where people can experience nature at its best and see sites they have never seen before, take pictures and bring those pictures to all who have never been to the public lands. The recent PBS special by Ken Burns on the public lands did us a great service, by showing all that watched what there is to see in our great and beautiful country. The spiritual feeling I felt when at Muir Woods several years ago, would be destroyed by the roar of recreational engines. Muir Woods just as an example by being a quiet and reflective place should be preserved to allow nature to give us the connection to the spirit. It is told that when a President, I think it was Theodore Roosevelt or it could have been Woodrow Wilson, wanted to bring to life the League of Nations, which then became the United Nations, he brought the delegation that was influential in deciding the fate of the League of Nations to Muir Woods and the deed was done. Muir Woods influenced all that gathered to bring all the nations together in a League of Nations. These quiet reflective places that stir the soul, should be preserved for all generations to experience.

I wholeheartedly promote this idea provided traditional access roads remain open. I can't speak for Alaska, but there is much land in need of wilderness protection in the desert SW. This area is largely waterless, so closing traditional roads would prevent any and all access for most. These areas should be difficult to access, but this is the case even in a Jeep or OHV.

When I buy any recreational equipment, that doesn't give me the right to demand that the US government provide me with a place to use that equipment. I don't care whether it's a pair of hiking boots, an ATV, or an RV. Federal land managers should look at the capability of the land for different types of recreation, and provide opportunities for those that are consistent with that capability. When any form of recreation exceeds the capacity of the land, it should be cut back. That's been done with hiking for many years as trails have been closed or relocated. It's now being done with OHVs. Limits apply to everybody.

I agree. The job of National Parks is to preserve the natural beauty of these places, not destroy it. The gasoline engine is not a part of this natural world and its use should be severely limited on lands that have been set apart as parkland.

Totally agree with #11. Implement the ideas of the National Parks 2nd century commission.

Implement most of the ideas for the National Parks 2nd Century commission including more funding for upkeep, maintenance, new purchases, conservation corps funding as a green jobs and economic stimulus, paying more attention to migration corridors and staffing. The only worry I have are off road motor vehicle use by visitors, including but not limited to snowmobiles and ATV's. These should not be used in pristine wilderness areas. Part of the pristine nature of these places is the lack of noise as well as undevelopment of the land.

As an outdoor person, I see the value and quality of life when shared with others, everyone is a different person when involved with nature, we must implement the best recommendations provided by the National Parks 2nd Century commission.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Quite honestly, I would rather my taxes be increased if it meant better environmental protection.

The San Gabriel mountains are a fantastic resource for hikers. Making it part of the National Parks would provide the resources it needs to accomodate the millions of people who visit each year.

The BLM is yet another renegade Government agency. They slap the law in the face. The BLM has taken millions of acres away from America's Wild Horse. Their horrendous management of America's Wild Horse and the BLM's flaunting of the 1971 Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act is staggering. I thought we were a Nation of law? Where is Congress in this? What is the Dept of the Interior doing? Our voices are being ignored, swept aside just like the law. We are no longer a Democracy. We are ruled by special interests. The management of our treasured wild horses is a shining example of our country being taken over by those with money. For whom does the BLM work as demonstrated by their management of America's Wild Horse? Where are the scientific, facts that substantiate the BLM's actions towards this now threatened, vulnerable, suffering animal? Threatened, vulnerable and suffering at the hands of the BLM. What is the REAL reason America's Wild Horse is being driven from our public lands? President Obama, Sec'y Salazar and Congress, i demand an answer based on scientific fact. Nothing less than a study done by the National Academy of Sciences will suffice. Public hearings need to be conducted. All actions of the covert BLM need to have sunlight shone on them. Why are these roundups conducted without public observation? The whole thing rather reminds me of the MMS, BP and the destroyed Gulf of Mexico. By the way, speaking of environmental degradation, cattle will degrade our Public Lands horses do not.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our government should STOP letting big companies do whatever they want or should I say do what they want and face no really penalty if they get caught. Take a good look at BP right now. What banalities are they facing? Our own government has yet to file any federal charges or make them totally responsible in any way shape or form. If it was a small to medium business'; they probably would be in jail with outrageous financial penalties hanging over their heads. If our government started passing strong, tough, no loop hole or grandfather clauses; but real honest to goodness Conservation laws - then our government would collect a lot of money for the ones that can afford it and they could use that money toward Conservation programs. Bio Gems is a great resource and A strong, non-profit company that looks out for the Planet, wildlife, the environment, our Oceans, etc. I truly believe that our government can do a whole lot more. Heck, I am fighting to get recycling of Plastic and glass in my town. Plastic which is so highly used and they don't want to be bothered. Think if our Government made the recycling law; my town would have to follow it or pay fines. Which do you think they would do. And if you want a real kick-in-the-teeth - a great family had started their own recycling business and the town shut them down and charged them all kinds of financial fees. They were at the farmer's market every Saturday to take your stuff, pick up once a week at your house, they made a lot of people much more aware and encouraged them to recycle. I still can't believe it. Our family went from using 3 garbage cans a week to at the most 3/4 of a can a week. Big difference. Now if our Government made it Federally Mandatory and everyone started recycling; the money saved and/or could be made. Companies are looking for large loads of stuff to recycle and will pay for the used product and recycle it and make money. See our government could start and/or fund some new recycling companies (either collecting; distribution; recycling; etc.) There are a lot of possibilities and this would greatly help the dumps, wildlife, pest and bugs would decrease, general waste; just to mention a few. I really pray this idea gets off the ground. I see so much potential with little work but a few small changes that will really add up.

In the western 12 states the federal government already owns 48% of the land. They should sell it to the states & private citizens who have a better track record of conservation.

Personally, at times I wish that the local lands could be voted on by those living and residing there as to how public lands will be used. Unfortunately, the Federal Government will always have the last and final say - so good luck working with the Feds. Normally, whatever they want they and their corporate interests get!

Rachel, the government will spend several million dollars to build roads so lumber companies can log in an area that will produce \$100,000.00 worth of lumber. Your point is it would be too expensive to pay someone for their property if the land was turned into a national park? I say it would be a worthwhile expense. What I was talking about was not every area needs facilities (park store, full time employees, new roads, etc.). What I've seen in my state is when the federal government creates a national park or forest, the people who have property there stay until they want to sell, then the federal government is given the first shot at buying the property.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Geez, if you're worried about not having tax dollars for basic services, perhaps you should let your Congressional reps know they should stop spending A TRILLION DOLLARS (!!!!!!!) on endless wars! With the money we're handing over to the military industrial complex we could have free health care, beautifully managed national parks & forests, free college educations for our children, a healthy Social Security system, and on and on. Our military budget is MORE THAN ALL OTHER COUNTRIES ON THE PLANET COMBINED. Think about what else could be done with that money to benefit all of us.

To lay down, give up and let large corporations have all the tax exemptions and subsidies they want is essentially flushing our country down the drain for good. If you look at the countries that were least affected by the economic crash that destroyed us, you will see a pattern. Their politicians don't take money from those companies like ours do. They also have much higher regulations and taxes and WAY more social programs that support their average citizens. Big oil and coal cost the average American more than they benefit us. The top 10 percentile in the world controls something like 90% of the economy. Why is it that the no tax, no regulation and trickle down fantasies have done nothing for us in the last 40 years but create a greater disparity between rich and poor? Why have we continually fallen down the ranks of education and our money is devalued amongst top nations in the world? Taxes on the rich and the corporations MUST be GREATLY used to dig us out of this hole. Our population will not disappear, therefore the demand for those services won't either. Let the rich and the corporations run away and leave. They will lose all the business from the 350+ million people still living here and it will open up the market to new companies who care about the triple bottom line. During the greatest economic times the US has ever seen, taxes were upwards of 90%. Almost everyone was doing well back then. TAX THE TOP, it's the only way.

As our population grows and more pressure is placed on our National Parks and wilderness areas it becomes increasingly important to provide financial support for staffing and maintenance. The federal government must play the primary role in the funding efforts.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Lets see, deficit spending is over some trillions of dollars and we should spend more money we don't have to fund our National Parks. Exactly HOW DUMB IS THAT? People do not have jobs, nor are there going to be any jobs as long as business owners and CEOs of corporations do not create jobs. Why? Little economics lesson here, folks: Radical leftist government, constantly in flux, changing the rules as fast as that horse changed color in the Wizard of Oz, businesses have no clue what's going to happen next -- waiting to see how ObamaCare, Illegal immigration, regulatory reform, and who knows what else the Obama Congress has in store for America plays out, and PEOPLE WANT TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL PARKS? I SAY, OBAMA, YOU AND YOUR CHICAGO THUGS IN CONGRESS, GO ON VACATION UNTIL JANUARY -- MAYBE BUSINESSES WILL STOP WORRYING THAT YOU HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO CLUE HOW TO RUN A GOVERNMENT AND START CREATING JOBS. If I were you people, unless of course you work for this over bloated hog of a government, I would worry about having a job in the very near future, instead of increasing funds for the National Parks -- hey, I get it -- you guys want to work for the National Park Service, NO wonder! I must be on the wrong website -- I was looking for the one that believes in protecting State public lands and Private citizens' lands from the Federal government's BIG UNCONSTITUTIONAL LAND GRAB ACROSS AMERICA.

Thank you, for providing a little balance. Stop... I say STOP the reckless spending! Focus on what we HAVE to fund. Reduce Federal Government's control. Stop the powergrab!

Keep in mind that in many cases, landlocked public land is landlocked because the surrounding land was a free or nearly free gift from the public through homesteading, mining grants, etc. While I don't advocate renegeing on the transfers of ownership of those lands, I do feel that the current landowners owe some consideration for the public's interest in the landlocked public property. Possible approaches are 1. Deny grazing or other rights for landlocked public lands to owners of surrounding lands who do not allow public access across their lands. Granting the access doesn't cost the landowners anything substantial, but restores the balance of fairness for public access. 2. Grant property tax relief for land dedicated to public right-of-ways across private land adjacent to public land. The Federal Government would compensate local governments for the loss of revenue that results.

I think the #3 comment for an exit fee to help fund the national parks is a great idea! If the government also cut its overspending on unnecessary and ineffective programs and advertising, recouped monies from overpayments and owed funds, and simply kept a more stringent control and review of given loans and grants, we would have plenty of money for our parks!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

"I am anti hunting of struggling, threatened, and endangered animals." Much like said, there is no state that allows any endangered species that legally open to be killed. Trophy hunting is huge money in this country. As long as the rules and regulations are followed there is nothing wrong with this practice. I myself have killed multiple trophy bucks, but at the same time I have harvested those animals for food. The public and our government should be supportive of all fishing and hunting as it a money maker for our economy across the United States every year. Even through the economic lows of our country in the last few years the amount spent on hunting and fishing is still on the increase. With increase in funding to our state agencies there would be a greater chance to help protect these beautiful landscapes and animals that are in our great country.

Better idea: Get rid of all political parties and make legislators vote individually, not according to some stupid party platform.

I'm fairly conservative, but Irene Schmidt makes a good point. We do spend way too much on defense. Being the only remaining superpower, you'd think we could cut back a bit now...

The BLM has been mismanging our public lands for decades. Foreign corporations such as British Petroleum rule. They are right now removing thousands of wild horses from several states to make way for the Ruby Pipeline. All at taxpayer expense. They allowed the BP Gulf disaster to happen and they are allowing mining and drilling on public lands without environmental studies. They do make money on mining and drilling leases but they are not at fair market value. They are at fees that were set decades ago. When the West was vast and unpopulated. They've blown hundreds of millions of dollars on wild horse and burro "control". They are feeding 38,000 stuck in pens in the Midwest right now. They've emptied lands set aside by Congress for horses and burros of horses and burros. They paid one family over \$12 million dollars to round up horses using helicopters in the last ten years. They lose hundreds of millions annually on the cattle/sheep grazing permit program. Yes, I said LOSE. Large corporations, some foreign owned graze over ten million cows on public land for pennies. Not even close to fair market value. Producing less than 3% of US beef but at a ecological cost and taxpayer cost of billions. Family ranchers hold a small minority of permits. Ted Turner has permits though. He could certainly afford to pay fair market value, ya think? The Myth of the Cowboy and Good Old Boy politics has ruled the BLM for decades. The General Accounting Office (GAO) has documented their excesses and waste but nothing has been done. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar is a Democrat but has acted like a Reagan/Bush Republican during his time in office. Oh yea, he is a cattle rancher....

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Horses did evolve in North America. This has not been in question look in any textbook on the subject. Horses spread to Asia and Europe via the Bering Sea Land Bridge. Humans came to North America via the same land bridge. Horse bones that have been dated to long before Columbus have been found in North America with spear/knife marks on them. Recently, cliffs in Canada have been found with hundreds of horse bones with tool marks on them below, indicating that early Native Americans drove whole herds off the cliffs to their deaths for food. While climate change may have played a part in the possible extinction of horses in North America, human predation did too. When the Spanish brought horses to our shores in the 1500's they were re-populating them not bringing an invasive species. Regardless they've been here 500 years which is far longer than most of our ancestors..... The Bureau of Land Management has been in the horse business for thirty years. They have spent hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. They have 38,000 horses in pens in the Mid West right now. More than on the range. There are tens of millions of cattle on our public lands in the West and about 30,000 horses. Do the math, cattle are destroying the ecosystem, not horses. There are scientific studies that prove this yet the BLM persists in removing horses spending hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars in the process. The BLM grazing permit program loses over \$100 million annually. Most permit holders are large corporations not family ranchers producing less than 3% of our beef. Foreign owned mining and drilling corporations are raping our public lands as well. British Petroleum is part of the Ruby Pipeline going through several states and thousands of horses are being rounded up this summer to make way. Horses with nowhere to go but feedlots in the Midwest costing the taxpayers millions to feed as they stand nose to tail in misery. Madeline Pickens has proposed to buy land for a sanctuary with her own money and donations not taxpayer money. She has proposed to take all of the horses now in pens. She has asked the BLM for grazing leases surrounding the sanctuary to pay for horses grazing instead of cattle and they have refused. They have refused all offers from all groups to have grazing leases to let them go to wildlife or horses. The BLM is lying in the first place about them being over populated. There are only about 150 mustangs in all of Montana. How can that be over populated? Look on a map. Lands set aside for mustangs by Congress in 1971 are being emptied out. The BLM is zeroing out whole herds all over the West. Colorado is close to losing every mustang. There is no cost to leaving them be. It would be a huge savings and if the BLM spent a few million on parking and signage and advertising tourists would come by the thousand to try to see a wild horse. American Mustangs are fantastic riding horses that are very trainable and very healthy, their feet and legs are far healthier than modern horses. There are multiple groups and programs working to get some trained and adopted but the horse market is terrible now due to over breeding by pros and back yard breeders. Slaughter was a dirty little secret for many professional breeders and now that it has been stopped breeders must cut back. Mustangs should not be caught in the crossfire. We should be advertising these healthy hardy horses to the world not treating them like worthless plugs. They are just as much a symbol of America as the bald eagle and the bison.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

FYI Madeline Pickens is a long time horse owner. She isn't some do gooder with no clue. Her former husband was Allen Poulson and together they bred and raced some of the top Thoroughbreds of the last twenty years such as Cigar, Azeri and Rock Hard Ten. She has a website and a Facebook page detailing her plans for a mustang sanctuary and is taken seriously by everyone but the BLM.....

54 Congressional Representatives sent a letter to the BLM in July of this year asking them to stop the round ups but they were ignored. The BLM insists they are "saving" the horses and they have convinced many including Congress, the Senate and several Presidents that this is true. There are about 150 mustangs in all of Montana. Look on a map and see that saying they are over populated is ridiculous.

The BLM is a rogue agency that is managing OUR wild horses and burros on OUR public lands into extinction in order to pander to special interests in their incessant land grab of rangelands designated by law to our wild equines as stated in the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. The BLM refuses to be transparent, they lie about EVERYTHING to justify this shameful equicide, they waste taxpayers' money, they break one law after the other and they apparently answer to NO ONE and all the while the will of the American people to preserve these national treasures is completely ignored. THIS MUST STOP NOW! It is time to clean house!

I am strongly opposed to the government closing more federal lands to multiple use and even more against the government purchasing more private lands. Wilderness type of lands are nonproductive lands and with the economy so bad these days it would be the wrong thing to do.

In Washington designated "forestland" gets a huge property tax break, with the property tax bill for 1,000 acres of timberland about the same as a medium sized home. This tax break is in place because forestland has public benefits, including outdoor recreational access. Since this tax break was put in place, many large timberland landowners have closed their land to recreation, even charging a fee. These type of property tax breaks should be reduced if private landowners insist on keeping the public out. The resulting revenue could be dedicated to providing recreation on public land.

As a non-hunting hiker, I give a big thumbs-up to this idea. I've often felt hunters and anglers put us backpackers to shame on the "put your money where your mouth is" front! Most wildlife enthusiasts I know voluntarily donate to conservation organizations, but I doubt the average casual weekend backpacker is putting up %11 of what they paid for their boots, tent, pack, and camp stove. (should be aware that most tent-camping and hiking gear not related to hunting or fishing isn't included in current federal excise tax programs.) Granted, some hikers aren't going to use their gear on public land. Well, some hunters belong to private hunt clubs, and some anglers fish on private property, but they're still paying the excise taxes on their gear.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

At the very least, the federal government should prohibit children under the age of 16 from driving ATVs on public land because that practice is simply too dangerous according to the American Academy of Pediatricians and other medical, safety, and health groups. Pediatricians and neurosurgeons who have to deal with the deaths and the brain and spinal cord injuries to children on a regular basis want to see this practice stopped. Young children do not have the physical or mental abilities needed to safely drive these vehicles. The federal government should take the lead by banning this dangerous practice on federal lands since the Consumer Products Safety Commission and other agencies are well of the risks.

While I don't think the First Family necessarily needs to DO more camping, it would be good if they mentioned more of what they have done.

We have a unique opportunity to use the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War and the attention it will draw to make a difference probably for the last time to preserve the battlefields of that conflict. Whether it is to support increasing land preservation or fighting to keep urban sprawl and traffic from interfering with tourists visiting those hallowed grounds (i.e. Walmart at Wilderness or Casinos at Gettysburg to name a few.) Mr. President, please support any efforts to at least maintain current funding for preservation and the National Park system if not increasing those budget items. Even taking 1% of what you are attempting to save in Defense spending and putting towards these efforts can help. If it was important enough to the veterans of the Civil War to work together North and South to preserve the battlefields of that conflict, its the least we can do and the current generation to do the same.

This idea has merit and should really be considered. There are incredible opportunities throughout the country for federal dollars to leverage private investments in conservation. In the Hudson Valley region of New York State, Scenic Hudson's Saving The Land That Matters Most initiative proposes to match every public dollar with an equal share of private monies. The return on investment increases significantly for the federal government and taxpayer when one considers that a significant portion of the public investment would come from local communities through initiatives supported at the local ballot box.

Urban parks would be an ideal opportunity to provide school students with an opportunity to experience nature first hand. Programs can teach them about conservation, restoration projects, wildlife, and recycling. This may be the only avenue for innercity kids to explore, enjoy and participate in nature. This experience can only grow and develop with the years. The federal government's role is to provide for experienced park rangers, equipping them with the necessary tools to run the parks and to provide educational programs. Urban parks must be protected from builders or those who want to encroach upon this land by official designation from the Park Service (e.g., National Wilderness Area). For those like me with physical disabilities, urban parks would help us to get outdoors and walk or ride wheelchairs if pathways can be developed that would be wheel-friendly.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The drug cartels love your idea! Arizona wilderness areas, nature connectivity corridors, national monuments, etc. have restrictions on law enforcement that restrict them from traveling freely and make them ideal corridors for drug and human smuggling. Federal lands in Arizona are THE entryway of choice for murderers, rapists, and terrorists. More than 50% of all illegal entry into this country is through federal lands in Arizona. There are restrictions on BLM employees telling them where they can and cannot go just to protect their lives because of all the thugs out in the National Monuments protecting their drug loads and have no respect for human life. Ranchers are getting shot. Not just Rob Krentz. Ranchers 50 miles north of the Krentz ranch have been shot at while just minding their business. The cartels will always have guns. They are murderers. My home is on the smuggling trail. There is a rape field near my house, a whole roadless area full of rape trees. In the Sonoran Desert National Monument just 30 miles south of Phoenix and 80 miles north of Mexico, there are signs warning citizens not to travel there because that land is owned by the drug cartels. Border Patrol Chief Aguilar called the area from that point south to the border a "third country. And you want to take guns away from law abiding citizens? People live and work in these areas. They have the right to go on living!

that is an ignorant statement. We go through hundreds of hours of planning with state, local and federal agencies to plan any new ORV trail.

Great discussion. Glad to note most of the comments stay on wildlife corridors and what they mean to the health of our planet and our own health. Interesting to watch the usual suspects from the OHV crowd try to turn the focus on their issues. I am not a scientist. I do have a forestry degree and training as a land steward. So my observations are based on 40 years of living, working, hiking, and studying a small headwaters in southern Oregon. In my travels I have compared this small ecosystem to other areas. In the little mid-elevation migratory corridor where I live, 40 years have seen a lot of changes. There are no more pheasant. The timber wolves are gone. There are fewer hawks, more ravens. Both grouse and quail are in decline, while flocks of turkeys now roam the hills. There are fewer porcupines, more raccoons. Fewer bobcats, more cougars. I have no illusions that these changes are the result of changes in this one drainage. The landscape is changing, and changes in the valley bring changes to these mountains. The real problem is that no one is asking why. Our government is doing a poor job of protecting our health by failing to protect the health of our planet.

O.K., Sonny, I'm trying to follow the logic here. You don't like rich people who live extravagantly. Got it. Have to agree. They are the ones telling you your activities are ruining the planet. If so, that is, of course, hypocritical. But - are they the only ones telling you about the problems they see with your activity? These minions you speak of.....would that be the government employees that (supposedly) work for all of us? Not just the rich.....although maybe their bosses just work for the rich. Admittedly, our citizenry is a bit confused on that point. Now here's where I'm having trouble with your logic. You want to strike back at rich people by spending ten to fifteen thousand dollars on a play machine, a couple thousand more on a toy hauler, and then rip up the public commons? That, my friend, is not logical.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want to help define some terms and clarify some thoughts on this contentious issue. Wilderness (with a capital W) is federally designated on Forest Service land for essentially no human change. There is no firefighting, timber cutting, mining, motorized vehicles, etc. There are over 100 million acres in the US, with a large part in Alaska, but quite a bit in the western states. Smaller portions in the eastern US forests. wilderness (small w) is whatever we think it is, usually land without houses. Some is private, or public. Some is managed for timber production. There is something like 600 million acres of forest land in the US, plus hundreds of million acres of open/desert/range land that provides wildlife habitat. West of the Mississippi, over 50% of the land is owned and controlled by the federal government. Total for the US is something like 43%. Add the state and local government land, and conservation easements, and well over half of the nation is protected from development already. How we use that land (timber, wilderness, wildlife habitat, mining, ranching, etc) is open to constant debate and change. Over the last 30 years I have seen that change more and more to Wilderness and semi-Wilderness use. We are a wealthy nation that can afford to "not use" our land, as long as we can import food and wood from other nations. The Nature conservancy is a non-profit multinational corporation that has accumulated over 2.7 billion dollars in assets. Most of the species of wildlife in America are doing just fine. Black Bears for example, which use huge swaths of habitat and are an indicator of healthy landscape ecology, are on the increase in all the northeastern states. When we discuss perishing species and loss of "biodiversity", this is mostly in developing nations and not a huge problem in the US. There is an extreme proposal called the Wildlands Project, which has published maps of huge areas of land as basically off limits to human use, with connecting corridors and buffer areas where farming and forest management might be "allowed". Several states use these maps for their long term planning. They promote the government taking these lands and designating them as they have proposed. The federal government has a track record of either taking huge swaths of land from citizens, or creating conditions where the land become valueless, (such as losing water rights,, access, or development rights) and the owners become "willing sellers" or willing donors to groups like TNC. A quick cruise through google earth will show any interested party the extent of undeveloped "wilderness" that is available for wildlife. The USA imports a large proportion of wood products from other countries, while our western forests burn and eastern forests rot. Wood is the very best raw material on environmental grounds, using less energy and creating less pollution than almost every other raw material. Think globally and act locally.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree with a recent article by Kurt Repanshek, the basic premise of which is that its not we/USA/Fed gov't doesn't have the money (we do, as we have a budget every year) its that many of us believe the priorities are out of whack. And while I agree the deficit is an issue and we need to reduce, if not abolish it, I STILL believe we should fund national parks, a new CPCC, etc. Again, its about priorities, and mine lie here. Here is an excerpt from the article: "The chronic under-funding of the National Park Service is not now and has not been for the past 50 years a matter of money – it is a matter of priorities!" Dr. Pitcaithley told those who attended that conference back in April. "Five billion dollars amounts to 0.002 percent of the president's 2008 proposed budget." For the sake of comparison, while the National Park Service slogs along with its insufficient budget, the Defense Department is funded at roughly \$550 billion, the professor points out. Just one B-2 bomber costs \$2 billion, he adds for emphasis. "Do you really think the American people would notice if this country's military industrial complex held one less bomber than it does today and that those funds were transferred to the National Park Service?" he wonders. "The president and Congress took less than ten minutes to determine that the economy needed an economic stimulus package totaling \$150 billion. Do you think anyone would have complained if it were \$148 billion? And the resulting \$2 billion saving were given to the National Park Service?" Over at the U.S. Marine Corps, Dr. Pitcaithley points to the Osprey aircraft that cost \$110 million apiece. "They are currently being sent to Iraq even though military analysts believe they don't work as designed," he says. "Here's the punch line: Several branches of the military are planning to purchase 400 of these flawed aircraft! Four hundred times \$110 million equals \$44 billion!" The money is there. The problem, though, is we let Congress get away with more than a few decisions that are terribly misguided. The problem is that there are not enough advocates for the National Park System. "It's not a matter of money, it's a matter of priorities and the National Park Service over the years has not developed a constituency that will lobby on behalf of it. The National Park Conservation Association is simply not enough and clearly no match for other park interest groups. If you doubt that in any way, consider the recent ... effort by the National Rifle Association to change decades-long NPS policy on guns in parks," says Dr. Pitcaithley. "A goofy idea by any measurement, but one that went unopposed except by a handful of editors. "In the world I envision for the National Park Service, the 50 congressmen who endorsed the (gun) proposal would have been instantly balanced by 50 congressmen and women who opposed it – delegates in Congress who had been cultivated over the years to support various pieces of legislation that benefit the national parks and, through the parks, the American public. Where are those congressmen and women? Why don't we do that? The Department of Defense passes up no opportunity and spares no expense in cultivating congressmen to support its programs. Why doesn't the National Park Service do the same?" When you realize that a single B-2 bomber retails for \$2 billion, is it really far-fetched to want to believe that the National Park System with its 391 units stretching from Acadia National Park to Zion National Park is worth at least three bombers?

SUPPORT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND INDUSTRIES THAT HAVE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER ALREADY FOR QUIT SOMETIME NOW PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THESE PROGRAMS IN THE "BEST" AND THE "WORST" OF TIMES -

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Perhaps we need a new political party that respects the public nature of the environment and the need to respect the work of scientists while still holding individuals accountable for their own personal needs and for budgeting independently. I don't think the government needs to provide everyone with everything, but we don't have a private company creating air, water, and wildlife for individual sale. No, we do share some things in this world and must manage them with the understanding that one cannot create scientific principles the way we create art or ideologies. No, science is something that has to be understood and accepted. It is not like the fashion industry, politics, entertainment, poetry, etc.... that has cycling trends. We can't just 'will' oxygen to be produced with the shake of a magic wand. We can't avoid food shortages or desertification by putting all our trust in the charismatic twinkling smile of a talk show host, corporate CEO, or scientifically illiterate conservative or liberal politician.

I don't think that scientists who study primate social systems in the Congo and compare the highly organized knowledge sharing of those primates in undisturbed areas with the less organized and less well versed in survival strategies of those in highly human impacted areas are trying to bring down the economy of the people in the Congo. Seriously, scientists are simply looking to understand what they are studying and how it is impacted by all kinds of external variables. If I am just an avid reader of wildlife books and I don't even belong to any organization (which I don't), then why do I agree that we should share our planet and designate areas for wildlife protection in every country in the world. The United States should care about its own ecosystems as much as about those in other countries, and I can't say i blame scientists in other countries for looking at our environmental practices as many of us look at theirs. It hurts to think that more oil has been spilled in wilderness areas of Uganda than anywhere else. It hurts to think that happens anywhere on Earth. i may not be in favor of expansion of many government programs and I may agree with the conservative fiscal responsibility viewpoint, but not where environmental matters are at stake. I agree when it comes to people taking responsibility for their own personal needs, but we all breathe the same oxygen, and can you find one politician anywhere who can explain how oxygen is generated? Probably not on the Right or on the Left. Politicians, from Socialists to Republicans tend to understand very little about any aspect of science, and if it costs them money, they are going to understand it even less.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

No money left because * The federal government cannot account for \$24.5 billion spent in 2003. * A White House review of just a sample of the federal budget identified \$90 billion spent on programs deemed that were either ineffective, marginally adequate, or operating under a flawed purpose or design. * The Congressional Budget Office published a "Budget Options" book identifying \$140 billion in potential spending cuts. * The federal government spends \$23 billion annually on special interest pork projects such as grants to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, or funds to combat teenage "goth" culture in Blue Springs, Missouri. * Washington spends tens of billions of dollars on failed and outdated programs such as the Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Geological Survey and Economic Development Association. * The federal government made \$20 billion in overpayments in 2001. * The Department of Housing and Urban Development's \$3.3 billion in overpayments in 2001 accounted for over 10 percent of the department's total budget. * Over one recent 18-month period, Air Force and Navy personnel used government-funded credit cards to charge at least \$102,400 for admission to entertainment events, \$48,250 for gambling, \$69,300 for cruises, and \$73,950 for exotic dance clubs and prostitutes. * Examples of wasteful duplication include: 342 economic development programs; 130 programs serving the disabled; 130 programs serving at-risk youth; 90 early childhood development programs; 75 programs funding international education, cultural, and training exchange activities; and 72 federal programs dedicated to assuring safe water. * The Advanced Technology Program spends \$150 million annually subsidizing private businesses, and 40% of this goes to Fortune 500 companies. * The Defense Department wasted \$100 million on unused flight tickets, and never bothered to collect refunds even though the tickets were reimbursable. * The Conservation Reserve program pays farmers \$2 billion annually to not farm their land. * Washington spends \$60 billion annually on corporate welfare, versus \$43 billion on homeland security. * The Department of Agriculture spends \$12 billion to \$30 billion annually on farm subsidies, the vast majority of which go to agribusinesses and farmers averaging \$135,000 in annual income. * Massive farm subsidies also go to several members of Congress, and celebrity "hobby farmers" such as David Rockefeller, Ted Turner, Scottie Pippen, and former Enron CEO Ken Lay. * The Medicare program pays as much as eight times the cost that other federal agencies pay for the same drugs and medical supplies. * Congressional investigators were able to receive \$55,000 in federal student loan funding for a fictional college they created to test the Department of Education. * The Army Corps of Engineers has been accused of illegally manipulating data to justify expensive but unnecessary public works projects. * Food stamp overpayments cost \$600 million annually. * School lunch program abuse costs \$120 million annually. * Veterans' program overpayments cost \$800 million annually. * Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) overpayments cost \$9 billion annually. * Better tracking of student loan recipients would save \$1 billion annually. * Preventing states from using accounting tricks to secure additional Medicaid funds would save several billion dollars annually. * Medicare contractors owe the federal government \$7 billion. Keep creating more government programs America! Keep sending Washington MORE MONEY! Intelligent people would solve their perceived problems in the private sector where they are forced to make a profit and are held accountable.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This program is critical, strengthening land trusts in the Upper Hudson Valley and throughout NYS - it supports transaction costs, building capacity for land trusts and vastly increasing the ability of government to assist and support property owners.

Great idea! Everyone should be able to enjoy the sky at night as part of our national heritage. In the northeast there are many cultural sites which are unidentified or unstudied. These sites were meant to be viewed at sunrise, sunset and during certain night events, such as the Perseid Meteor shower. These ceremonial landscapes played a 'lost' role in our nation's history. The federal government could now play an important role in supporting the identification and protection of these sites. The federal government could also play a role in reforming our nighttime lighting - inefficient fixtures, wasteful timing and overuse of lighting. 'Dark sky' street fixtures are no more expensive than traditional fixtures. Residential lighting can also be manufactured to be 'dark sky' friendly - I own several. The federal government could provide incentives to states and towns to become more lighting efficient. Public education could go a long way. A one night national 'dark sky' event could bring partners together to raise awareness of the beauty of the night sky as part of our great outdoors and to generate support for more year round changes. In the recent National Geographic issue, a nonprofit in New York working with community farms asked children who had participated in their programs if they had seen the stars - sadly only two children who had recently immigrated from Africa could answer 'yes'. Viewing the stars should part of the outdoor experience for every child. Consider starting with a 'Big Star Night' on August 11th each summer to coincide with the Perseid Meteor shower. Partners around the country would offer local family oriented events (a sort of 'Trails Night' similar to Trails Day). When everyone realizes what we've been missing, it'll generate excitement for restoring our national night sky.

Although this suggestion focuses on a specific project, the bigger theme is that successful cooperative and collaborative efforts reap extremely valuable benefits, even if they are very hard to accomplish, and take a lot of time. My experience has been that proactive outreach by organizational and agency leaders to each other to propose interagency connections is what it takes to get started, and then there will be plenty of support from organizational/agency members and volunteers. Since "all politics is local," the focus should be on the community project/s, with federal folks aiding and supporting, for mutual benefit.

I say bring it back and get them working on our national infrastructure. We need to invest in our own country and stop sending hush money to these other countries. National Defense needs an overhaul and needs to have some pork trimmed out of it's budget. So much money is being wasted that it's absolutely appalling. As far as problems with sexual harassment or civil rights, this is baloney. Just pre-screen the applicants and ask for references. Make everyone sign a liability release and a form saying that they understand this work has inherent risks and that they will not hold the US liable.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Endangered Species List is being used like a club for the federal government (under threat of lawsuit) to maintain control over the wolf population. The problem that was unforeseen (or unheeded) is that with wolves there is a cultural/societal population limit. I would love it if wolves were found in all of the areas they did pre-settlement; however in this day and age with so many more millions of people in this country it's not feasible, at least not in the large numbers they had before. The wolf populations of the Northern Rockies are recovered as indicated by numerous wildlife biologists who live there. Ranchers and others who have lost animals are indicating that the numbers are too high in some areas. Allowing the states to have control gives them the freedom to manage the population as they see fit, while allowing for the long-term survival of the species in that state. Keeping the wolf on the ESL does not provide for their long-term survival because it: 1. Cheapens the ESL by keeping a species on the list that no longer requires protection to survive. 2. Increases the angst and frustration of local landowners who cannot deal with livestock losses without fear of legal proceedings and fines. The only way that wolves will have long-term survival in a locality is to get the local landowners to understand and value them as part of the ecosystem. Some will never understand and will choose to demonize the wolves regardless. However, if a majority of the people in an area value wolves the consensus will turn to discourage the hatred that wolves currently espouse. This situation is also being replicated in the Great Lakes wolf population that has been recovered for the last decade; to no avail.

The State urges the Obama Administration to increase funding for the Forest Service's Forest Legacy program so more private working forest conservation easement projects can be undertaken by New York and other states.

The Legacy program works well with the States to leverage state and private resources for sustainable private forestry conservation easement programs, but is underfunded.

Doubling the annual Legacy appropriation to \$200 million would be a modest investment in the region's forest products and outdoor recreation industries that will be repaid many times over by the enhanced economic activity it generates.

Expanding funding for forestry incentive programs can directly enhance and complement other efforts for retaining forests and implementing sustainable forestry on-the-ground.

Efforts should be undertaken to increase funding for the forestry component of EQIP, and to enlarge the budget of the State and Private Cooperative Forestry program of the USFS.

Community forests can provide outdoor recreation and education, forest products for community use, sustainable biomass for community based energy systems and carbon sequestration. The USFS is preparing to roll out the program soon, but the initial appropriation of \$1 million for the program is woefully inadequate. Here in New York alone, there is great interest in this program, and increased assistance from the USFS Community Forestry Program will leverage significant local and private resources for this exciting new program.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The USFS can help the States, the forest products industry and private forest land owners develop carbon sequestration and ecosystem services programs that reward forest land owners for the carbon sequestered and other environmental benefits on their forest lands.

While much work has gone into this effort, there is no national standard or program that has yet been developed to provide direct financial assistance to forest land owners for the significant carbon sequestration and ecosystem benefits forest lands provide to society at large.

It is time to recognize, and reward, the long term management of forests, and to help ensure that the forests of today remain the forests of tomorrow by providing meaningful assistance to current forest land owners to keep their forests as forests.

Regardless of whether a national Climate Change program is authorized by Congress, a voluntary approach to the issues of carbon management and ecosystem services through forestry practice is a critically needed opportunity for family forest owners, the forest industry and public forest lands.

Enhancing the budgets of APHIS for its regulatory and control work and for the Forest Service's Slow Ash Mortality (SLAM) program will directly benefit New York's efforts. Every dollar that is expended on either eradication (as is the case with ALB), or slowing the movement (as is the case with EAB) is money well spent and will give the State, private land owners and local governments more time to intelligently plan for and mitigate the impacts these pests have had on forest resources in other parts of the country.

Supporting the Northern Forest's forest-based economic development activities offers additional opportunities for promoting sustainable forest management and long-term retention of forested open space, particularly in large tracts that have significant ecological benefits.

The States have developed many innovative conservation tools with our many partners. Perhaps chief among our partners has been the steady and reliable support of the USFS's State and Private Cooperative Forestry program. The continued and expanded support for the USFS State and Private Cooperative Forestry program is critical to the ability of New York and other Northern Forest states to extend our conservation activities on the region's forest lands. A modest federal investment in the program will leverage considerable state and private conservation investments, and help secure the future of the Northern Forest. At the same time, it will build constituencies and connections to our great outdoors and create the next generation of advocates for our forests.

State, federal and private conservation organizations need to do all they can to promote and support hunting and fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities on lands that they control and manage.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Building upon the successful aspects of federal funding programs like the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), Partners for Wildlife(PFW), Forest Legacy Program (FLP) the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and conservation programs of the farm bill like the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), America's Great Outdoors Initiative has the potential to dramatically improve the protection, restoration and enhancement of our nation's natural resources for future generations.

These federal programs provide the necessary government incentive to attract private investment and participation that has been key in helping DU and others achieve significant conservation objectives over the past several decades, but much more needs to be done and we encourage this Administration and Congress to continue to support and fully fund these, and other important federal initiatives.

Farm Bill programs such as Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Sodbuster have thus far played a critical role in preserving millions of acres of prairie grassland that benefit many species of wildlife. We strongly urge that they continue and expand.

Since 1990, sixteen NAWCA grants totaling \$7.9 million have been approved to protect over 125,700 acres of critical wetlands and associated uplands in NH. These grants have been matched by nearly \$27 million in non-federal funds. Many of these properties are now under the management of state and federal agencies and conservation organizations like the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, The Nature Conservancy and others. In all cases, every effort is made to make these properties available to the public for a variety of recreational and educational uses. The NAWMP, and the JV model for implementation, is recognized as one of the most successful conservation initiatives ever undertaken. The American Great Outdoors Initiative should explore ways to replicate this model when and wherever it is appropriate.

Although much has been accomplished, more work remains and more collaboration is needed. In order to build upon this success it will take increased funding to meet the backlog of interest.

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative may be the last and best opportunity to preserve the world class resources of the Northeast's vast working forest, the mid-west Prairie Pothole Region and the southeastern Gulf Coast estuarine and freshwater wetlands recently threatened by the Deep Horizon oil spill disaster, among others .

We appreciate the Administration's effort to reach out to all stakeholders to bring new ideas, perspectives and concerns to the table as we look for ways to collectively formulate policies and legislation that will have positive impacts how we manage, protect and restore and enjoy our Nations rich natural diversity and beauty by this generation and all generations that follow.

Please add Houston to your list of stops on the "America's Great Outdoors Initiative" listening tour. Houston Wilderness would be pleased to act as host and stands ready to facilitate a successful event.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Even the best of local grassroots efforts often need the support and dollars of federal assistance programs, and for this reason, I will focus my comments today on the full funding of the Land and Water Conservation (LWCF), especially that state-side assistance program.

Traditionally, urban parks have been considered purely facilities of local interest – in contrast to urban roads, for instance, or urban wastewater facilities. Today, however, it is recognized that there is a considerable federal interest in high quality city parks. For one thing, city parks are the principal place where urban residents can exercise, and exercise is key to reducing the nationwide obesity crisis and related health problems and expenses. For another, city parks allow denser urban growth and infill surrounding them, reducing edge sprawl and ever more exurban automobile use, congestion and pollution and when connected create systems of parks linked to each other and to their communities allowing greater access and mobility which encourages increased use. There is therefore a great need for federal leadership and resources to expand and better shape our rebounding urban parks movement.

Including city parks and open space in a major new outdoors initiative could encourage cities to engage in long term planning and analysis. In addition to funding for planning and park system analysis, cities need help funding land acquisition for new parks, site clean up, and park design and development. A matching grants program for cities, similar to the USDA's federal/state Forest Legacy Program would leverage city money for these critical investments and allow the federal government to play an important stimulus and partnership role in support of local efforts. Multiple federal agencies have a role and all should be tasked with bringing their resources to cities' parks and recreation needs.

We recommend that while overall coordination is overseen by the Council on Environmental Quality, the actual federal funding and "work" be carried out through the existing programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of the Interior (DOI), the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other agencies as follows:

1. Waterfronts. Conserving vulnerable coastal and flood zone areas as parks can save the nation vast sums of money and reduce the loss of life from storms and surges. Revitalizing derelict industrial waterfronts can help cities renew themselves.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Potential: NY/NJ Harbor and Newark/Passaic River At the heart of the nation's largest metropolitan area, the NY/NJ Harbor plays multiple important roles--as a recreational and environmental educational resource for the region's population, as one of the largest ports in the country, and as a critical natural habitat for birds and other wildlife. As the region's economy has slowly transitioned away from its industrial past, portions of the waterfront have been reclaimed for parks and natural areas, yet much needs to be done to provide adequate recreational opportunities for this growing region. Waterbodies such as Jamaica Bay, Raritan Bay, the East River and the Arthur Kill are surrounded by substantial amounts of private land vulnerable to development that would be suitable for public access and natural areas. Similarly, current efforts to establish a linear park along Newark's Passaic Riverfront offer unparalleled opportunities to meet many federal goals: transit-oriented development, improved environmental and human health, urban reinvestment, job creation and tree canopy expansion. These efforts are consistent and aligned with other efforts in the larger urban focus area, including the Army Corps' Comprehensive Restoration Plan for the Hudson-Raritan Estuary, and efforts to restore and enhance Gateway National Recreation Area.

2. Connectors. Linking destinations within metropolitan areas by using trails and greenways along creeks, abandoned rail lines and other corridors can encourage non-motorized transportation as well as recreational movement of people (as well as of wildlife).

Potential: The Bloomingdale Trail Project, Chicago, Ill. The Bloomingdale Trail – conceived in the spirit of the New York's Highline Park and the Promenade Plantée of Paris—will provide multi-use recreation opportunities and alternative transportation for the 100,000 residents of Logan Square, Humboldt Park, Wicker Park, Bucktown, and neighboring communities. (Logan Square has the second-least amount of park space in all Chicago neighborhoods.) The trail will include three new ground-level parks and three expanded existing parks at points along the route, providing twelve acres of new park space in these densely populated neighborhoods. The Bloomingdale Trail will link downtown with the lakefront and will have access ramps every six to nine blocks. This infrastructure re-use project will transform a piece of Chicago's industrial heritage into Chicago's first - and the world's third - elevated greenway and multi-use trail.

3. Anchors. Anchors are new or refurbished signature parks in city centers or in redeveloping communities that generate jobs and economic growth and promote social health. Anchor parks, whether large or small, spur development, engender smart growth, result in construction and maintenance jobs, and draw tourism.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Potential: Uptown Parks, Charlotte, N.C. In areas now taken up by parking lots, Charlotte hopes to develop center-city parks to anchor rehabilitated walkable neighborhoods and provide key cultural offerings to the region's burgeoning population of residents and workers. Concerned about growing problems with traffic and flooding, Mayor Pat McCrory actively supported light rail and infill development in Uptown (what Charlottians call downtown). Now the city wants to provide two new anchor parks for the area -- Romare Bearden Park, named after the famous artist who grew up in the city, and First Ward Park, located next to a new University of North Carolina-Charlotte campus. Uptown Charlotte is growing --15,000 people who live there now, up from 5,000 a decade ago -- and these anchor parks can provide a powerfully attractive environment for both workers and center-city families and residents.

4. Environmental Justice Parks. Low-income neighborhoods and especially the children who live there often do not have access to green space; many of these places are located next to noxious factories, sewage plants, waste transfer stations or landfills. A special program to bring the amenity of parks can go a long way to making these areas healthier and raising them economically.

Potential: A new park in Santa Ana, Calif. The eighth most densely populated place in the U.S., Santa Ana has only one acre of parkland for every 1,120 residents, among the lowest ratio anywhere in the country. Over 75 percent of the city's 340,000 people are Latino and 20 percent live below the poverty line. With most citizens not within walking distance of a park, it is a fact that Santa Ana has the highest rate of overweight children in California. Furthermore, many of the tightly-packed apartment buildings ban any recreational activity, and public schoolyards are locked after school hours. Residents have lobbied for one new park, for which the city has dedicated funds, but that will barely make a dent in the larger problem.

Potential: Sonoran Preserve, Phoenix, Ariz. The Sonoran Preserve, one of the nation's most grandiose urban conservation concepts, is a vast 21,000-acre parcel of critical desert habitat threatened by development as soon as the Phoenix housing market rebounds. In 1998, responding to a land development rate of one acre per hour, the city of Phoenix adopted a plan and a sales tax funding mechanism for the Preserve. But because the land must be purchased at full market value from the state trust land agency, and because the city does not have right of first refusal, the area is still at risk. With the help of matching state money, land is now being acquired at the rate of about 700 acres per year, not nearly fast enough. The preserve is managed for trails and wildlife habitat; the city hopes to also guide the quality of development along the urban/park interface.

The military has been a great partner to land trusts and national conservation groups in preserving thousands of acres near military bases in North Carolina. The original impetus was to protect endangered species habitat, but it has expanded to include preservation of buffers around bases to ward off encroachment and ensure the safety of training exercises. The Administration could encourage DoD to pursue similar conservation projects at many of its facilities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Make permanent the expanded (but lapsed) federal tax incentives for donated conservation easements

Devote significantly more funding to land acquisition along the Blue Ridge Parkway

Work to make USDA conservation programs more user-friendly, particularly the appraisal process, and make them more available for land trust involvement

Ask Department of Education to provide incentives and materials to schools to include in their curricula outdoor experiential environmental learning

Provide more funding and incentives for local greenways, trails, and parks

Provide more funding and incentives to encourage greater farmland preservation and production of fresh, local and healthy foods

National legislation has helped to define three of these five landscape: the NJ Pinelands in the 1978 National Parks and Recreation Act (followed by the 1979 NJ Pinelands Protection Act); the Highlands Protection Act that Congress enacted in late 2004 that has established a federal-four state conservation partnership for the 3.5 million acre Highlands Region (I served as co-chair of the Highlands Coalition for several years); and the Fire Island National Seashore Act. NY state law in 1993, the Central Long Island Pine Barrens Protection Act, has established the governance and management of the 100,000 acres of the LI Pine Barrens, but the 2500-acre Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, the largest such refuge on Long Island, is part of the core of the LI Pine Barrens. No comparable federal legislation exists for the NY Harbor area, but we are in the process of forming a coalition to develop such national legislation. Land conservation, protection and acquisition is central to the goals of preserving the NJ Pinelands, the four-state Highlands, the LI Pine Barrens and the Fire Island National Seashore (where the NPS has never had any funding to acquire land seaward of the coastal high hazard line following storm destruction of dwellings). Presumably all of these four landscape would be eligible for LWCF dollars if that Fund is fully funded. While there is a land preservation/acquisition plan for the NY Harbor region, to my knowledge no recent federal funding has been used to protect any such lands. Interior is involved with all five of these landscapes in that there are Interior land-holdings in all five. In addition, Interior is the approving and funding agency for state-federal acquisition of high priority parcels under the 2004 Highlands Protection Act.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I attended the AGO meeting held in Denver, Colorado on July 16th in the Denver West Marriott as a representative of the BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF AMERICA. Note-takers recorded our comments and we were told that a report containing our input would be issued at a later date. However, nobody knew how that data would be disseminated or when. Can you answer my question?

I got your invitation to participate in a dialog around the health of our national parks. I was asked to put in my email address to start. I put in my home email and got this response from your website: D'oh! that's not a valid email address It was my valid email address and, as a result of your response, I'm no longer planning to be part of the dialog.

We are preparing materials for National Wildlife Refuge Week in October and would like to promote the IdeaJam site. (<http://ideas.usda.gov/ago/ideas.nsf/>) Will it still be operational in October?

Could you please me how long comments will be collected on this site? I write a newsletter for the National Wildlife Refuge System and we are wondering if we can include the website in materials that will be distributed in October 2010, during National Wildlife Refuge Week.

What is the deadline for these conversations to take place and results to reach your offices? Do you have a preferred format?

I am in the education department at the Minnesota Zoo (mznzoo.org) and also involved in the leadership of the Minnesota Children & Nature Connection (mncnc.org). I am very interested in learning about the logistics and planning for the listening and learning sessions that were mandated in the April 16, 2010 Presidential Memorandum establishing the America's Great Outdoors. Since families and children are primary audiences for both the Minnesota Zoo and the Minnesota Children & Nature Connection and the America's Great Outdoors "initiative will also help families spend more time outdoors" (source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/04/16/creating-a-21st-century-strategy-americas-outdoors>), we would like to be involved and could potential host a listening and learning session. Any additional information would be greatly appreciated. Please let me know if we could provide leadership and support for this important initiative.

Would it be possible to add me to your e-mail contact list so I receive information on upcoming listening sessions and other events? And is your list the only one or does USDA also maintain a list? Thank you

Thank you and thanks to President Obama for initiating this very important outreach program! Because we are dependent every day upon our environment for survival, it is great that the Administration is providing a forum to raise awareness about our precious natural environment. Can you please tell me what the deadline is to send in comments?

This is really late notice – our event is planned for Sept 24th. Any way you can make this work? You could have someone attend with preliminary conclusions. This is a public event that invitation have already been issued for. I hope we can do something that works.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please provide the LOCATION, ADDRESS, DATE + TIME of upcoming America's Great Outdoors' Listening Sessions. In specific, for the Los Angeles listening session, WHERE will it be held on July 8, 2010 and at what time PST?

We are interested in hosting a listening session. Do we have to register in order to host one? Do you know of any that are happening in Hawaii?

I am interested in attend the listening session that is scheduled for Charleston, SC on June 28th, but there is NO information about where it is, what time of day and how to register. How can I get this information? I am the director of the Friends' group for the National Wildlife Refuges and the National Forest of coastal SC, and we have over 800 members in this area. I would love to get information out to them so they can make plans to attend. Please send information ASAP so we can work this into our schedules and get the word out to everyone!

Hello and thanks for the interesting presentation in Minneapolis yesterday. I appreciated the opportunity to listen and to contribute. I am curious if the America's Great Outdoors video is available for educational use? I am an outdoor educator at the University of Minnesota Duluth. We have a Seminar course for our graduate students where we consider new ideas, initiatives, programs, etc. It is our chance to expose our students to the breadth of the outdoor and environmental education/recreation fields. Thus, I would like to present the Presidential Initiative as a federal collaboration on behalf of land and people in the US. I envision using the President's April 16 Memorandum and on-line resources from your website as background, I thought the video would add a colorful touch to our discussion. My outcome would be to get each of our students to contribute a comment via your web site, i.e. promote their engagement in your process. Thanks for your consideration of my educational use of the promotional video, if it is available, please instruct me how I can access it.

I'm teaching a class in Honors Writing at the University of Utah this fall. I'd like to have my students write essays on America's Great Outdoors for you. Where shall I submit them? And what's your deadline for including them in the input for the final report?

I greatly appreciate the AGO web site, and I've posted several ideas on it. However, I cannot locate any information on the site about when it may be closed or inaccessible to further public posting of ideas, commenting on ideas, or voting on ideas. I understand that the AGO public input will eventually be consolidated and included in a report to President Obama by November. Since people are still learning about the availability of this AGO site, and others may procrastinate if they think the comment period is open-ended, I recommend that a deadline be shown on the AGO home page. This would enable people to plan ahead, and warn procrastinators when they may miss their comment opportunity.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I also have two other questions First, although both Arizona and Nevada are states with relatively large amounts of federal lands (Nevada has the highest percentage of any western state), there have not been any held or scheduled AGO listening sessions in them that I am aware of. Why? I would especially welcome a session in Las Vegas, as it is only a two-hour drive each way from where I live. Second, what process will the Obama administration use to review all of the AGO public input (both from listening sessions and submissions on the AGO web site) and to evaluate the input to determine which ideas are the best and most feasible to implement? I think that some explanation of this process on the web site would help assure the public that their input was genuinely appreciated and helpful in preparing the final AGO report to President Obama.

I am organizing feedback from a rural setting where we will not get together in person and wonder if this is the right address to have people direct their input to.

I've registered on the America's Great Outdoors website but I'd like to get the press releases/announcements emailed to me when they come out. I work with a number of conversation groups which want to stay current as new Listening Tours are announced. I cant seem to find the place to sign up to receive the press releases/announcements. Can you point me to the right place?

I would like to find out if there will be a session for the southeast region (I live in Greenville, SC) as is planned for the Chesapeake Region June 25. If so, when and where will that session be held and how can I help with it? I have done volunteer work with local conservation groups and am retired from the Biology Dept at Lander University in Greenwood, SC.

Thank you for initiating this invaluable effort to reconnect our people with conservation and the outdoors at a national scale. Given the massive & multiple challenges facing our society and world, it is tempting to overlook the power and importance of our environment. Yet when we don't respect and care for it, civilizations fall. I live in Montana, but won't be able to attend any of the listening sessions being held this Wednesday. How long to I have to submit ideas/comments on line? What is the timeline for moving ideas into action?

The U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration should work collaboratively with states and local governments to establish new federal land management units and expand existing units, including : National Wildlife Refuges, Bureau of Land Management units, National Forests, and national Marine Sanctuaries.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) should budget and allocate additional Readiness and environmental Protection (REPI) program funds for conservation of lands and encroachment mitigation adjacent to military installations and coordinate those funds with other federal land conservation programs.

Federal tax benefits for qualified conservation contributions should be extended.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The U.S. Department of the Interior, through the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, should facilitate efforts to provide the public with meaningful watershed experiences along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail to expand student knowledge of the Bay ecosystem, history and American Indian cultures. This can be accomplished by supporting outdoor education programs, such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's student field programs, and the development of heritage and geo-tourism programs, such as the Watermen's Heritage Tourism Training Program

The Department strongly supports the passage of House Bill 2054 and Senate Bill 866, the No Child Left Inside Act. Provisions from this Act would enable New York to train teachers to deliver high quality environmental education, utilize the local environment as an extension of the classroom and develop State Environmental Literacy Plans to insure that students are prepared to understand and address the environmental challenges of the future. DEC educators stand poised and ready to implement these components in New York State.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy made a pledge to the nation that, as this country exploited offshore oil and gas resources, the proceeds would be invested through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) into the outdoor recreation needs of the states and local communities. It worked, and worked well to re-connect people to the outdoors in their own communities. The state side of the LWCF has been used in the past by virtually every community in New York State to acquire and build local parks and preserves. We are encouraged that legislation is pending in Congress to fully fund the state side of the LWCF; this would address an immediate and pressing need that can quickly help the AGO meet many of its goals to reconnect Americans to nature and promote community based recreation and conservation. In New York, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation administers this program in conjunction with funding from the State Environmental Protection Fund. the infusion of new federal funding could re-invigorate this program and stimulate extensive local conservation and recreation projects.

Other Department of Interior programs that need additional funding, as well as a temporary reduction in the state match requirement in light of states' dire fiscal situations, include the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). Both programs have been instrumental in conserving valuable wetland and coastal habitats and leveraging private investments and support from not-for-profit partners.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

New York is proud of its work with and investment in the state's land trust community. The Conservation Partnership Program (www.dec.ny.gov/lands/48901.html), a partnership between the state and the Land Trust Alliance, is a model not-for-profit capacity building grant program for the country. Development of a nationwide grant program to provide capacity building assistance to local, regional and statewide land trusts and other conservation non-for-profit organizations could leverage substantial private conservation funding and build even more effective networks in communities across the nation. Pairing this concept with the ability of land trusts to access LOCF, NAWCA and CELCP land acquisition funds, similar to the Great Outdoors Colorado model, would yield even greater results and leverage of private conservation dollars.

In 2006, New York passed and implemented a state Conservation Easement Tax Credit (CETC), which offers landowners a refundable tax credit up to \$5,000 per year to offset the property tax burden on lands for which a conservation easement was donated to a qualified conservation organization. The CETC has proved to be a benefit to both the public and landowners. Similarly, the federal conservation easement tax incentive enhancements, first enacted in 2006, have increased the rate of land conservation benefiting landowners and the public. The enhancements raise the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income in any year to 50%; allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for voluntary conservation agreements from 5 to 15 years. While initially enacted for the period of one year and extended each year, the enhancements expired at the end of the 2009 calendar year. New York enthusiastically supports the renewal of these enhancements and making them permanent.

The Highlands Conservation Act, passed in 2004, provides funding to protect the Highlands region, which extends from Pennsylvania through Southeast New York and Northern New Jersey to Northwest Connecticut. In the four states, the Highlands region serves as a critical public drinking water supply. It contains exceptional natural resources including contiguous forests, scenic vistas, wetlands, pristine watersheds and important plant and wildlife species habitats. The region contains many sites of historic significance and provides abundant recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This area is also one of high population density and development pressure, and is highly susceptible to forest and landscape fragmentation. New York supports full funding under the Highlands Conservation Act.

This year, Governor Paterson and Mayor Bloomberg requested a necessary and appropriate increase in federal funds for HREP through the EPA National Estuary Program that would address issues in the Raritan River in New Jersey, the New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary and the Hudson River Estuary. The request for \$52 million for FFY 2011 (copy of letter attached) would implement the existing, consensus-based plans for the restoration of these estuaries: the Hudson-Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan (prepared by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the Army Corp of Engineers in partnership with the New York-New Jersey HEP) and the related Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda (developed by New York State in conjunction with federal, local, and not-for-profit partners). The Hudson River Estuary Program is an excellent model that could be replicated in watersheds with additional federal funding.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

New York's wastewater infrastructure is in decline and needs at least \$36.2 billion in funding over the next 20 years to address the needs of aging, failing and new facilities. [See DEC's report: "A Gathering Storm" <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/42383.html>] An enhanced, consistent commitment of federal funding is absolutely essential to protect this vast and essential infrastructure whose failure will result in irreparable harm to our waters, imperil the health of our citizens and ecosystems and cause havoc to our economy. And as we work to upgrade these critical facilities, we also need to think of new approaches to protect our waters. New York has been working closely with the EPA to (1) make our state revolving fund (i.e. Clean Water SRF and/or Drinking Water SRF) more sustainable by examining how it could better support smart growth, energy efficiency, and asset management and (2) support better wet weather controls and the need to adapt to a changing climate by encouraging the wider use of so-called "green infrastructure" projects to protect natural resources.

Finally, you ask about our view on the appropriate role for the federal government. In general, the answer to this question is that we need and appreciate the federal government as a full and effective partner in this overall effort. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture fill critical roles, and provide the human and financial resources that are crucial to the success of many important programs. For this, we thank you. In terms of enhancing that role, we reiterate our need for steady, consistent funding for programs, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund or for youth conservation service efforts like AmeriCorps. Another parochial recommendation is for the federal government to take on a major role in applying the collaborative national park or national recreation area model for the Hudson River Valley similar to the Cuyahoga River National Park and National Heritage Area and the Mississippi River National Recreation Area. [NOTE: As proposed by Congressman Maurice Hinchey and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand.]

Also, our system of government subsidies needs to be overhauled so that money is not going to support activities that harm the outdoors, like to oil and gas companies (which seem to have no problem being very profitable).

The Department of Interior needs to undertake a study to determine what would constitute full funding for proper management of our public lands agencies. The administration should then use this information to request full funding every year. The Administration should then use this information to request full funding every year. The Administration should support full funding for, and the extension and renewal of, the Land & Water Conservation Fund as well as the Historic Preservation Fund.

The Administration needs to proudly broadcast its strong support for public lands, from the President and secretary of the Interior on down, and at every opportunity.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It was disconcerting to see Secretary Salazar say that land use decisions would be made at the local level in Utah when politicians and others in that state, representing a minority of Americans, voiced opposition to the possibility of new national monuments. This is not to say that local opinions should be ignored, but federal public lands belong to all Americans. Only a small minority of Americans lives in those states having the most vocal anti-public lands attitudes, and this minority should not be allowed veto power over proposals and management policies that benefit the majority of Americans.

There is a growing trend toward the development of public-private partnerships in the management of our federal (and other) public lands. While useful in the short term, because of funding constraints, in the long term these partnerships will tend to undermine the notion of public lands being the birthright of every American. Rather, the natural temptation will be to plan around and for those projects that will attract private funding. And while this temptation might be overcome, it will take a special kind of land manager to do so. In any event, the commercial interests of partners must be always subservient to public interest and benefit.

A related topic is the role that private concessionaires play in the running of public lands. Again, the public interest must take precedence over the interests of private concessionaires.

Fees need to be reasonable for families to be able to camp, but the use of concessionaires, by the Forest Service in particular, to run campgrounds causes several problems. The first is that not only must campers pay the costs of maintaining the campground, they must also cover the concessionaire's fee to the government plus cover a reasonable profit. So campers pay much higher fees than they might if the government were running the campground.

Tax revenues should pay for the majority of costs associated with the management of our lands.

Though not mentioned at the Davis meeting, the Administration should include the preservation of historic and cultural resources in its final proposals. The Historic Preservation Fund should be fully funded.

We look forward to reading the final report and sincerely hope that the administration makes its implementation a top priority.

This rush to preserve without use is advocated on many fronts. Government, often under cover of insufficient funds, is also a culprit. For instance, the Pacific Southwest Region of the US Forest Service manages 20 million acres in California or almost 20% of our state. If one looks at its Mission, Motto, Vision and Guiding Principles however, the word "recreation" does not appear. Whatever happened to the motto "land of many uses"? It is no wonder that we are losing touch with the outdoors when access is not a priority for one-fifth of the entire state.

One easy answer to the question how the federal government can help conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors is to go back to your own agencies and make public recreational access a part of their mission.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Encourage with money, tax credits, etc land trust conservation easement for private landowners. Consider partnering with state and local entities.

Pass Legislation, such as the Utah Red Rocks Wilderness Act, to preserve valuable open space on public lands

The coalition group that formed to sponsor this event represents diverse interests both on a national and local scale on issues such as wilderness protection, diversity parity and equitable access to parks for all of our communities, urban parks, river parkways and wetlands restoration just to name a few. We fully expect to continue our collaboration to insure that the policy and funding opportunities we have identified are reinforced with our Federal agency partners through on-going dialogue with agency and political representatives as appropriate.

This 300,000 acres of floodplain is crucial to local and regional nature-based tourism interests . However, the land has to be properly managed and local Federal Land Managers from both Agencies have to be properly resourced to do so. Beyond stewardship, there is a need for reliable public access for these destinations to be safely experienced. Local Federal practitioners need your support.

Throughout consideration should be given to building on past experiences with resource leveraging and capacity building via partnering and collaboration. Partnering mechanisms employed by Federal resource management agencies should be streamlined and incentivized.

Following the America's Great outdoors Great Rivers listening Session conducted on August 20, 2010 in Alton, Illinois, the following team, consisting of experienced practitioners from the following organizations, will convene on recurring basis for the purpose of providing ongoing assistance and support to the efforts of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works o-Ellen Darcy, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke, and White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley.

A great partnership between federal, state and local authorities presents a new model of collaboration. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, EPA's Harbor Estuary Program, NY/NJ Port Authority, and hundreds of local groups and agencies are dramatically expanding their efforts to restore hundreds of sites in the NY/NJ Harbor under the guidance of a Comprehensive Restoration Plan (the CRP) to restore tidal wetlands, oyster reefs, eelgrass beds, colonial bird breeding sites, maritime forests, and other ecotypes to the area, as well as increase public access. At the same time, New York City is investing tens of millions of dollars in a series of investments to improve public access, improve water quality and address flooding issues throughout the Harbor as part of the Mayor's Plan NYC 2030 sustainability efforts. The National Parks of New York Harbor is knitting together its offerings, from Federal Hall to the Statue of Liberty and Governors Island, into new visitor experiences. It offers a terrific lesson on how government can work together to address a common agenda, restoring environmental quality and creating jobs and lasting economic value in our cities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As we listened and talked with others at the April 16th event, it became apparent that many of our report's recommendations are central to realizing the full promise of America's Great Outdoors. As the Conference discussions underscored, partnerships among levels of government and the private sector, including the land trust community, will be essential to achieve the goals of America's Great Outdoors. Another impressive aspect of the day was the prominent representation from many key agencies with responsibilities for outdoor recreation.

We recognize this call comes at a time when the country faces significant deficits and mounting debt, making the prospect of new federal or state funding problematic. We also note that the President's memorandum launching America's Great Outdoors cites the need for fiscal constraint, keeping OMB's role intact and thus making a larger task for LWCF more difficult at least near term.

New Administrations, of course, could undo what your Administration constructs. At some point it may be opportune to seek a statutory foundation for an independent American conservation Trust as the permanent successor to a new America's Great Outdoors office within the Department. As suggested in our report, an independent, quasi-public entity in the deferral establishment offers a means by which to ensure, as Administrations and Congresses come and water conservation. The board of such an entity chaired or co-chaired by Cabinet officers, would draw in federal agencies, states, the private sector, and other stakeholder, improved planning, and catalyst funding.

- Open up to cross participation with groups like the Sierra Club who FOR YEARS have had a vested interest / track record for conservation in the wilderness

- Break with going to the various Corporations 1st instead of seeking help from conservation groups.

- Clean up the Organ Pipe area so people can hike in there without fear of being shot

- o I guess this would mean making drugs legal to get the drug traffickers to stop – and NO, I don't nor have I ever done drugs

- o Like prohibition, people are going to do it, you can't stop them, so quit trying, the thugs will go away, and you can tax the drugs and make money, the Pharms will thank you

- You have some GREAT rangers in the field. These people too are passionate about their parks. Let them be a part of the decision process because in the end, THEY are the ones on the front line. Hire more of them, because IF you do this you'll need a LOT more help in the field

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Government bureaucracy and red tape continues to be obstacles to effective and efficient partnership response to enhancing conservation and increasing opportunities for outdoor recreation. While adding another layer to the federal bureaucracy seems counter-intuitive, collaboration among federal agencies would probably improve with the establishment of an inter-departmental coordinating council or committee. The Secretary of Interior would likely head said council.

To be a better partner, the Federal government needs to be more responsive. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have been slow to react to stewardship contracting authorities. Some of this is no doubt due organizational culture and structure; leadership perceptions; lack of initiative; fiscal constraints, limited funding and inadequate knowledge of or availability of personnel. Even with the slow response to embrace this new tool, there have been some notable successes.

Invest in the successes of others and try not to duplicate efforts. Provide more federal funds to successful programs. More Kids in the Woods – Add DOI and DOD to these programs.

- These thoughts come to mind that might strengthen on-going activities that are working across the urban/rural/wild-land continuum: Reposition the Land and Water Conservation Fund to better address local and state concerns; reduce competition, and improve collaboration among partners and the federal managing agencies. A national recreational resource conservation strategic plan might also be useful to public agencies, private businesses, communities and other stakeholders.

- Reframe the role and relevancy of Statewide Comprehensive Planning, as it needs to be more inclusive, inter-agency in nature, and expanded to include local, state and federal agencies, communities, private sector entities, and other stakeholders.

- Work to make Stewardship authorities for the Forest Service and BLM permanent. The authority to trade goods for services through contracting and agreements has proven to be a successful tool in every region. The ability of a Forest or District to use these tools has resulted in getting more work done on the ground, putting local contractors to work in areas they care about, and the agreement authority allows groups and organizations to raise additional funding to leverage against scarce federal dollars.

- Expand the delivery of NWTF programs that have demonstrated they can have landscape impacts, get more people outdoors, particularly kids and help local economies.

1. The perception that the federal government will control property protected by conservation easements

1. Keep programs and goals broad and flexible to meet local and regional priorities

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1. Don't let funds get swept for single species initiatives like NFWF monies

Help your Eastern program officers, attorneys, and reviewers understand Western issues and land owning and management issues

1. Require the IRS to honor the intent of the law in allowing federal tax deductions for conservation easements.

1. Make expanded tax incentives permanent

1. Production of effective education materials that describe the government's role in partnering with non-profits

Most importantly, TPL urges the Administration to immediately complete the rulemaking process for the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFOSCP) which was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill but has been mired in administrative delays. This program offers local communities and tribes the opportunity to purchase important forestlands for public use and enjoyment. This program will be particularly meaningful to urban areas and connecting underserved populations to forests and natural systems. The CFOSCP is well-designed to help implement the goals of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative if the rulemaking were completed, and if funding of \$10 million or more were allocated in FY12 for a first round of grants from the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program.

Transportation. Since 1991, DOT's trail, transportation enhancements and non-motorized programs have exemplified how federal agencies can work cooperatively with state and local governments. We support the continuation and expansion of these programs that have created and improved many urban trail and park systems for purposeful and recreational transportation.

We recommend establishing a new active transportation fund to provide focused investments in walking and bicycling systems connecting the places people live, work, play, learn, and shop. This will provide safe and convenient options for clean, healthy and affordable travel and more routine outdoor experiences.

Environment. EPA's Brownfield program has successfully cleaned up many polluted properties and returned them to industrial, commercial, retail and residential productivity. Relatively few, however, have become parks. We recommend that EPA promulgate new Brownfields language to give priority consideration for the establishment of parks in urban areas that are short on parkland or that have neighborhoods with particular park inequality.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Planning. Many federal programs require planning prior to the disbursement of federal funds. We support this concept. For urban parks that planning should take place on the urban or regional (i.e., Councils of Governments) level rather than at the state level. Such planning should include community-wide gap analyses that identify where parks-to-people connections especially related to children and underserved neighborhoods - will be most meaningful. This will ensure that limited federal dollars will be used most effectively.

We recommend that CEQ adopt language requiring urban park planning and analysis necessary to evaluate existing park systems according to consistent standards for accessibility and equity. HUD's CDBG program should also be focused further on planning that targets AGO goals.

III. Increase and provide consistent federal funding for other grant programs that support state and local conservation.

There are a host of federal matching grant programs that leverage state and local investment in outdoor recreation lands and are critical to a successful conservation outcome and require active partnerships among federal, state, and local governments. These programs complement existing federal investments such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and/or meet federally-required state resource plans, such as the State Wildlife Action Plans and State Forest Resource Assessments. These programs also help address the AGO Initiative's focus on private land conservation by providing permanent conservation easement protection of private working farms, ranches and forests. TPL strongly recommends that the Administration recognize this suite of programs as essential to the successful outcome of the AGO Initiative, and provide full support to them in budget proposals and future legislative re-authorizations such as the Farm Bill.

This suite of programs includes:

USDA/US Forest Service: Forest Legacy Program, Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program

USDA/NRCS: Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program

DOI/USFWS: Cooperative Endangered Species Fund, National Coastal Wetlands Grant Program, North American Wetlands Conservation Act

NOAA: Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program

DOD: Readiness and Environment Initiative

IV. Focus and coordinate federal investment to support landscape conservation.

TPL believes that multi-partner initiatives to advance conservation across all ownership types within large priority landscapes are a highly effective strategy for conservation delivery. This type of landscape conservation will be particularly important to achieve higher level conservation outcomes, such as watershed protection, climate mitigation and climate adaptation, where isolated conservation actions will not be sufficient to achieve these larger goals.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Landscape conservation also creates a framework for collaboration, and reliably increases the leverage and integration of conservation actions. It supports integrated conservation planning, so that multiple actors can work from coordinated strategies, often based on GIS mapping and other tools.

Landscape conservation can also be particularly useful to break down silos in conservation approaches, linking public land managers and private landowners, and getting experts in conservation, restoration, and stewardship to deploy their skills and resources in an integrated approach.

Finally, landscape conservation can create leverage for implementation synergistic use of public funding source--federal, state, and local--and private match funding.

We recommend continued investment in identified landscapes based on ready-to-go projects that meet identified criteria and outcomes.

V. Propel climate change response through federal leadership.

In addition to existing initiatives, TPL believes that there are many new opportunities for federal agencies to advance a climate change response even without new legislative authorities.

U.S. farms and forests now sequester almost 15 percent of annual U.S. carbon emissions. This is a critical piece of climate mitigation that can be expanded with conservation of these carbon absorbing lands and enhanced management of these systems, including restoration, to increase their rate of sequestration.

TPL believes that the federal government should look to expand these partnerships with private entities to other agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, where carbon credits might be developed as part of a project, and utilized to help finance that transaction. This will require work through the Office of General Counsel to develop legal agreements to facilitate these partnerships, and pilot efforts by vanguard federal land management units to test these project types. TPL believes that these efforts would be worthwhile for their strong potential to help advance biological carbon sequestration and to advance other conservation objectives simultaneously.

2) Grant funding to TPL and other private partners for outreach and convening that help deliver coordinated participation in implementation across each landscape.

Private Landowner Engagement: 1) Agency staff capacity to support technical assistance and delivery of programs for private landowners;

2) Grant funding to private partners to support coordinated outreach and technical assistance;

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

3) Private landowner incentive funding to support private landowner participation in achieving shared conservation, restoration, and stewardship objectives within each priority landscape.

Permanent Land Conservation: 1) Agency staff capacity to coordinate conservation actions with private partners, including real estate transactions;

2) FY11 LWCF and Forest Legacy funding of \$22.05 million to conserve 53,000 acres, including additions to Umbagog NWR (NH) Forest Legacy Program funding for the Crocker Mt and Orbeton Stream (ME), Androscoggin River Headwaters (NH) and Northern Green Mountains (VT) projects;

and 3) Incentive funding for coordinated conservation actions on private lands.

Priority objectives identified in TPL's MOU with U.S. Forest Service are: 1) Carbon Mitigation Deployment of TPL's Carbon Conservation Mapping Facility to develop a regional carbon sequestration inventory and parcel-level priorities, leading to development of USFS-TPL carbon sequestration pilot projects as a model for this work at scale across the Northwoods;

and 2) Climate Adaptation Development of an adaptation plan for high priority watersheds within the Northwoods region, and implementation of those plans through integrated conservation, restoration, and stewardship projects to protect key resources. There is also a robust role for DOI in these efforts, including strategic additions to refuge lands in priority areas like the Upper Mississippi and DOI-led efforts on fish passage and other habitat improvements. These combined USDA and DOI efforts will help to sustain Laurentian forest ecosystem services ranging from carbon sequestration to forest products, maintain water quality in the Great Lakes and important tributaries, and provide future security for native coldwater fisheries and sensitive wildlife threatened by climate change.

Priority Needs from Federal Agencies: 1) Grant funding to TPL and partners to support development of parcel-level watershed conservation plans and ecosystem markets assessment;

2) FY11 and 12 LWCF and Forest Legacy Program of \$16 million to conserve 25,000 acres, including additions to the Ottawa, Hiawatha, Chequamegon-Nicolet, and Chippewa National Forests and 18,000 acres of private working forest;

3) Support for GFLA, AFF, and NWF-led work with private landowners, including outreach, technical assistance, and convening;

and 5) Dedicated pool of incentive funding for private landowners willing to undertake activities that will help achieve Northwoods watershed and/or Laurentian forest restoration objectives.

2) FY11 LWCF and Forest Legacy funding for the Montana Legacy (LWCF) and Clearwater (Forest Legacy) projects these projects in the Crown of the Continent ecosystem contain key watersheds that are region-wide priorities for watershed adaptation and habitat connectivity;

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

3) FY12 and FY13 LWCF and Forest Legacy Program funding to complete TPL's work on Montana Legacy and related projects, and new projects currently being developed in the Salmon-Selway;

4) USFWS and NRCS easement funding to address watershed conservation needs on non-forested lands in priority watersheds;

5) Fisheries habitat and forest restoration funding for conserved tracts, including USWFS Fish Passage funding.

2) FY11 and FY12 LWCF funding for the Silvio O. Conte NFWR project at full request this funding will enable conservation of rare grassland habitats along the Fort River, the longest un-dammed tributary of the Connecticut River in MA and source of rare aquatic habitats;

3) FY11 Forest Legacy funding for the Scantic River Headwaters (CT) project in at full request this project contains 1000 acres of headwaters that rank among the most important for future security of eastern brook trout in the State of CT;

4) Restoration funding to help restore fish habitat on conserved properties, including Fish Passage funding for barrier removal projects led by TU and other partners;

5) Incentive funding through the Partners program, NRCS programs, and other sources for coordinated conservation actions on private lands

Priority Needs from Federal Agencies: 1) Grant funding to TPL and Carpe Diem to support data acquisition and development of parcel-level watershed adaptation plans;

2) FY11 LWCF funding for relevant watershed conservation opportunities in the Wenatchee NF and Pacific Crest Trail/Snoqualmie-Baker NF;

3) FY12 LWCF and/or Forest Legacy for Watershed Adaptation Projects;

Further, TPL believes that existing landowner incentive programs should be modified, or new programs created through the next Farm Bill if more practicable, to incentive landowner actions that will protect and enhance carbon stores and sequestration. A program modeled on the Carbon Conservation Program contained in S. 2724 would be an excellent approach. This would establish a set of approved carbon activities for each land type, activities that would include permanent conservation through easements, and would pay landowners on a per-acre basis for undertaking the specified practices. The program would be run through USDA with forest elements administered by the US Forest Service.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Finally, land conservation projects that can be demonstrated as helping to achieve climate mitigation objectives should be given special assistance from the range of potentially relevant federal land conservation, restoration, and stewardship programs. Potentially relevant programs for TPL's carbon-oriented land conservation project work include the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy Program, Coastal and Estuarine Lands Conservation Program, among others. Accordingly, all federal land conservation programs with potential application to climate change mitigation should contain some clearly written criteria reflecting this priority. This will enable federal land managers, program staff, and private partners alike to have clear guidance as to how projects will be measured against climate mitigation objectives. Already, the U.S. Forest Service has integrated such criteria into its Strategic Land Acquisition Ranking System, providing a strong model of how this can be accomplished.

The federal government is to be commended for its natural resource adaptation response. Already the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is leading efforts through its new strategic plan and the Department of the Interior's Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) to create a science-driven response to adaptation that integrates land conservation, habitat restoration, and stewardship strategies. The U.S. Forest Service has produced a new "roadmap" and "scorecard" to guide its climate change response, from land managers to state and private forestry and research.

TPL is deeply engaged in these important efforts, and believes that they must be continued.

TPL is on the steering committee of most LCCs and is attempting to develop science based adaptation plans to guide TPL projects to conserve parcels that contain habitat refuge and offer connectivity benefits, both important elements of adaptation. TPL encourages that the LCCs be provided adequate resources to support adaptation research, but also to help support on the ground implementation through collaborative conservation.

TPL is also deeply engaged with the U.S. Forest Service in an "all lands" approach to climate change response, and believes that these efforts should also be given the needed resources to thrive.

Land conservation projects that can be demonstrated as helping to achieve the climate adaptation objectives of the LCCs, USDA-led "all lands" responses like the Northwoods Climate Change Response Framework, and other similar efforts should be given special assistance from the range of potentially relevant federal land conservation, restoration, and stewardship programs.

Accordingly, all federal land conservation programs with potential application to climate change adaptation should contain some clearly written criteria reflecting this priority. This will enable federal land managers, program staff, and private partners alike to have clear guidance as to how projects will be measured against adaptation objectives. Already, the U.S. Forest Service has integrated such criteria into its Strategic Land Acquisition Ranking System, providing a strong model of how this can be accomplished.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Landscape Conservation Strategy: Collaborate with DOI and USDA to develop multi-partner initiatives to employ integrated conservation, restoration and stewardship actions across large priority landscapes to achieve targeted conservation outcomes, including climate mitigation and adaptation.

Planning. Utilize TPL collaborative planning skills (“Greenprinting”) to develop plans that target conservation actions to highest value sites within each priority landscape and support integration

Partnership. Create collaborative structures that create robust roles, engagement, and partnership across federal, state, local, and private actors, including private landowners at all scales.

Funding. Utilize TPL Conservation Finance to enhance match funding through state and local measures.

Projects. Create leverage for implementation through coordinated conservation actions across public and private boundaries and synergistic use of public funding sources federal, state, and local and private match funding.

Priority Conservation Outcomes: 1) Water Security. Create future security for public drinking water supplies and coldwater fisheries through integrated watershed conservation;

2) Forest Systems. Protect forest-based ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration, timber production, and recreational use, through conservation and restoration of key forest types and climate-resilient resource areas;

3) Habitat Connectivity and Refugia. Protect key wildlife habitat functions and features, including connectivity and adequate distribution of “redundant and resilient” habitats for species most vulnerable to climate change; and

and 4) Outdoor Recreation. Enhance public access for a wide range of outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing.

Requests for Support from DOI and USDA: Planning: 1) Agency data and scientific expertise on adaptation and carbon mitigation;

2) Grant funding to support TPL adaptation planning and mapping, including vulnerability assessment to help set adaptation priorities in targeted landscapes;

3) Grant funding to support construction and application of TPL Carbon Mapping Facility as a tool for carbon mitigation project development.

Partnership: 1) Agency staff capacity to coordinate partner actions at the landscape scale;

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

4) USDA agency capacity for convening and outreach;

5) Grant funding to Carpe Diem to support outreach, technical assistance, and convening around watershed adaptation objectives;

and 6) watershed restoration funding for public and private lands, including funds dedicated for newly conserved tracts.

Priority Needs from Federal Agencies: 1) Grant funding to TPL to support data acquisition and TPL Carbon Map implementation in the Northern Sierra;

2) Development of an MOU with USFS Region 5 to support development of projects subject to reserved carbon rights;

3) Collaboration with USFS staff to identify two carbon projects for FY12one under LWCF and one under Forest Legacy;

4) Access to LWCF and Forest Legacy to assure funding for these projects.

TPL, the American Forest Foundation, and the National Wildlife Federation seek to partner with USDA and DOI in integrated landscape conservation in the watershed that can deliver future security for public water supplies, economic opportunities and recreation access for local communities, forest carbon sequestration, and adaptation for fish and wildlife. This project is linking together in new and innovative ways permanent conservation strategies, such as federal acquisitions in the Chattahoochee River headwaters region, with efforts to reach unengaged private landowners and to facilitate their participation in helping to achieve landscape conservation goals. This project will focus on developing synergies between public lands and private lands initiatives, including coordinated management activities across public-private boundaries.

2) FY12 LWCF funding for acquisitions in the Chattahoochee NF and Chattahoochee NRA properties under negotiation within the national forest boundary include critical inholdings for watershed protection;

4) FY12 Forest Legacy Program funding to support relevant projects currently being developed in the watershed that feature longleaf restoration;

5) Restoration funding for improvement of public acquisitions, including fisheries habitat improvements and longleaf restoration;

6) Assistance in identifying areas where NRCS and DOI easement funding can be used to support conservation of non-forested areas in service of watershed conservation objectives;

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

7) Support for AFF and NWF-led private landowner outreach activities;

and 8) Dedicated pool of incentive funding for private landowners willing to undertake watershed and/or longleaf restoration objectives.

The Forest Legacy Program was established in 1990 to provide federal funding to states to assist in securing conservation easements on forestlands threatened with conversion to nonforest uses. Over the past 20 years, the Forest Legacy Program has prevented the loss of almost 2 million acres of forestland in 42 states and Puerto Rico and has leveraged an equal amount of state, local, and private funding for every federal dollar spent. In FY 2011, 39 states submitted proposals for 60 FLP projects and a robust President's budget of \$100 million will provide full funding for only a portion of these identified projects, leaving thousands of acres of important forests in many parts of the country at risk. TPL urges the Administration to increase its investment in this program in order to ensure the permanent protection of the myriad benefits provided by our nation's private forests.

FRPP is a vital tool in helping landowners and communities protect agricultural land that is being lost to development and fragmented at an alarming rate. FRPP helps ensure the food security of the nation, stabilizes rural communities, promotes regional food production, saves critical wildlife habitat, protects our water quality and assists family farmers and ranchers in passing their land on to future generations of producers. Since its inception in 1996, FRPP has been enormously successful and remarkably beneficial to the agricultural community. For example, 97% of land under FRPP is still in agricultural production and 22% of FRPP farmers market locally in comparison to the national average of 5%.

This program so critical to keeping farmers and ranchers on the land in a productive way was proposed to be capped in FY 2011 at \$160 m -- \$10 m more than last year but a \$15 m cut from the level provided in the Farm Bill. TPL urges the Administration to maintain the Farm Bill authorized funding level for this program in FY 12.

Prior to program changes enacted in the 2008 Farm Bill, the Grassland Reserve Program had protected over 677,000 acres. Under new rules, the program is projected to protect another 500,000-800,000 acres. In FY 2009, GRP funds protected almost 57,000 acres in 31 states. This important wildlife habitat and working lands program was proposed to be reduced in the FY 11 President's budget by 183,662 acres, a cut of about \$22 million. TPL urges the Administration to maintain authorized levels of enrolled acres under the GRP in the FY 12 budget.

Over the history of the program through FY 2009, over 2 million acres in all 50 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have been protected under WRP ensuring the protection of critical wetlands on actively worked farmland. However, under the President's budget for FY 2011, the WRP would be reduced by 57,018 acres, cutting expenditures by about \$111 m. TPL urges the Administration to maintain enrollment levels for WRP as authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) administers the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, commonly referred to as Section 6 funding, which provides grants to States and Territories for species and habitat conservation on non-Federal lands. Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants allow the FWS to reduce conflicts that arise between the conservation of listed species and land uses on specific parcels of land associated with approved Habitat Conservation Plans. The use of Federal acquisition dollars by States for habitat protection within and adjacent to HCP areas is an important and effective mechanism to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species. In addition, Recovery Land Acquisition Grants seek to prevent the loss of critical habitat for listed species by assisting states and territories acquire these habitats from willing sellers through land acquisition in support of approved species recovery plans. To date, there have been 432 land acquisition grants awarded through the program, and 38 states and 2 territories that have used land acquisition dollars since the program began in 1997. TPL recommends that the Administration maintain its current level of support for this important program.

The FY 2011 President's budget reduced funding for NAWCA by \$5 million from the previously enacted level. TPL urges the Administration to reinvest in this important wetlands protection program.

Created by Congress in 2002, NOAA's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program protects "those coastal and estuarine areas with significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreation states to other uses." To date, the program has supported over 160 conservation projects in 28 of the nation's 35 coastal states. In total, the CELCP program has helped preserve approximately 45,000 acres of America's most important coastal areas. All federal funding for CELCP is leveraged by at least an equal amount of state, local and private investment. In March 2009, the CELCP program was formally authorized as part of the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act. In recognition of the significant demand for CELCP projects, the bill authorized the program at \$60 million annually. Over the last three years, NOAA, in partnership with the States, has identified over \$270 million of vetted and ranked projects eligible for CELCP program funding. CELCP funds have also been targeted to Great Lakes states under the President's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

In FY11, the President's budget recommends only \$25 million for the program -- an increase of \$5 million over last years enacted level but still well shy of the urgent need for coastal conservation. TPL urges the Administration to continue to increase the funding for this program to meet the authorized level of \$60 million a year.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Established by the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act of 1990, the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program is a matching grant program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire, restore, and enhance the wetland ecosystems of coastal states and territories. Funding for the program comes from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels. Projects in states bordering the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific, and Great Lakes are eligible for funding. The one exception is the state of Louisiana, which has its own coastal wetland program administered under the Act. Projects are given priority if consistent with the criteria and considerations outlined in the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan; are located in states with dedicated funding programs to acquire coastal wetlands and open spaces; are located in maritime forests on barrier islands; benefit endangered species; encourage cooperative efforts among diverse partnerships; and benefit other ongoing conservation efforts. Federal funds leverage more than equal levels of non-federal matching dollars.

To date, over \$240 million in grant funding has been awarded to 25 coastal states and one U.S. territory to acquire, protect, or restore over 260,000 acres of coastal wetland ecosystems across the country. This small but critical program has been effectively used to enhance conservation efforts through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and should be part of similar landscape-level program investments in identified focus areas.

Appropriations for REPI have generally increased each year since the program began in FY 2005, but the appropriated funds have fallen far short of the need, as evidenced by the number of funding requests submitted each year by the services to OSD. In recent years, these requests have been greater than \$100 million annually. The FY 2010 appropriation was \$57.4 million and the Administration's budget request for FY 2011 is only \$39.8 million. TPL urges the Administration to restore budget investments in this important and effective program, which addresses both a military and an environmental need.

Investing now in the continuum of conservation from the urban core to wilderness areas will ensure a healthier and greener future for America and leave an important legacy for our children and grandchildren.

Our vision, shared with many other organizations and individuals around the country, is for the Federal government to act as the catalyst for federal, state, tribal and local agencies and private interests to work together across America to protect a network of critical ecosystems, natural resource areas and recreation lands from the inner city to wild lands.

Metropolitan and urban parks and greenways that structure urban growth, connect metropolitan area residents to natural areas, and provide access to high quality recreation. Urban greenways, parks, and trail systems can greatly enhance the opportunity for all Americans to experience the outdoors and learn about nature, in particular those living in high density areas or experiencing a park deficit close to home. The AGO Initiative's focus on places where people live is timely and important

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Public and private lands including existing, expanded and new Federal and state parks, forests and refuges that are further insulated from the impacts of unplanned growth by working farm, ranch and forest lands protected with conservation easements and other economic based land conservation measures. Individual properties that ensure public access for recreation and preserve our nation's history as well as larger open space corridors that conserve whole functioning ecosystems are integral to the goals of the AGO Initiative.

Important lakes, rivers, watersheds and estuaries that provide clean and abundant water for human use, sustain aquatic species and ensure opportunities for water-related recreation

Cultural landscapes that protect and interpret America's diverse cultural heritage.

I. Enact full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

LWCF is the only account that provides a specific conservation offset to federal energy development. Now is the time to ensure that LWCF becomes a true dedicated trust fund to protect these receipts from being diverted to unrelated spending.

The House of Representatives has approved legislation, H.R. 3435, the Consolidated Lands, Energy and Aquatic Resources Act, and this fall the Senate may consider legislation that includes a similar full and dedicated funding provision. TPL urges the Administration to support enactment of legislation that truly dedicates LWCF funding to its intended purposes without being subjected to the vagaries of annual budgeting.

With a steady annual provision of \$900 million, both the federal side and the state grants portion of LWCF would be able to see a consistent flow of meaningful funding, allowing for better planning and targeting of land acquisition and recreation investments.

The conservation outcomes made possible through LWCF funding are also closely linked to a sound economy. The Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) reports that recreation contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supports nearly 6.5 million jobs across the U.S, touches over 8 percent of America's personal consumption expenditures more than 1 in every 12 dollars circulating in the economy, and generates \$88 billion in annual state and national tax revenue. The 2009 National Parks Second Century Commission estimated that every \$1 in taxpayer money spent on National Parks returned a \$4 economic benefit through tourism and private sector spending. In the West, OIA reported that more than 43 million people participate in hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing each year, spending over \$33 billion annually. Maintaining healthy wildlife populations and providing access for recreation on public lands is a key component to maintaining these economic benefits.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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In addition to investing in the protection of critical lands within and adjacent to federal units and the formula-driven grants to state park agencies, and in order to best leverage limited federal dollars, TPL recommends that the Administration use a portion of the increase in LWCF to create a nationally competitive matching grant component to better incentivize state and local investments in conservation.

Finally, TPL strongly supports the continued annual allocation of LWCF dollars to two complementary grant programs the Forest Legacy Program and the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund, both of which are critically important to the goals of the AGO Initiative.

II. Increase conservation investments in cities across America.

Better open-space planning; creation of trails, waterfronts, and anchor parks; and protection of natural lands will help transform our urban areas, where the majority of Americans live, and address park equity issues. These investments will enhance connections to the natural world, foster a healthier lifestyle for children and adults alike, create livable and prosperous communities, and support improved energy efficiency in transportation, land-use patterns, climate regulation, and water management.

Moving forward in this direction will require multi-agency coordination and focused funding.

Traditionally, urban parks have been considered purely facilities of local interest --in contrast to urban roads, for instance, or urban wastewater facilities. Today, however, it is recognized that there is a considerable federal interest in high quality city parks. For one thing, city parks are the principal place where urban residents can exercise, and exercise is key to reducing the nationwide obesity crisis and related health problems and expenses. For another, city parks allow denser urban growth and infill surrounding them, reducing edge sprawl and ever more exurban automobile use, congestion and pollution and when connected create systems of parks linked to each other and to their communities allowing greater access and mobility which encourages increased use. There is therefore a great need for federal leadership and resources to expand and better shape our rebounding urban parks movement.

A matching grants program for cities would leverage money for these critical investments and allow the federal government to play an important stimulus and partnership role in support of local efforts.

Multiple federal agencies have a role and all should be tasked with bringing their resources to cities' parks and recreation needs.

In order to best focus limited federal funds, TPL believes that planning requirements are an essential pre-requisite to grant awards, and that federal investments should target projects that will best transform cities into more economically productive and sustainable places.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is currently no federal agency that has full responsibility for urban conservation projects. Numerous agencies have partial interest and partial jurisdiction, such as planning, acquisition or development. But completing an urban conservation program today is often so bureaucratically challenging that many communities give up or don't even try. Thus, we call for the creation of an urban department within the Council on Environmental Quality to streamline and coordinate funding by multiple federal agencies for urban park and conservation programs to help accomplish these national goals.

Housing and Urban Development. HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides grants to needy neighborhoods in many cities and urban counties. CDBG funds may be used for numerous activities including acquisition of real property; relocation and demolition; and construction of public facilities and improvements. We recommend the addition of specific CDBG language to give priority to urban parks and nature conservation initiatives to mitigate the many concrete and asphalt hardscapes in today's cities.

Interior/LWCF: We recommend using a percentage of LWCF "stateside" funds on a nationally competitive grant program for urban projects. Factors for screening could include the quality of the planning process; having a nexus to a larger conservation effort; building off previous government investments; demonstrating regional cooperation and public/private engagement; improving nature access and outdoor recreation for children, the underserved and high-density populations; and protecting water. As with stateside LWCF now, any urban project would require a 50 percent non-federal funding match.

We also recommend continued focused investment in DOI's many federal units located in and around our nation's cities and metropolitan areas, such as the Santa Monica Mountains NRA in Los Angeles, Cuyahoga Valley NP in Akron-Canton, E.B. Forsythe NWR in southern New Jersey and the Chattahoochee River NRA in Atlanta.

LWCF funding is also needed to support the creation of newly-proposed urban-focused wildlife refuge units such as Hackmatack NWR in Illinois and the Middle Rio Grande Unit of the Bosque del Apache NWR.

The Department's many urban units provide millions of Americans with outstanding recreational opportunities in their own backyard and should remain a departmental focus.

USDA/US Forest Service: We recommend investment in US Forest Service programs and activities that help connect Americans in urban areas to forests. These programs include the Urban and Community Forestry program and the Kids in the Woods program.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Even the best SCA/Corps career training and federal intern programs have no extended value unless used strategically by agencies as pathways to jobs. SCA and Corps programs provide a broad-range of top-notch conservation-related training, and provide an excellent way to identify and select motivated and qualified workers for entry-level agency jobs. However, currently none of the SCA/Corps participants have a direct pathway to entry-level jobs within the agencies. We recommend that the federal government make SCA/Corps career training a mission-critical hiring priority and workforce development tool for entry-level hires. This commitment, for example, may include, among other things, increasing summer agency hires under such programs, adapting hiring plans to include noncompetitive intern job conversions (see below), and holding managers accountable for intern hiring goals from such programs.

We recommend adding a noncompetitive job conversion option for participants completing 640 hours of SCA and Corps training programs. As exists for certain current federal intern programs, we also recommend that the Office of Personnel Management be given authority to waive up to 320 of those hours for exceptional performance by any SCA or Corps participant. Finally, given the current length and cumbersome nature of the federal hiring process (which process we hope will be streamlined), we recommend the conversion period extend to 2 years after participants complete SCA and Corps program.

Creating a dedicated and expanded funding stream within each public land management agency for existing and new SCA/Corps models and programs that connect youth to the outdoors or address youth challenges with conservation service. Dedicated and expanded funding also would help stabilize funding for these programs.

Providing funding for wrap-around services (e.g. transportation, gear, travel scholarships), as well as for training, further career development, and environmental education. Funding currently is not allowed for these services with the fee-for-service project-based funding typically provided by the agencies to get youth conservation projects completed.

Creating a \$250 million Conservation Youth Innovation Fund to pilot innovative, scalable public private nonprofit models and intermediary approaches for pathways to professional, technical, and vocational careers in public land agencies for youth with priority funding for programs targeting disadvantaged and diverse youth. This fund should be administered at the department level in the Department of the Interior and the relevant bureau levels at the Department of Agriculture.

Funding and implementing the 21st Century Conservation Corps as recommended by the Public Lands Service Coalition, of which SCA is a founding steering committee member.

We recommend that the federal government help facilitate linkages between the stakeholders to provide expanded opportunities for young people to connect to the outdoors at every level of engagement. Working through nonprofit partners, this facilitation could include: (i) an outreach and education campaign for youth regarding engagement options; (ii) conferences or workshops for stakeholders to discuss ways to connect various levels of engagement; and (iii) funding for nonprofit initiatives that link engagement levels in collaborative, innovative models.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The AMA is aware of at least a dozen more possible "listening sessions ~ in the coming months. However, specific information has not been made available to the general public. Therefore, we request a list of all "listening sessions so our members may participate in these public meetings.

I was delighted to read about the roll-out of the America's Great Outdoors (GO America) initiative a few weeks ago. It brings you and the Secretary one step closer to fulfilling a dream. I am hopeful that having the Department of the Interior take the lead on it and involving the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Council on Environmental Quality will broaden the base of support at the federal level and in the region, too.

There may be a lull in development in the natural areas of this country right now, but it will not last. As soon as the economy improves, the cost of open space will go up. We need to secure public outdoor spaces now and make them integral parts of our communities.

Thank you for meeting with us to talk about the Hudson Valley as a model of collaborative conservation that may be a good fit for President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative. Scenic Hudson is very excited about the initiative and grateful that the administration and the Department of the Interior are moving forward with this. We appreciate how much you and your staff at the Department of the Interior and the other agencies still have to do to plan, the listening tours and then design and implement new strategies that result.

As follow up to our meeting, we would like to offer to convene a group of key public and private Hudson Valley stakeholders for a conference call with you to discuss how we can assist you to structure a listening tour event here. One possibility might be to combine a visit to the Hudson Valley with one in New York City, which could highlight both urban and rural conservation opportunities and how they can be linked.

I don't see why we can't dedicate an area for motorized use just like they do for Wilderness Areas? Call it a Recreation Area and it can never be changed to anything else just like a Wilderness Area." Believe it or not, Senator Feinstein of California has legislation in the works, S2921, which would establish Congressionally mandated OHV areas. Her staff and The California Wilderness Coalition worked with a number of willing off roaders to establish these areas and others in the Southern California desert areas. I was one of those off roaders who had the chance to successfully negotiate motorized access in a couple of those desert areas. It was a little mind bending to say the least to be working with those which I had historically felt were just out to close everything they could. But to be very honest, I discovered a genuine interest on the part of the Senator's staff and the wilderness group to work with us in keeping areas open. The practice should be a national model when ANY areas are being considered for closure of any type.

The national parks have been a wonderful instrument of environmental education. Exhibits, campfire talks and nature walks have introduced many adults and children to the ecosystem concept. Growing environmental literacy in our country has contributed to better environmental legislation at the state and federal levels.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Designation of a national scenic byway or All-American Road is by the Secretary of Transportation and does require the involved municipalities and agencies to collaborate on a corridor management plan to recognize and protect intrinsic values (scenic, historic, recreational, cultural), but the plan does NOT utilize any new federal controls or requirements. Nor does it prevent safety enhancements of the roadway. The goal is for communities and agencies to shape growth and change, not try to block it. And we are now approaching the 20th anniversary of the first round of designations (of which there are now 150+ for some 35,000 miles of road). The results are encouraging. Economic value of the designations is proven by increases in visits and use of the featured assets of the corridors, and local pride and awareness of the corridor value is widespread and greatly increased.

Clean up the polluted mess, and restore the nature. Keep it that way. Simple! Agencies do need to work together, involving green building, transportation, waste, erosion and impact of population.

Please open more public land, BLM and National Forest to OHV activity. More land is needed, not less. Please!!!!

Establishing an Ancient Forest National Park is simply a matter of re-designating the land. The vast majority of the proposed park is already established wilderness. What would be needed? Some infrastructure in the front country? Environmentalists need to have a higher consciousness of the rural poverty that is endemic in many of these areas. A national park designation immediately raises the stature of the land, it brings significantly more tourists, and allows for some benign economic development in these rural enclaves. The National Park System needs to be significantly expanded. The excuse that other units in the system are underfunded therefore we should not add more is fallacious. Many of these potential national parks are under constant development pressures, national monument status still allows many of them to be exploited by timber, oil and gas, grazing, mining and agricultural interests. If you want more money for conservation, parks, and environmental initiatives then it will be imperative to re-task money already in the budget, 52% of which goes to "national security" in the form of the budgets for DoD, DHS, and various intelligence agencies. That's an abomination, we spend more on "national defense" than the next 30 countries combined! As for the notion that ranchers are responsible stewards of the land, that is a dubious statement at best. Most ranchers are a subsidiary of Big Agra, they exploit federal lands, exhaust the resources, socialize all external costs, then internalize the profits. I dare anyone survey a grassland after it's been invaded by tens of thousands of cattle. The evidence just doesn't support the notion that ranchers are responsible stewards of the public commons, they may be better at caring for their own parcels of land where they cannot pass off the external costs to taxpayers, but I've seen what's happened to grasslands in Oregon after grazing interests ripped the hell out of the place, and it wasn't responsible stewardship. Ranchers masquerade as free marketeers, but in reality they're just free loaders.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We must ALL come together on the climate change, government, non-profits, and the people at large. Can't anyone realize that as we kill the climate we are forcing our great-great grand children to find an off earth home? Will the technology be there to find one or do we doom them to a horrible death here? As a world, we are one but to argue and push each other away for fear and loathing we ALL loose!

Note: We are protecting humanity by the protection of wildlife and habitat/ecosystems. This action needs to involve all functional and restorable systems, including ALL federal lands.

Why am I even wasting my time with this? Why should the NPS have even more land to mismanage? Right now, the Crown Managers are planning on a conference about how they are going to "protect" Glacier by encouraging buffers around the park. As in, let it burn, don't allow access, let the wolves eat everything, close all the roads, kill all the non-native fish, blah blah. This Treasured Landscapes initiative is a scam.

Reward people who come up with good ideas and think outside the box.

Support alternative energy. There are many intelligent people in the U.S. and they have great ideas. Support them.

In partnership with the USFWS Southwest Region 2 Director Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, Houston Wilderness has already scheduled a day-long session at Rice University on August 10, 2010. The purpose of the session is two-fold: to roll out the Gulf Coast Prairie Landscape Conservation Cooperative to stakeholders within the 24 county southeast Texas region, and to present the Houston Wilderness region's newly developed joint strategy for increasing conservation within current budgets to representatives from federal agencies including EPA, FEMA, the Department of Agriculture and Interior, and others. This event could easily be adapted to become an official America's Great Outdoors listening session. We are still in the planning stage so if August 10th is unworkable, we will do everything possible to accommodate your schedule.

The Obama administration should create new national programs that help connect people - especially our youth - with nature. Outdoor play and a connection to the natural world benefit children in many ways. The federal government should develop new administrative incentives and funding to expand state and local opportunities for students to reconnect and learn about nature.

Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010: The bill (H.R. 1612) "increases service opportunities for youth and young adults on public lands (ages 18-24), providing green jobs, improving infrastructure, restoring public lands, encouraging cultural and historical research, improving the health of coastal, marine and estuarine ecosystems, addressing climate change and assisting with scientific data collection."

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund: The administration should support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas, protect lands around lakes, rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails, or provide key wildlife linkage areas.

In California, we are working with Congressional leaders to protect wilderness and wild and scenic rivers in the San Gabriel Mountains, the California Desert, in northern San Diego County, and many other regions. Your support of these proposals can preserve our wildest lands for future generations.

Please support conservation of large landscapes like Berryessa-Snow Mountain that include pristine wildlands, working forest and ranch lands, private parcels, and connections across large areas. The protection of Berryessa - Snow Mountain as a National Conservation Area is a key step. This provides us with the best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality, and climate change adaptation while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.

Support nature education programs, a revived civilian conservation corps, and programs that inspire people to go outdoors. In Southern California, a proposal to create a National Recreation Area for the San Gabriel Mountains and River will benefit many urban communities that lack easy access to the outdoors. No matter where they live, all children deserve the opportunity to learn about and experience the wildlands that belong to all Americans.

The administration should support fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas and protect lands around lakes, rivers, and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails, or provide key wildlife linkage areas.

Please protect key landscapes on a large scale -- for the land, for the people.

The Obama administration should conserve large landscapes, including our healthy wildlands, connecting them with working forest and ranch lands, private lands and the connections across these large areas.

Protect large natural areas such as: San Miguel River corridor: This river corridor not only provides stunning natural scenery, but acts as an important ecosystem that creates a protected open space and wildlife habitat; Western Colorado's Gateway area: This diverse and beautiful area includes the Palisade's towering sandstone spires which create an ecological bridge between rock tributaries and verdant aspen forests; Wildlands of the Arkansas River Watershed: These ecologically rich, lower elevation lands provide essential habitat, protect major water supplies, and provide quiet recreation opportunities for two million people living nearby.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Just recently, there was a huge success for wildlands protection in the magnificent Vermillion Basin, which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced it will close to future oil and gas leasing. We need more bold actions like this to protect large, unfragmented and treasured landscapes.

This effort should include reaffirming and implementing the BLM's authority to establish new Wilderness Study Areas and to protect the wilderness characteristics of those areas.

Support and implement more science-based management of our resources in Colorado. This science-based management needs to provide a better understanding of the impacts of conflicting land uses on other resources across the landscape.

We are working with congressional leaders to protect the Organ Mountains wilderness, a spectacular backdrop to the city of Las Cruces. Your support of these proposals can preserve our wildest lands for future generations.

The designation of the Manzano Wilderness Study Area as part of the existing Manzano Wilderness will preserve a critical wildlife corridor through the Sandia and Manzano Mountains.

Create a National Conservation Area in the Ute Mountain area: This will protect the amazing high desert along New Mexico's river, the wild and scenic Rio Grande. This designation will protect important wildlife corridors.

Otero Mesa should be permanently protected as a national monument. The million-acre grassland is home to more than a thousand native species and sits above a vast, untapped freshwater aquifer. A half-million acres of Otero Mesa qualify for wilderness designation; and a national monument would preserve these fragile wildlands while promoting traditional uses such as hunting and hiking.

Utah needs your help to preserve its precious wild lands that give us clean air, drinking water, open space, beautiful recreation areas and wildlife habitat. From Cedar Mesa to Red Cliffs, Utah offers an extraordinary home to wildlife and outstanding recreation opportunities. However, development, increased recreation and climate change has put some of our most precious outdoors destinations at risk.

Large natural areas, such as Cedar Mesa, the San Rafael Swell, Wasatch Mountains, Beaver Dam Wash and Red Cliffs -- provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife, recreation and lands we enjoy today. Protecting these lands will give us the opportunity to actively reconnect our children to their incredible natural heritage.

The Wasatch Wilderness and Watershed Protection Act would provide valuable protections to the watershed that provides municipal water to more than a half-million residents of Salt Lake City while maintaining access for backcountry skiing. The proposal is supported by local governments, recreation interests, and local conservation organizations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Permanent protection of The Grand Gulch and Cedar Mesa Plateau as Wilderness will protect an unsurpassed primitive outdoor museum of rich cultural resources and spectacular geology containing deep twisting canyons, alcoves and natural bridges - along with one of the most significant archeological landscape in the west. San Juan County Commissioners and Senator Bob Bennett, along with conservation organizations, are working to reach consensus on the protection of this landscape within San Juan County.

This effort should include giving the BLM the authority to protect wilderness quality lands until permanent protection of these iconic Utah landscapes is made possible by the diversity of voices speaking out in favor with the collaboration of government, local citizens and user groups.

The San Gabriel Mountains soar above our homes, from Santa Clarita to San Bernardino, providing much of our public open space. These mountains benefit our quality of life and the health of our families by providing us with clean air and water and incredible natural beauty. Our region's youth obesity and diabetes crisis has brought new urgency to connecting our people and communities back to our mountains and rivers. I urge you to recommend the creation of a robust San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area that would improve the visitor experience in the mountains and better connect families to the recreational opportunities inside the forest.

A National Recreation Area Should Include: Recognition of the importance of wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers. It should address opportunities to expand these resources and support their recreational use with additional rangers.

A National Recreation Area Should Include: All of the area historically considered to be part of the San Gabriel Mountains including all of the national forest land between the I-14 on the west and the I-15 on the east.

A National Recreation Area Should Include: All of the watershed study area in the San Gabriel Valley outside of the national forests including cities such as Azusa and El Monte.

A National Recreation Area Should Include: A major effort to connect surrounding communities to the forest. This effort would include a robust system of trails, parks and public transportation.

A National Recreation Area Should Include: The management structure in Alternative C in which the National Park Service takes the lead in creating a partnership between the Park Service and the Forest Service (which would continue to manage the San Gabriel Mountains).

A National Recreation Area Should Include: Enhanced educational and interpretive programs so that kids--and everyone--can learn more about native habitat, plants and animals.

A National Recreation Area Should Include: Additional resources to help with Station Fire recovery and a public education component associated with the NRA to track recovery and educate the public about wildfire.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The goal to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking. The Initiative must preserve Multiple Use lands as Multiple Use for current and future generations to enjoy these and all other forms of recreation.

Multiple Use lands are where the majority of people recreate, as well as where much of our timber and beef products come from, but these lands have been closed at an alarming rate. The President must protect these precious lands by designating them permanently as Multiple Use.

The President needs to include the two largest forms of recreation as a priority in his plan to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. That would be Off Highway Vehicle recreation and Mountain Biking. More areas need to be opened to people who enjoy these most popular ways to enjoy the outdoors.

Renewable resource harvesting in America, also known as logging, is done under the strictest environmental regulations in the world. The Initiative should encourage logging, otherwise we are supporting poor logging practices in other countries where they may have little or no environmental regulations, not to mention wasted fuel and energy shipping wood from far away places.

Wilderness and Monument are the most restrictive forms of land designation and reduce access. We need to revert some of these lands back to Multiple Use in order to promote access for urban youth and all Americans.

The initial Wilderness Act envisioned about 20 million acres as suitable. Today we have over 120 million acres of Wilderness where public access is restricted. The majority of the public have been forced onto smaller and smaller areas outside of Wilderness. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors we do not need more Wilderness areas, we need less.

The Initiative seeks to address Climate Change and should use the best science, such as the Sierra Nevada Conservancy/USDA Climate Change Report, which determined the primary need for fuel reduction to promote forest watershed health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests.

Address Conservation at a Large Scale

Protect our wilderness

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat

Connect people with Nature

Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities

Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Within the Prairie Pothole Region lies the Missouri Coteau, America's last great landscape of richly diverse wetlands and native grasslands. This ecologically and culturally unique landscape provides breeding habitat for millions of waterfowl and other migratory birds, and it is also home to a strong outdoors-focused culture and a proud ranching tradition.

We also support a strong North American Wetlands Conservation Act program and full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Ducks Unlimited, in partnership with the federal and state agencies, numerous NGOs and private landowners, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have worked to curb habitat losses in the Prairie Pothole Region to ensure the future of migratory birds and related natural resource conservation opportunities. Despite these efforts, the native grasslands and wetlands of this cultural and ecological treasure continue to disappear faster than they can be conserved. For these reasons, I urge the administration to recognize the Prairie Pothole Region as a Treasured Landscape.

By employing a landscape-scale approach to protect, reconnect and restore habitats and sustaining our conservation legacy through youth engagement, we can develop a strategy that achieves the goals of the AGO Initiative. Building on the projects and programs mentioned above will help implement the activities to make the initiative a success.

Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We need real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife. Your active leadership is crucial to develop this conservation strategy for the 21st century.

Our parks, refuges, national forests, and public lands represent the best of America. They are home to our most treasured and historic places. Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development, mineral extraction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration.

There has never been a more important time for a comprehensive approach to conserving our treasured landscapes.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is a tremendous need to do landscape-scale conservation to address critical issues facing ecosystem services, wildlife conservation, outdoor recreation and clean water. In addition, now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change.

To assist fish, wildlife, natural resources and human communities in adapting to climate change, this initiative must include the conservation of large, connected landscapes to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and other threats. It must also include the protection of large watersheds and their wetlands to mitigate the impacts of flood and drought that result from changing weather patterns.

I am thrilled that you have launched this important process and I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality.

Earlier this month, Tennessee's U.S. Senators Corker and Alexander introduced the Tennessee Wilderness Act of 2010, which could protect nearly 20,000 acres of wilderness in the Cherokee National Forest. It would specifically designate six areas of wilderness, adding acreage to the beloved Big and Little Frog, Sampson Mountain, Big Laurel Branch and Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock wilderness areas, while creating more than 9,000 acres of Upper Bald River Wilderness. The Tennessee Wilderness Act represents the opportunities that exist within America's Great Outdoors to change conservation for the 21st century. This historic bipartisan push to expand Tennessee's wilderness is long overdue. However, the true victory will be seeing Congressional approval of the bill, providing everlasting protection for eastern Tennessee's land and wildlife.

Protect our Wilderness and the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee. We are working with Government leaders to protect wilderness and wild and scenic rivers in the Cherokee National Forest. Your support of these proposals can preserve our wildest lands for future generations.

Please support conservation of large landscapes that include pristine wildlands, working forest and ranch lands, private parcels and connections across large areas. This provides us with the best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and climate change adaptation while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.

Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. The Obama administration should prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands, making restoration a national priority.

Support nature education programs, a revived civilian conservation corps, and programs that inspire people to go outdoors. No matter where they live, all children deserve the opportunity to learn about and experience the wildlands that belong to all Americans.

Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans two them in the next century.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.

Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences.

Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country.

We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

We are pleased to hear that the Obama administration will be hosting an America's Great Outdoors event in the Los Angeles region on July 8, 2010. We are particularly interested in the administration's goals to encourage individuals from underserved, diverse communities to enter into career paths that these public land agencies, and also to bring recreational and educational opportunities to these communities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Los Angeles region, specifically the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), is an exceptional area for showcasing best practices and innovative partnerships towards reaching these goals. We urge you to consider holding a listening session and field trip to the SMMNRA.

The National Park Service is currently conducting a special resources study of the Rim of the Valley Corridor that may lead to enhanced recreation and educational opportunities for communities challenged with the lack of open space. The administration can glean best practices from the SMMNRA's programs that will shape how our land management agencies better connect to urban communities.

We are confident that you will find many projects and partnerships that exemplify the America's Great Outdoors agenda in the Hudson Valley and we hope that you will be able to include our region in your upcoming tour of the country.

I am delighted to hear of the America's Great Outdoors/Treasured Landscapes Initiative. I understand that you are planning to hold a number of listening sessions around the country after your formal launch in Washington, D. C. on April 16th. I appreciate your leadership on putting American's national forests in the forefront. This will be a great opportunity for the Department of Interior, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the other engaged agencies to hear from the public about the on-the-ground needs and opportunities to protect and manage our natural resources across a broader landscape for all Americans.

We are writing to encourage you to schedule an America's Great Outdoors listening session in our home state of New Jersey, also known as the Garden State. We believe that the America's Great Outdoors Initiative will provide an opportunity for the Environmental Protection Agency, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of Interior and the other agencies to hear from the diverse audiences who often live in densely populated cities and face significant obstacles when searching for healthy recreation opportunities.

In our country, only one in five homes have a park within a half-mile and this number is even higher for New Jersey's cities, which are some of the country's most densely populated. All Americans are adversely affected by limited green spaces, deteriorating community facilities, health problems, and juvenile delinquency. Research shows that healthy and vibrant urban areas play key roles in improving the economy, health, and quality of life in our communities. Urban parks are instrumental in helping our nation achieve important national goals of increasing exercise, providing safe, healthy alternatives for at-risk youth, and spurring local economic development. Providing cities with outdoor resources is a necessity and will reconnect people to the great outdoors.

Twenty million people live around the New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary, an area that is also home to a broad variety of plant and animal species. There is a great need for protection of underdeveloped land in densely populated communities where open space is scarce and public access to the estuary and its tributaries is often limited due to past industrial use.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Currently, there are America's Great Outdoors listening sessions that have taken place in Los Angeles and other areas. Currently, there are America's Great Outdoors listening sessions that have taken place in Los Angeles and other areas in the South and West. We believe that the challenges that New Jersey faces in regards to the need for urban parks and access to quality recreation opportunities in densely populated cities and suburbs is unique and should be part of our national public lands agenda and the discussion should take place in New Jersey.

We appreciate your efforts in this regard and agree that new conservation initiatives should be based on the input from local citizens and landowners who will be most directly affected by them. In that spirit, we are writing to ask you to consider holding a listening session in Pierre, South Dakota, this summer to allow the citizens of our state to express their views on potential future AGO initiatives to conserve South Dakota's natural resources.

Well-regarded national conservation organizations, led by Ducks Unlimited, and including Pheasants Forever and the Boone and Crockett Club, as well as the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, have expressed support for additional efforts to conserve the Prairie Pothole Region.

In closing, we hope that you will hold a listening session in Pierre, South Dakota this summer to hear from South Dakotans about their conservation objectives in the context of your America's Great Outdoors initiative.

1. We need the Land and Water Conservation Fund to be fully funded and Maine needs a fair share in the allocation of the federal portion, not just the state portion, of those funds.
2. Change the Forest Legacy rules so that states with a high amount of unprotected forests can get a higher amount of annual Legacy funding.
3. Adopt a landscape connectivity based conservation plan for Northern New England and provide funding to accomplish it.

If we want the New England's wildlife and native plants to survive in a changing climate, we must help them to adapt by protecting critical habitat cores and creating corridors that will allow for migration as temperatures rise. Main's Western Mountains are an essential physical link in that process. wedged between the densely populated southern Province of Quebec just across the border with Canada to the north and the population centers of southern Maine, this region serves as a critical connector linking large blocks of existing conservation and providing opportunities to maintain habitat continuity on a landscape scale.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Key to the Initiative's success is Section 2 of the Presidential memorandum that you signed, requiring "listening and learning sessions around the country where land and waters are being conserved and community parks are being established in innovative ways." As you and your "Green Team" of Chair Sutley, Administrator Jackson, and Secretaries Salazar and Vilsack begin identifying locations to hold these sessions, please give strong consideration to Washington State. My state is one where conservation is a way of life and where "tribal leaders, farmers and ranchers, sportsmen, community park groups, foresters, youth groups, businesspeoples, educators, state and local governments, and recreation and conservation groups" can provide your administration with the creative conservation strategies you are looking for to share with the rest of the nation.

As you continue your work on the America's Great outdoors program, we hope you will consider visiting the Adirondacks to conduct a listening session and learn about local innovative strategies to conserve our lands and water. The Adirondack Region of northern New York State, which is home to the Adirondack Mountains, covers over six million acres and contains the largest wilderness area east of the Mississippi River, the Adirondack Park. The area contains over 3,000 lakes and ponds, 2,000 miles of hiking trails and is a truly unique state park.

Support Implementation of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan The National Fish Habitat Action Plan is a partnership-based initiative that uses best science practices to protect, rehabilitate and improve fish habitat. The Action Plan is implemented through 17 Fish Habitat Partnerships under National Fish Habitat Board guidance. These partnerships span all 50 states and bring a broad coalition of partners together, including federal and state agencies, tribes, NGO's, private industry and recreational angling groups.

Support Dedicated Funding for Fish and Wildlife Conservation Extraction of oil and gas from federal lands and waters makes use of a natural resource that will not be available to future generations. In addition, all energy development on public lands, traditional and renewable, has impacts to fish, wildlife and their habitats. A portion of fees and royalties from these energy development activities should be invested strategically in state, federal and private lands conservation through investments in State Wildlife Action Plans. A portion of fees and royalties also should be invested in state and federal programs that can help avoid, minimize or mitigate the impacts of oil and gas development. The Land and Water Conservation Fund should be fully funded with 50% of the funds directed to states and 50% to federal land management agencies. Parity will help ensure investments are made in land conservation and recreation programs at the state, county and municipal levels where accessibility is the highest for the greatest number of citizens.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support Landscape Level Conservation Landscape-level impacts to habitats from energy development, transportation, climate change, agriculture and urban growth require increasingly coordinated efforts between state and federal natural resource agencies. In addition to State Wildlife Action Plans, state fish and wildlife agencies are engaged in developing and implementing landscape-level conservation strategies such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; National Fish Habitat Action Plan; regional sagebrush strategies; and range-wide management plans for big game, coldwater fish, resident and migratory birds and other species. Habitat connectivity should be achieved between federal, state, local governmental lands and key private conservation holdings (including easements). Federal land protection funds should be prioritized for securing greater access to land-locked federal lands for the purpose of reconnecting youth and adults to nature through fishing, hunting and wildlife-dependent recreation.

Support Climate Change Adaptation Climate change is and will continue to have devastating impacts on many fish and wildlife species and their habitats. Federal policy and associated climate-derived funding (e.g. from sale of carbon allowances, a carbon tax, etc.) are urgently needed. Legislation introduced by Senators Bingaman, Baucus, Whitehouse and Udall (S1933) provides the right approach to addressing climate change by accurately reflecting the roles of federal and state government. The nation needs to move to renewable sources of energy, but also recognize the importance of proper siting and mitigation of impacts to fish and wildlife. There should be a mechanism to assess these impacts and a source of funding from royalties or excise taxes on renewable sources that are put in a dedicated trust fund and invested in strategic fish and wildlife conservation.

Support Conservation of Fish and Wildlife on Private Lands Most fish and wildlife are found on private lands. We can not be successful in conserving fish and wildlife without strong support by and partnerships with the farmers, ranchers, homeowners, corporations, etc. who own and manage private land. We need increased investment in working lands and better incentives for stewardship that keep lands in private ownership but maintain and enhance their value to fish and wildlife. continued Administration support for robustly funded conservation programs under the Farm Bill is clearly needed.

Support the North American Conservation Education Strategy The nation needs environmentally literate citizens with the knowledge and skills to support natural resource conservation; participate in outdoor recreation activities; pursue green economy jobs; and make decisions that will positively impact the future of our resources and America's Great Outdoors. Federal agencies involved in conservation education (natural resource agencies and education) should actively engage with state fish and wildlife agencies and conservation partners to support environmental literacy standards that connect students more closely with the natural world; recognize the value of outdoor skills in the education process; and help ensure every child has access to a natural area (no matter how small) within walking distance of his/her school which can be used as an outdoor classroom.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Designed by experts from state fish and wildlife agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the North American Conservation Education Strategy identifies what every citizen should know, feel and do related to fish and wildlife conservation. These core concepts have been translated to meet K-12 academic standards (science, social science, health and fitness) while shaping students' environmental literacy, stewardship and outdoor skills. By encouraging support for the North American Conservation Education Strategy on a broad level, federal and state agencies can help Americans of all ages understand and appreciate fish and wildlife management including the sustainable enjoyment and use of those resources.

1. Develop a National Wildlife Corridor Inventory. We need to inventory and assess the conservation status of wildlife movement areas across the nation. Precise knowledge of this major ecological phenomenon is lacking. A national migration database is recommended.
2. Develop incentives to conserve wildlife corridors on private lands either through new funding initiatives or adding wildlife corridors as preferential selection criteria for the expenditure of Land and Water Conservation Funds, Farm Bill provisions, and Transportation Bill support.
3. Incorporate wildlife corridor considerations within all federal natural resource planning efforts such as the National Forest Management Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
4. Develop a national designation process for categorizing and delineating ecologically and culturally important wildlife corridors. In most places, wildlife corridors do not have any formal designations. A national designation will help bring attention and awareness to outstanding wildlife movement areas and provide planning guidance for proposed development. The Western Governors Association has developed a Wildlife Corridor initiative that includes designating corridors and zones of ecological connectivity within State Wildlife Action Plans.
5. Improve federal transportation policies that support wildlife crossing efforts and incorporate wildlife crossing considerations in the review of federally supported highway projects, especially in high wildlife-vehicle collision areas.
6. Provide federal funding to state and local efforts such as State Wildlife Actions Plans that seek to conserve wildlife movement within and between states.
7. Provide federal funding for Tribal lands and waters to support efforts to conserve connectivity on reservations and adjoining treaty areas.
8. Establish a national conservation registry of the most iconic wildlife corridors in the nation. There are many iconic wildlife corridors that deserve special conservation status such as the Path of Pronghorn in Wyoming or the Bowhead Whale migration around Point Barrow.
9. Fund pilot climate adaptation pilot projects that test the ability of wildlife corridors to assist species in responding to climate change.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You're asking how the government can help. I believe what could be of real benefit to our region would be federal funds designated specifically for particular projects such as building and maintaining multiple use trails to augment the growing ATV tourism in addition to the important snowmobile industry. Helping the ongoing, local efforts to increase tourism activity could be a genuine help for northern Maine.

TWS supports a thoughtful approach to alternative energy development that considers the effects of solar, wind, and biofuel on wildlife and wildlife habitat at every step of the way. Choosing alternative energy sources is an important way for people to make a difference for wildlife, and choosing to develop those energy sources in an environmentally conscious way should be a top priority for the federal government as it crafts national energy policy and plans for its own facilities and agencies.

Invasive species are a profound threat to ecosystems across North America. TWS encourages effective laws and regulations at the state and federal levels that control the spread of invasive species by discouraging further introduction of invasive species for any purpose; prevention of the accidental escape of exotic animals already in captivity into the wild; and programs to monitor and control invasive species capable of modifying native wildlife habitat and affecting support tourism, recreation, and love of the outdoors.

The federal conflict of interest statute (18 U.S.C. § 208) should be amended to exclude professional and scientific societies, so that service in leadership positions within these organizations is encouraged. Full participation by a variety of individuals, including federal employees, in professional and scientific societies is essential for the conduct of science and the integration of research into management decisions.

Federal agency scientists and managers that use science should not be speaking only among themselves. This increases the probability that the agencies will become isolated and develop an insular culture that does not interact with or is not aware of information or ideas being generated by academia, NGOs and industry. The federal government's agencies and their ability to do their important job of protecting our natural resources will be strengthened as their employees benefit from membership in professional societies.

The Endangered Species Act should be strengthened to increase the effectiveness of threatened and endangered species conservation, through improvements to the law and its funding, administrative implementation, and integration with efforts by other parties, especially private landowners. The success of the ESA is apparent in the recovery of species and populations such as the Yellowstone grizzly bear, which draw thousands of visitors to the National Park System each year. Thank you for considering the views of wildlife professionals.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Recreational Trails Program (RTP): American Trails strongly supports continuation of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), administered by the Federal Highway Administration, funded by federal taxes paid on gasoline used in non-highway recreation. RTP funds are distributed through the state transportation departments and natural resource agencies in cooperation with citizen advisory committees and a network of organizations and communities. These partners leverage available funding with cash and in-kind support. Work for these projects is primarily done by youth corps, volunteers, and small businesses. Even more encouraging would be a permanent line of federal funding that would ensure consistent trail-related projects over the years. Please consider increasing funding for trails and bikeways as a critical part of the solution to the childhood obesity problem.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund: This is another crucial program that can provide grants to states for parks, trails, and acquisition of lands and waters. It is authorized at \$900 million per year. However, Congress has fully funded the program only twice since its inception and rarely has the funds come close to matching the full amount authorized. Appropriations over the years have varied wildly and have been a mere fraction of the total amount authorized, to the detriment of our parks systems.

Federal Land Management Funding for Trails: The U.S. Forest Service currently has a backlog of 148,000 miles of trails on USFS lands that need deferred maintenance (this is major maintenance, not routine maintenance, and is work needed to bring a mile of trail up to its designed standard for the use it is receiving). The Forest Service cost to bring this 148,000 trail miles up to their design standard is estimated by the Forest Service to be \$294,000,000.

Additionally, the AHC specifically recommends the Administration work with Congress to:

- Pass the Conservation Easement Incentive Act of 2009 and Rural Heritage Conservation extension Act of 2009.

- Ensure the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program and The Grassland Reserve Program are adequately funded.

The Equestrian community understands the current fiscal situation precludes major increases in the budgets for the federal land management agencies. However, the AHC believes the Administration, Congress and recreational users must come together to find a solution to address the current situation.

Equestrians are also concerned about any serious threat to our public lands that could have a lasting impact. For example, the spreading infestation of the mountain pine beetle in the west and hemlock wooly adelgid in the east are causing great damage to our nation's forest or the growing acreage of forest destroyed by wildfires each year. The Equestrian community believes action must be taken to address such threats to our public land and is ready to help in anyway it can.

Additionally, the AHC specifically recommends the Administration work with Congress to:

- Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

- Support Reauthorization of the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA) for ten years.

• Support the Recreational Trails Program reauthorization in the next national surface transportation bill.

- Pass the Complete Americas Great Trails Act

- Ensure the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program is adequately funded.

The AHC believes as we consider policies concerning America's outdoors it is important to remember the ability to experience America's outdoors can be limited for individuals with disabilities. The horse is a major means of access for disabled individuals. Many therapeutic riding programs prepare handicapped individuals for the experience of trail riding. Indeed, such programs are working with disabled veterans of the Iraq war and teaching them to ride or facilitating their riding under new limitations.

When considering outdoor recreation, access to trails and natural places, any significant medical condition that impairs a person's ability to gain such access deserves consideration, including people with limited mobility due to arthritis, heart disease, lung problems, peripheral vascular disease, etc. as well as those confined to wheelchairs.

We hope as the Administration and Congress determines future policy the contribution of America's millions of equestrians make to support and conserve America's outdoors and the role equestrian activities can play in connecting Americans of all ages with the outdoors will be considered. The equestrian community is part of the historic legacy of America and riding on America's public lands continues to play an important role in the lives of many Americans and their families today.

Please develop and implement a comprehensive, national, coordinated strategy to reconnect children and families with the great outdoors through policy solutions and federal funding.

I look forward to following up with you and your staff to understand how we can partner on this region's approach to sustainable forestry and sustainable community development. In particular, I ask for your support of the Center's application to USDA Rural Development for a "Great Regions" Rural Business opportunity Grant. This investment will match significant private investment and advance this coordinated strategy across one of America's greatest forested regions.

Make the forest-based economy an interagency priority to keep forests as forests and revitalize rural communities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1. Diversify Markets and Promote Investment in the Forest Products Industry by funding a Forest Products Advisor position to continue developing Maine's niche in the global marketplace.

2. Increase Energy Efficiency by tailoring the Rural Energy for America Program to meet the needs of large mills and other forest-based businesses.

3. Advance Workforce Training and Business Assistance Programs by increasing funding and flexibility for USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant and Rural Business Opportunity Grant Programs.

Develop creative, flexible partnerships with local entities to better deliver services in support of the forest-based economy.

4. Expand Rural Broadband Access by creating state allocations from the USDA Broadband Program and revising the Community Connect Program to allow multi-community grants and expand eligibility to underserved areas.

5. Improve Landowner Relations by allowing state authorities to use the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program and the USDA Farm Service Agency's Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program to improve enforcement of recreation laws and educate recreational users of private land.

Provide incentives to landowners to continue management and stewardship in support of the forest-based economy (See the Keeping Maine's Forests Proposal for additional ideas).

6. Reduce Landowner Costs of trail construction and maintenance by opening the Challenge Cost-Share Program - currently restricted to federal or federally-designated lands and rail trails - to allow its use on non-federally owned, but federally-funded conservation land and easements.

7. Enhance Wood Supplies from family forest owners by restoring WoodsWISE (USDA Forest Service Forest Stewardship Program in Maine) funding and by authorizing the Maine Office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to deliver forest conservation financial assistance through the Maine Forest Service.

These broad, thematic ideas are not new. The second one, for example, is a hallmark of the Obama Administration and included the the goals of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. What is new, however, and what this Committee is excited to offer are seven specific, actionable recommendations that USDA and USDI can implement by collaborating with state government and private businesses to enhance forests as an economic engine.

If implemented, these seven recommendations will strengthen the markets for forest products and forest-based tourism. They will provide additional revenue streams for landowners and added means for Maine's forest-based businesses and rural communities to realize enhanced value from Maine's forests.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Maine has institutional infrastructure to promote rural broadband access and adoption: the ConnectME Authority is the State's coordinating agency to bring broadband to unserved and underserved areas, and the Broadband Strategy Council advises Connect ME through a statewide strategic broadband infrastructure plan. The USDA has rightly made rural broadband access a priority, but more support and flexibility are needed.

To address the fact that rural communities have circumstances that are often not directly compatible with federal program guidelines, a state allocation from the USDA Broadband Program would be most effective at improving rural broadband access, as opposed to making individual grants to specific towns. The ConnectME Authority is well positioned to coordinate efforts in Maine, including state match for federal resources.

The KMFE Steering Committee believes the most effective way to reduce costs for landowners and increase public appreciation for the benefits they provide is to simultaneously increase enforcement of laws for recreational users on private land and to educate recreational users about current laws and the critical economic role that landowners play in Maine's rural woods-based communities.

Allow existing uses in new Wilderness

Allow Limited Bicycle Use Within Wilderness Areas

Allow mushroom picking for personal use on most public lands.

Cal DFG and BLM partnerships

Change the Definition of mechanised travel to allow bicycles

grazing leases on BLM land

Handicapped Access

Local, State and National Parks

Protect Old Growth Forests in their Entirety, not just specific old trees within them

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect our Dark Skies

Protect the Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks Wilderness (Bill S.1689)

The Berryessa Snow Mountain region - protect our treasured landscapes

wilderness designation

Wilderness designation is the gold standard

Change the rules to allow side by sides UTVa on ATV trails

Collaborate with local not for profits

create a longleaf pine wilderness!

environmental education class required in order to graduate high school

I challenge our government not ot turn a Blind eye to OHV enthusiasts

Keep OHVs out of public lands

Keeping USFS Roads and Trails Open to OHV Use

MANDATORY BOTTLE DEPOSITS

National "Preservation Highway"

New Name for our Newest System of Protected Lands

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Prepare the National Parks for Upcoming Centennial

Preserve Multiple Use Lands Permanently and Prevent Concentrated Used

Preserving a 22 ACRE HISTORIC SITE

Public Awareness - Post Corporate Land use on DOI Website

Reaffirm BLM's Authority to Establish Wilderness Study Areas

Set aside more public land for OHV use

Stop closing land to OHV use

Make the Enhanced Tax Incentive for Conservation Easements Permanent

Expand The Estate Tax Exclusion for Lands Protected With A Conservation Easement

Expand the Land + Water Conservation Fund to allow 3rd parties, as defined by IRC section 170(h) to access LWCF funds to complete, hold and administer conservation easements on private lands.

Adopt Legislation to Avoid Protected Lands During Siting of Utilities

Defer Estate Taxes on Family Farms and Ranches

Beyond tax deductions: Tax credits for conservation

Bring Back the Landowner Incentive Program

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support Farm Bill Conservation Easement Programs

Targeted Conservation Easements Program (TCEP)

Tax Incentives for Green Building Programs that focus on landscapes

Complete the National Scenic and Historic Trail System

Complete The National Trails System - Connecting People to our Natural, Historic, and Cultural Heritage through Citizen Stewardship

complete the Yolo/Napa Blue Ridge Trail

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and get the funds to local governments

fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund Stateside Assistance Program

conservation easements

Reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA)

1 for 1: 1 new acre of wilderness = 1 new acre of OHV area

100 new national parks for the 100th anniversary of the NPS

A deposit on tires

Abolish grazing in wilderness areas

Address national and worldwide overpopulation

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

ALL AMERICANS DESERVE AN EQUAL VOICE IN LAND USE PLANS.

Allow harvesting of fallen trees after windstorms

Allow Mountain Bikers to acquire a license to access USFS Wilderness Areas

Allow Mountain Biking in Wilderness areas

Allow Running in Wilderness Areas

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge must be designated Wilderness

Backcountry Area Conservation Program

Ban Off Road Vehicles (ORV or OHV) from National Forests Near Water

Ban OHV use on federal lands

Ban Oil drilling in National Parks

Be a Leader

Better coordination and collaboration between federal, state and local agencies

BLM wild horse policy and grazing program a financial disaster

Bring Back the Civilian Conservation Corps

Bring back the Civilian Conservation Corps of the '30's!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Bring US Forest Service/BLM/Army Corps up to date

Civilian Conservation Corps

Clean public transport for national parks

Close tax loopholes and impose fees on oil, gas, coal and logging companies

complete deferred maintenance at National Parks

Concession operated

Conduct Recreational Carrying Capacity Studies

Congress should amend the Taylor Grazing Act and FLPMA to allow voluntary grazing permit buyouts to be permanent

Congressional Intent and Legislative Histories Ignored by Federal Agencies

Connect needs with jobs

Conservation and the economy

Continued Protection of Land, Water, and Wildlife

Corps Programs

Cost of New Recreation Proposals – No Relationship To Reality

Create Alternatives to the Wilderness Designation

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Create an "Agency for Atmospheric Production"

Create Ancient Forest National Park

Create New Public Lands in Ohio

Cross state horse trails, cross america horse trails, non-motorized vehicles

Designate land open to cross country OHV use

Designate Lands and Save our Last Remnants of Wilderness

Designate More Trails

Develop quiet OHV vehicles and restrict off-road use to them only

Development of the "Smart Park"

Disband the BLM

Do something about climate change NOW!

Dump the Welfare System

Education

Encode the Roadless Rule

End Taxpayer Subsidized Clearcutting

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

ENFORCE existing laws.

Environmental Education in our National Parks, America's Best Classroom

Expansion of Parks and Monuments

Federal agencies need to be more consistent and effective in stopping illegal livestock grazing

Federal Biodiversity Protection

Federal Funds

federal government role

Follow existing laws to protect the environment and endangered species!

Forbid firearms in National parks & monuments

Forest Legacy Program Funding

Forest Recreation Cabins Threatened By Agency Policy

Forest Use tied to schools and roads

Full & Dedicated Funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Fully Fund Historic Preservation and Heritage Area Programs

Fund and leave our Parks alone !

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fund land grant universities

funding for corridors and larger core areas

Funding our national parks

GAO Reports Should be Reviewed By Recreation Supporters

General Ideas - Education, Easements, Eco regionalism, Bureacracy cooperation

Get Agencies Directly Involved With Access TO Public Land

Give benefits to those who go green

Give Priority to Recreation (be it Backpacking, Mountain Biking, or even OHVs) over Industrial Uses of Public Land (Mining, Gas Drilling, etc)

government has too much control already!

Government law should reflect the laws of nature

Government Vehicle Standards for Conservation Areas

Grazing Subsidizes Recreation, Ranchers Rights Must Be Recognized

Grow Trees, Cut Timber, Maintain Roads

I'm from the government and I'm here to help you

Implement the Recommendations of the National Parks Second Century Commission

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Incentives for Gov't Worker Involvement

Increase federal government's role.

INCREASE FOREIGN VISITOR NATIONAL PARK/MONUMENT FEES

Increase Funding to Stop Criminal OHV Use

Inholders Should be treated as Asset-Partners in Outdoor Recreation

Interagency & Scholarly Organization Cooperation

Intra-Departmental Communication

Keeping Forests as Forests

Land Protection Plans - Implementation Needed

Land Use and the Federal Government

Law

Lead by Example. Hey Mr. President, take your girls Camping!

Leave the forest roads open

Let the States Decide

Limit Off Road Vehicle Use on Federal Lands

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Local governments must be held accountable and citizens protected

Maintain OHV/non-OHV Ratio

Maintenance before new acquisitions or programs

Make it the "peoples land", not the governments

Make me a hiking trail contouring every 500 feet of every wilderness area

Manage wild areas as if the area matters, not just people

More clearly defining concepts of environmental activity and action

More Than Enough Wilderness Lands

National Forest Service lands should be converted to National Park lands

National Parks

National Parks and Protecting Species

Need for Detailed Federal Plans for Possible Disasters Affecting Parks and Wild Areas

neo-CCC

New Climate Science Centers and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives must "add value" to existing programs, and not another layer of bureaucracy

New Community Planning Services -Combine/Integrate Livability with USDA Community Grants, SPF and DOI RTCA

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

No Child Left Inside Act

NO Siskiyou Crest National Monument, Please

Obtain access to BLM Berryessa Peak Unit

obtain access to landlocked public land

Old-Growth Forest Network

Open Trails

Outdoor Cultural Resources - Iron Goat Trail

Owyhee Canyonlands Protection

Park Transportation

Partnerships & Grant Subsidizing with the Federal Government

Pay North Shore Road Settlement

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

Preserve and Maintain the Parks

Preserve Southern national Forests and National Parks

priorities

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

promote camping as an affordable way to take a vacation!!

Promote 'Equal Justice' over 'Environmental Justice'

Promoting and Managing Low-Impact Access

Protect and Preserve Our Nation's Wildlife

Protect Bristol Bay Alaska from Pebble Gold Mine

Protect Earth from GMOs and Nano (micronized) particles

Protect riparian areas, wetlands and headwater streams.

protect wilderness quality lands

Protect Wilderness-Quality Public Lands

Public Lands Require Sustainable, Predictable Sources of Funding

Put some bite in enforcement to protect wilderness

Realistic Alternatives to Fee Acquisition

Recomendations from Award Winning Colorado SCORP Exec Summary

reduce federal governments role

Reform 1872 Mining Law

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Refurbishing and preserving State Parks and Historic areas

Regulate Food

remove trapping from all public lands

renewable energy

Repeal the Fee Demonstration Program

Replace government Subsidy for Timber Harvesting with a Recycling Subsidy

Require Landscape Architects' input for new 'Outdoor' projects

Restore Long Leaf Pines

Restrict oil shale development

San Juan Trout Fishery Recovery

Save Central Valley through Sacramento Parks

Save Idaho Forests

Save the Historic Route 66 Bridge, an American Icon.

Saving Civil War Battlefields

Saving Our Butts by Preserving the Environment

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Saving our Historical Sites

Sharing Successes and Challenges

Shift more funding to the Department of the Interior

Should be working for us!

Simple Economics

Siskiyou Crest National Monument

Siskiyou National Monument

Small scale forestry

so must go the states....

Solar Infrastructure

state and local authority

States Role

Stop Abuses of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Stop agencies from Regulating to Death

Stop Expanding Federal Influence Beyond Area Boundary

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Stop Offshore Drilling Now

stop patenting of federal land

Support and Defend the Endangered Species Act

Support state parks with funding

Sustain Major Restoration Efforts at Everglades and Great Lakes

Swap more lands to clean up access

Tamiami Trail Modificatons Project

The federal government must act in the public interest

The feds should pay Taxes like everyone else

The National Park System should be expanded to better represent America's Great Outdoors

The Obama administration and Congress should work together to address the huge backlog of National Park Service proposed wilderness

The Public Lands of OUR Great Nation Belong to All Americans

There is already too much government that doesn't and can't work

To America's Outdoors Team - take all anti-everything but hiking ideas with a grain of salt

Transportation Enhancements

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Use Interim Designation to Protect Lands until Congress Acts

Utilizing Federal Veterinarians to Aid Wildlife in Disaster Situations

Watch the government

We need a comprehensive program to restore springs and seeps on federal lands in the West

Wilderness is Freedom

wilderness protection

Wildlife Are Not Lacking Habitat

Wolves in Utah

YES to Siskiyou Crest National Mounment

1040 Check-box for Parks & Preservation

A National Report on the State of Outdoor Recreation

A Peace Corp for the National Parks

Agencies should collaborate to develop a long-term strategy for public land management

Attendance Surveys Needed at Parks

Charge fees for high impact users on public land

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

confiscate ORVs trespassing on public lands

create an incentive for ORV users to stay on designated routes

Credit Markets

New offroad vehicle enforcement authority

NJ Pinelands National Reserve should be a National Park

Reinvent federal land use planning

State and Federal Role: Minimize Consumption of Resources

Stop hypocrisy. Keep public lands open for public

Strengthen Noise Restrictions for off-road vehicles

Take Congressional Delegations to visit Wilderness and National Parks

Use Clean Water Funds to Conserve the Land that Protects the Water

Voting System for our Representatives

OHV: Keep public land open to the public

Agency Authority

Create a 21st Century Smokey The Bear

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Debt for Nature Swaps in USA

Make FRLPP more user-friendly

Private ranches need public land grazing

Promote Smart Growth

Protect wetlands in the Prairie Pothole Region

Support Implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans

Allow school trips on our public lands

Building the Bridge Between City and National Parks

Conservation Education Competitive Grants

Enhance motorized access and OHV recreational opportunities

Expand multi-use land management: it's the proven approach

Federal Agency Accountability and Recreation Fees

Free Admission to National Parks for Our Soldiers

Hunting in national parks

Information campaign that defines key issues

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

InterNational Migratory National Parks

More public campgrounds

Open more parks to horsemen

Please work to integrate outdoor and physical education in K-12 education

preserve access for ohv use

Protect OHV use in the outdoors

Support OHV users

U.S. ANIMAL INVESTIGATIONS

\$1000 per barrel oil tax to cover medical costs and pollution damage

Allow the Public to Visit Featherstone National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)

Civil War Battlefield Preservation

Connect the National Fish Habitat Action Plan with America's Great Outdoors and Improve America's Fisheries

Convert All USFS, BLM and NPS Facilities to Renewable Energy

Create a 10 million acre National OHV Recreation Area in Utah

Create New, Roadless National Park

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Creating 'Master Naturalist' Volunteer Programs to help manage and conserve state and federal public lands

Designate the Scotchman Peaks as Wilderness

Education credit for service

Encourage individual energy independence (solar panels on homes) and produce energy where it will be used

End Old Growth Logging

Expand the Wild Rogue Wilderness

Federal lands mis-management

Funding Public Land Conservation

Great Plains National Park

Greater Involvement of Conservation Corps

Henry Mountains National Park, UT

Increase Funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Keep public lands open for responsible OHV use

Long Path National Scenic Trail

Marine Reserves

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Miners, Loggers, Ranchers need to pay for resource damage

National Park that Celebrates the Bravery of Our Greatest Explorers

new national parks

OHV Accessible Gulf Oil Disaster National Monument

OHV Use Should Be Encouraged

Overturn the "No More Wilderness" Policy

Program to buy national park inholdings

Protect our lands from invasive species

Protect Remaining Wild Country as Wilderness

Protect the lands, waters and cultural resources of our Conservation Lands!

Protect the National Conservation Lands

Protect Wilderness

Protect wildlife migration corridors

Protection of migration corridors

Protection of wildlife and erosion

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protection without Wilderness & National Monument Status

Public lands should not be used as feral animal preserves and recreational off-road vehicle parks

Response to Mountain Beetle

restore clearcut public land to wilder condition for OHVs

Support The Vanishing America Project because it supports Conservation in America

Tallgrass Prairie Conservation

Tear Down That Wall, Mr. Obama. Tear Down the Hetch Hetchy Dam!

The Redwoods of Oregon protected as National Wilderness

Three Countries and Three States National Park

Three Great Lakes National Park

Use and Camping Fees Based on Vehicle Weight

Floodplain reconnection. In addition to removing barriers to fish passage, the reconnection of rivers to their floodplains is a good way to promote healthy fish populations and protect downstream communities. Rivers should not be confined into narrow channels but rather allowed access to broader floodplains. We also should seek to restore floodplains and streamside vegetation. These measures transfer flood energies into well-vegetated floodplain zones while dissipating flows and protecting soils from erosion.

Bureau of Reclamation. Given its role in managing water resources in the West, the Bureau of Reclamation is in a position to enhance stream flows for fisheries if the appropriate emphasis is placed on environmental flows. In planning exercises and operation of federal water facilities, the Bureau of Reclamation should ensure that streamflow needs are met.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Forest Service Reserved Water Rights. After more than a decade of negotiations with the State of Montana, the Forest Service in 2007 was given an opportunity to apply for water rights to protect the health of more than 700 rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands in Montana's 10 national forests. Passage of a negotiated state of Montana-US Forest Service Compact by the 2007 Montana Legislature, and subsequent approval by the Secretary of Agriculture, cemented the agreement. But progress has been slow. In the last two-and-a-half years, only six water rights have been perfected. Because the Compact provides only a 30-year window to perfect instream flow reservations on Montana's national forests, we are concerned that the current pace will mean the Forest Service will ultimately fall short of what is needed to legally protect water from future development in the streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands of some of the West's most outstanding landscapes.

Trout Unlimited wishes to work with the Forest Service to facilitate instream flow reservations, and recommends that the Forest Service dedicate an annual, internal appropriation to Region 1 that helps ensure it gets at least 30 waters a year into the state's streamlined pipeline for approving instream flow reservations.

Water monitoring data. Effective water management depends upon reliable data. TU recommends strengthening the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Streamflow Information Program and restoring the capacity for USGS to match non-federal cost-share investments in the Cooperative Water Program on a 50:50 basis. Full implementation of the National Streamflow Information Program will require an annual appropriation of \$110 million. With a fully functioning National Streamflow Information Program, the USGS will also need approximately \$95 million for the Cooperative Water Program to restore its capacity to fully match state, tribal and other non-federal investments in data collection and interpretive investigations.

The National Forests received \$40 million in 2008, \$50 million in 2009, and a record \$90 million in fiscal year 2010 for Legacy Roads work. The Forest Service FY2011 budget request for Legacy Roads and Trails was \$50 million. TU recommends funding Legacy Roads and Trails at \$120 million, with an additional \$30 million dedicated to the national, regional and forest-level planning required to determine minimum road systems.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. The demand for this program well exceeds available funding. Trout Unlimited strongly recommends restoring WHIP to the FY2010 enacted level of \$85 million.

We also suggest some changes that would enhance the effectiveness of Farm Bill for conservation programs. A grant through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative for restoration in the Driftless area will have a tremendous impact on the region's lands and waters. The impact of the grant could be further strengthened, however if a portion of the grant could be used for staff or administrative support. The time spent cultivating landowner participation and providing assistance during project implementation is an essential component of a successful project.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Finally, we recommend applying Farm Bill watershed programs like the Agriculture Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) on a regional level rather than a producer by producer approach. This effort will create incentives for small-scale watershed restoration projects to move toward larger scale efforts.

Water resources and water quantity. To help protect water supplies and maintain stream flows, the Forest Service and BLM should emphasize the restoration of high elevation wet meadows, wetlands, riparian areas, and floodplains. These habitats act as natural hydrologic sponges that slow water discharge and recharge groundwater aquifers, which in turn increase dry-season stream flows. The proper function of these habitats will be increasingly important as snowpacks diminish.

Invest in Non-Profit Partnerships. TU began its Potomac Home Rivers Initiative in 2005 with an emphasis on the South Branch sub-watershed in West Virginia. Since then, TU has formalized a partnership with the USFWS Partners for Wildlife program to install at least 100,000 feet of livestock exclusion fencing on an annual basis. TU also facilitated the forest Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program project in Pendleton County, West Virginia through the Farm Services Agency, and cultivated Environmental Quality Incentive Programs and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Programs contracts through the Natural Resources Conservation Service for additional protection on six miles of brook trout streams. In this and other watershed restoration programs, TU's experience has been that non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives with roots in a community have a high degree of success in building trust with agricultural landowners and helping them understand their options for implementing conservation practices on their land.

In West Virginia, NRCS conservation program contracts in Pendleton County doubled in the three years after a TU coordinator began working with private landowners. NGO coordinators help overcome barriers to participation by 1) educating landowners on the benefits of BMPs and the sources of funding available for implementation, 2) helping to design and implement restoration projects, and 3) assisting the landowner with filling out paperwork and administering contracts. TU encourages the administration to consider ways to expend these types of partnerships with NGOs as a way to accelerate conservation adoption.

Use Small Grants Programs to Catalyze Grassroots Activity. A great deal of energy and commitment exists in communities throughout the country to improve the condition of local waters. TU supports the goal of large-scale efforts to restore habitats and encourages the administration to develop ways to ensure that local initiatives are fostered and integrated into comprehensive, large-scale restoration plans.

Volunteers at TU chapters regularly develop local partnerships to complete small projects such as culvert removals, biological monitoring, stream assessments, bank stabilization and other habitat improvements, as well as extensive outreach and education. A small matching grants program, perhaps from an increase in Section 319-funds, would be one way to catalyze extensive volunteer contributions and leverage resources for small-scale projects in the context of larger restoration initiatives.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Wildfire. Wildfires are increasing in western forests because of reduced snowpack and earlier vegetative drying during summer. To deal with more frequent and intense wildfires, agencies should selectively thin forests, primarily in the wildlands-urban interface zones and plantations. To prepare aquatic systems, we also should improve road networks and stream crossings, restore up-and downstream connectivity, and recover degraded riparian areas.

Finally, we should adopt strong post-fire logging standards that protect soils and stream systems while providing for adequate recruitment of large wood to streams. These actions will result in less wildfire damage and decreased erosion and stream sedimentation. Riparian habitats, old growth and mature forests, and roadless areas should be protected as well because these are the most fire resistant habitats.

Funding Transition. Areas like the Tongass National Forest in Alaska that were subjected to decades of unsustainable logging and road building practices are now in need of intensive restoration work. Administrative support for the shift of timber harvest and road building subsidies to investments in timber industry re-tooling, restoration job training and the funding of fish habitat improvement projects will not only revitalize and protect the region's valuable salmon and trout resources, but will also create jobs and stimulate new economic activity in rural Tongass communities.

Cooperative Watershed Management Act. The Cooperative Watershed Management Act presents an excellent vehicle for investing in watersheds but is currently under utilized. The act has passed Congress but lacks funding and an implementation strategy. TU recommends that the program be fully funded, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service named as the implementing agency.

This bill was crafted to replicate the successful watershed restoration effort in Montana's Blackfoot Valley, which started with small projects and evolved to address watershed-wide issues. An implementation strategy should be developed so that successful landscape pilot projects would compete well under the bill's competitive grants program. This could result in increased funding for local watershed group staffing as well as project money, funding the groups that are doing the collaboration.

Liability Relief for "Good Samaritan" Abandoned Mine Cleanup. TU has long worked to improve water quality and recover fisheries in watershed degraded by abandoned mines. Cleaning up abandoned mines is one of the single most important, least addressed environmental challenges in the nation. A major impediment to making progress on the ground is the lack of a clear permitting process that allows for would-be Good Samaritans to initiate cleanups.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

CWA liability for potential Good Samaritans is still a major limitation. TU supports S.1777, the Good Samaritan Cleanup of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2009, which would create a permitting process to greatly assist would-be Good Samaritans in abandoned mine clean up efforts. The bill would create a new program under the CWA to help promote the efforts of people who had no involvement or responsibility for abandoned hardrock mines, but would like to make their communities safer by cleaning them up. This program would allow qualifying individuals and entities to obtain CWA permits and conduct cleanups of abandoned or inactive hardrock mines. These permits would give some liability protection to those who volunteer to clean up these sites, while also requiring those volunteers to meet certain requirements. The bill specifies who can secure these permits, what a cleanup plan would require in order to qualify for a permit, and the extent of liability exposure. TU recommends that the administration support S. 1777 and help to facilitate Good Samaritan abandoned mine cleanup efforts.

If we are to clean up our nation's waters, we need strong public awareness of the factors that influence water quality and the measures that can be taken to restore our lakes, rivers and streams. Yet the amount of environmental education occurring in schools has leveled off and may even be in decline for the first time in three decades. Further, lessons that are confined to the classroom "remain abstract and irrelevant, beyond the experience of the learner and inconsistent with cultural norms.

Expand conservation focus of Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Although an environmental category does not exist within current grant opportunities, a majority of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA programs emphasize social issues and disaster relief efforts. By dedicating themselves to these causes, AmeriCorps volunteers earn valuable vocational experience and educational awards. Trout Unlimited and other non-profit conservation groups would greatly benefit from a national ConserveCorps model that would enrich internship experiences and encourage young adults to seek long-term employment in the conservation field. AmeriCorps support would give additional resources to college students who, up to this point, cannot afford the limited wages that accompany internships. Federal agencies would also benefit from a ConserveCorps model as it would allocate more resources for individuals interning and volunteering with the respective agency.

Waterway access proposal. We must continue to seek opportunities to expand safe access to our nation's lands and waters so that more Americans experience the great outdoors. Whether through an amendment to the transportation bill or changes to Department of Transportation policy, ensure consideration of water access when designing road projects, and authorize the use of transportation bill funding for improving access along public rights of way. We see this as a simple, cost-effective way of creating safer access to public waters for anglers and non-motorized boaters.

The changes we seek would accomplish the following: • Ensure that waterway access for anglers and non-motorized watercraft is considered in every comprehensive transportation plan and in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction of transportation facilities, except where such use is not permitted, unsafe or unreasonable.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

- Make "waterway access facilities for fishing, canoeing and kayaking" along the public rights of way of appropriate roads and bridges eligible for funding from the major Federal-aid highway, safety, and bridge programs including the Surface Transportation Program, Transportation Enhancement, and bridge funding. These changes would help to enhance waterway access, providing opportunities for anglers to experience the waters they love and to share those experiences with future anglers and conservationists.

The White House should issue guidance to provide the federal agencies with a policy framework that defines how protecting, reconnecting, and restoring landscapes will be coordinated with state and federal agencies and interested private partners.

Such an integrated and landscape scale approach to conservation will ensure that fish and wildlife resources and human communities can cope with a changing climate. Connecting public land efforts with associated private lands will also be essential. For example, incentives should be given to private landowners participating in Farm Bill conservation programs with projects that protect, reconnect, or restore watershed health and function.

In order to more effectively work at the landscape scale using the protect-reconnect-restore-sustain approach the administration should develop a series of national pilot projects that illustrate how implementing existing programs and authorities at a larger scale can bring on greater efficiency, leverage more private investment and jobs, enhance the payoff for collaboration, leverage federal investment, and encourage better local planning that will save taxpayer money in the future. The administration will learn from these pilot projects about what new conservation tools and protections are needed in the future.

Selection of pilot projects will be through a competitive process, based on self-nomination according to specific criteria, with clear incentives for being selected. Once selected, and interagency federal taskforce would be appointed that would focus on how to leverage existing federal programs across the broader landscape. These efforts would be to help direct federal programs and activities toward developing a "green infrastructure" that creates more jobs, improves air and water quality, leverages private, state and local investment, and inspires people to care about nature.

This process is informed by the recent Forest Service process around implementing the Forest Landscape Restoration Act. Under this act, forest interest groups were given clear criteria and incentives to collaborate around forest restoration projects. In this once very contentious arena, more than 60 groups collaborated to write proposals around projects. Thirty-one of those projects were recommended by regional foresters and 10 were selected, the maximum allowed by law. Once a project is approved, it will receive up to \$4 million a year in funding, so there were clear incentives of the program, informed by clear criteria.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In the case of large landscape-scale pilot projects, the incentives will be a mix of prioritized federal funding from existing programs, synergy between programs, coordination between agencies and improved policy outcomes. The result will be stronger outcomes for conservation, including water, wildlife connectivity, forest restoration, opportunities for recreation, keeping traditional uses on working lands while enhancing conservation values, and encouraging people to connect with nature.

Trout Unlimited (TU) recommends the adoption of the following framework to achieve the goals of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative: protect high quality habitats, reconnect them to surrounding areas, restore degraded habitats, and sustain conservation gains by engaging the next generation of environmental stewards.

First, protect the highest quality lands and waters. In a warming climate, national forests, and particularly roadless areas, are thermal refuges. Protecting these lands protects fish and wildlife, maintains groundwater recharge, removes carbon dioxide from our atmosphere, and also reduces the costs of filtering and treating water for downstream communities. Wild backcountry areas are critically important to maintaining healthy habitat, water quality, and tremendous hunting and fishing opportunities.

Second, reconnect landscapes. If fish and wildlife habitats are fragmented, the species they support they will not survive the floods, fire and drought predicted to increase with climate change. Identifying and protecting important wildlife corridors on public lands and allowing rivers to access floodplains are good not only for fish and wildlife, but for human communities as well. A healthy landscape will recharge and replenish underground aquifers that supply municipal drinking water, minimize the potential for downstream flooding, filter pollutants, and improve soil productivity for farmers and ranchers.

Third, engage communities in restoration. Recovering the ability of our lands to withstand the effects of climate change is essential. Reconnecting people, children and communities to the landscapes that provide their food, energy resources, and recreation opportunities is important to our nation's well being. Restoration activities such as tree planting, trail maintenance, and river clean-ups improve ecological resiliency and bind us to the lands and waters that sustain us.

Protecting, reconnecting, and restoring landscapes describe the biological imperative of climate change adaptation. The social imperative is to sustain these efforts over time.

The greatest threat to America's great outdoors may lie in public ignorance of their extraordinary values and a generation of children more connected to video games and computers than they are to lands and waters. Investing in youth education and getting kids out of doors is vital to building tomorrow's constituency for conservation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As part of the AGO Initiative, the Forest Service should issue direction to field managers to sustain the wilderness potential and values of agency-recommended wilderness areas by disallowing motorized and mechanized transportation within recommended wilderness areas. Similarly, TU recommends that the Secretary of the Interior issue guidance to field managers regarding the National Landscape Conservation System so that units are managed in a consistent manner that emphasizes conservation so that the values for which the lands were designated are sustained.

Water quality. To protect water quality, agencies should designate adequately sized streamside buffer zones and adopt management standards that emphasize aquatic system protection. These riparian zones should be large enough not only to provide shade to streams, but also to buffer from upslope erosion and allow fallen trees to enter the stream channel providing the complex stream habitat critical to aquatic species. Protecting water quality in headwater streams such as roadless areas serves to diminish downstream drinking water filtration and treatment costs. Agencies also should protect landslide prone areas. Inadequate protection of these areas will increase siltation and erosion, which will degrade stream systems, water supplies, and fisheries.

TU supports the EPA's current efforts to make storm water permitting more consistent and robust nationally, and particularly to address stormwater impacts outside the MS4 boundary. TU recommends that the EPA take into consideration the impacts of scour, sedimentation on impervious surfaces in its national rulemaking for stormwater. It will be important for EPA to establish specific requirements for stormwater discharges beyond MS4 boundaries, given the relatively low impervious surface tolerance of coldwater fish and the location of many coldwater fisheries in less-developed areas. Clear standards should be established for best management practices, and protective measures such as stream buffers should be used to minimize impacts on outstanding resource waters and other sensitive aquatic environments.

Due to the demonstrated relationship between scour, sedimentation and impervious surfaces and salmonid persistence, new stormwater sources that may contribute to an impairment of designated and existing uses should be required to provide baseline information and be subject to anti-degradation review. In order to maintain hydrologic conditions that can sustain trout and salmon, EPA should aim to use its stormwater rules to require that development meets the runoff profile of the natural landscape.

TU also supports Congressional efforts to restore Clean Water Act jurisdictional protection of "isolated" wetlands and headwater streams. A bill passed by the Senate Environment and Public Works committee, the Clean Water Restoration Act, and a bill sponsored by Committee Chair James Oberstar, America's Commitment to Clean Water Act, would accomplish this vital goal. We urge the administration to support the bills and to work with Congress to secure enactment.

Biodiversity. To prevent the loss of plant and animal diversity, lands and waters should be managed to provide adequate habitat to support native species. Agencies should manage to protect genetic diversity, including wet stocks and peripheral populations. High levels of genetic, life history, and ecological diversity will be necessary for species to adapt to rapid environmental change.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Maintaining genetic diversity is particularly important to sustaining Pacific salmon and steelhead. Protecting the best remaining stronghold populations has long been recognized as the first principle of conservation biology. The concept of protecting salmon strongholds has been promoted as a scientifically sound and cost effective approach to anchoring wild salmon populations. Additionally, scientists have argued for a large, watershed scale approach to fisheries conservation that would protect entire healthy watersheds and the native fish communities contained therein.

One such watershed exists in the area surrounding Bristol Bay, Alaska. The area is currently threatened by plans to construct a massive open pit gold and copper mine in the headwaters of Bristol Bay. The administration should do all that it can to prevent harmful impacts of mining on this vital resource. In addition, we recommend the management approach taken in the Pacific Salmon Stronghold Conservation Act of 2009 by identifying and protecting a network of wild salmon strongholds and empowering voluntary, incentive-based actions to achieve salmon conservation goals.

Inventoried Roadless Areas. By upholding the Idaho Roadless Rule, developing a strong roadless rule for Colorado, and protecting the remaining inventoried roadless areas on national forest lands, the Department of Agriculture can sustain the ecological and recreational values of these backcountry lands.

Private lands. Private agricultural lands harbor important fish and wildlife habitats, many of which are threatened by development. The departments of Agriculture and Interior should work with landowners and provide incentives to those who help conserve high-value lands.

Invasive species. Weedy and invasive species are more likely to flourish in degraded habitats and be favored in highly fluctuating environmental conditions. Some invasive species will spread more quickly during warming trends and will cause greater harm and be more expensive to control if left untreated. To better manage invasive species, we should become more aggressive in programs to detect new species invasions and in programs to control established exotic species - both terrestrial invasive weeds and aquatic non-native species.

One prominent example of the threats posed by invasive species is the potential for Asian carp to take hold in the Great Lakes. The evidence of Asian carp above the barriers on the Chicago canal is a reminder that the only long-term solution to the problem is full ecological separation of the Mississippi River basin and Great Lakes. Ecological separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River systems should be an explicit and top goal of the Inter-Basin Feasibility Study being conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This is the only viable way to limit the exchange of aquatic invasive species between these major systems over the long term.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The timeframe for the Inter-Basin Feasibility Study must be accelerated. The portion of the study examining options for ecological and physical separation should be completed by the end of 2010. The goal for completion of the entire study should be 2011 rather than 2012. Aggressive monitoring and netting efforts should be continued in the Chicago Area Waterway system and near shore areas in Chicago, and expanded to include a broader swath of the near-shore areas of the Lake Michigan covering and expanse starting at minimum from the Wisconsin-Illinois state border to the area east of Burns Harbor in Indiana.

Off-Road Vehicle Management on Public Lands. In order to ensure that off-road vehicle use is compatible with the land's capability (particularly fish and wildlife habitats) and the needs of sportsmen/women, recreational users, and others who rely on America's public lands for their enjoyment, TU offers the following recommendations:

1. Public cross-country OHV travel should be prohibited on all National Forests and other federal public lands except for special OHV management areas and for special needs. In the future, all illegally created user trails should be closed to any public use.
2. A visible tag that can be used to identify the rider needs to be mandatory for all OHV's used on public lands. These identification tags would greatly help in reporting and deterring illegal activities, as illegal riders are now essentially invisible. Funds generated by the sales of these required tags would go toward law enforcement, thus buoying sadly deficient agency capability in this area. This may prove to be the single most effective deterrent to illegal activities.
3. The US Forest Service should develop an estimate of the total costs to implement their Travel Management Plans, including necessary monitoring. The agencies need to develop a funding strategy (including the use of partners) to implement these plans.
4. Finally, the Bureau of Land Management should adopt a similar process as the U.S. Forest Service to ensure that these public lands have well thought-out Travel Management Plans.

Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. TU recommends support for, and changes to, the funding formula under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act to provide incentives to counties to restore and protect conservation values on public lands.

- Partner with NPS to develop a stronger presence for world heritage site with an attractive, attention grabbing logo on opening page of federal/NPS websites
- Partner with media sources to broadcast to the widest public, not focused on heritage conservation community as its audience
- Partner with Dept of Commerce to integrate into US tourism publicity overseas

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

- Partner with NPS to develop program-focused articles on each site into airline magazines

- Partner with NPS to develop appropriate literature (brochures, posters) for distribution to the travel industry, school systems, etc

- Partner with National Geographic, American Express, VISA, ASTA, and others to assist in creating visibility

- Partner with media - Expedia, History Channel, PBS, etc. to make the program known

Partner with media to develop short public service announcements for commercial media

a. America's Great Outdoors showcase for Americans and all the world our US treasured landscapes and the intersection between culture and nature

c. Make the US contribution to the world's heritage known

The founders of the national park system showed great foresight and great wisdom in recognizing the importance of preserving of open spaces for future generations. We urge the federal government to now do the same by greatly increasing the federal government's attention to and funding of open space protection. Demographic forecasts predict a continual increase in population growth. The consequence of will be a continual increase in sprawl and a continual erosion of open space.

Open space is required to support the local farmers who supply us with fresh, healthy food. The role of governments in preserving open space has always been important, but there has never been a time when it is more important.

The Westchester Land Trust has helped protect more than 6,600 acres and the lion's share was done through partnerships with the state, the county, and the towns and with New York City. Right now those partnerships are impossible to replicate because there's virtually no government money anywhere for land acquisition. Therefore there is a great need for more land acquisition money not just from the federal government, but also from the state, the county, the towns, and New York City.

Provide funding to state and local governments and to land trusts to preserve the land that they know is the most important land in their area.

Increase its direct role in acquiring land for open space protection;

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide the funding required to make viable the programs established by Congress for land preservation

Insure open space protection is a consideration required in all federal policies, rules and regulations affecting land use.

Shift national farm policies from their heavy bias towards factory farms and increase support for individual farmers.

Promote the health and environmental benefits of locally grown food.

The Endangered Species Act is one of the most powerful tools the Federal Government has to protect wildlife. This important law requires the government to conserve the habitat of all endangered and threatened species. Unfortunately, the Dept. of Interior under both Pres. Bush and Pres. Obama have not enforced the Endangered Species Act with much vigor and as a result wolves and other rare animals have been killed and the habitat of other rare species have been destroyed. Please vote YES to send our Federal Government a strong message that you want the Endangered Species Act enforced.

The lakes and streams of the upper midwest are generally in sorry state due to some agricultural practices, specifically non-point pollution sources. Since wetlands are the sponge that filters these contaminants and we have lost over 90%, I think more needs to be done with state and federal partnerships to restore much needed wetlands.

The national parks are truly one of the best parts of this country for both the people and the environment and I cannot think of a better use of funding than to invest it in preserving these national treasures. I would however, wholeheartedly suggest banning private vehicles in the park and promoting park operated vehicles running on natural gas.

The National Parks provide education and opportunity for health exercise. They need to be fully funded.

The National Parks should always be fully funded. They are a precious and irreplaceable resource and must be fully protected for all future generations. My favorite times throughout my life have been spent in our national parks and national forests.

The NATIONAL PARKS SYSTEM needs full financial support to provide lasting examples of natural settings and wholesome enjoyment for wildlife and the enjoyment of the nature that these parks were developed to sustain.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Obama administration and Congress should work together to address the huge backlog of backcountry areas in national parks that the National Park Service (NPS) has recommended over the past three decades for consideration as wilderness areas. During the NPS General Management Plan (GMP) planning process, NPS identifies those backcountry or primitive areas in national parks that they believe appropriately qualify for wilderness protection, and those areas receive interim administrative protection as "proposed wilderness." NPS has been doing these GMPs for many years, yet some of these wilderness recommendations have languished for up to three decades without any Congressional consideration. For example, in 1980 over a million acres in Grand Canyon National Park were so recommended. While wilderness is normally a controversial subject on BLM and Forest Service "multiple use" lands, NPS lands are set aside for the American people to "preserve and enjoy." The NPS proposed wilderness areas have already been administratively protected for many years, and I am not aware that this has caused any serious conflicts or problems. Given all of the NPS and public time and effort put into these various GMP planning processes, and the huge backlog of proposed wilderness areas that resulted, it is time for the Obama administration and Congress to do their part by comprehensively addressing this backlog. Indeed, since omnibus federal lands bills have become so popular and effective, perhaps a number of NPS proposed wilderness areas could be added to the next omnibus legislation.

The parks must be maintained for the enjoyment of all citizens. However, there are a number of points that must be paid special attention to. Stop the invasion of off-road vehicles of all kinds; this includes ATV's, snowmobiles, motorcycles/dirt bikes etc. any motorized vehicles used off the main roads must be park owned only. If people want to drive they can go to New York or one of many wonderful rural towns where they would welcome you with open arms. The parks should not be destroyed for the 'convenience' of tourists who don't want to expend a little energy hiking, camping skiing etc. Of course the parks must be funded in addition to reasonable park fees. If parks become too congested they should create a lottery system whereby everyone applies and once they have had the wonderful experience of enjoying a specific park they would then be put at the end of the line once again. Some parks become way too congested and I would really support this method of controlling the number of visitors. One major concern is the destruction caused mining and oils drilling . This must be stopped and such leases rescinded. They cause too much damage and never clean up after themselves.

The Parks need to have full funding in order to carry out programs, have rangers available, maintain roads and public areas.

The recreational carrying capacity of all federal lands should be estimated, so that many discussions of what recreational activities to allow in a given area, including to what extent and when, could include at least some data on sustainable recreational activities. This should be a nationwide effort, and it should encompass many types of recreational activities. It should also be done a per-park basis, taking into account the unique aspects of each park. It should be overseen by the federal government, and be as objective as possible.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The San Gabriel Mountains are a huge recreational resource for millions of residents of the LA basin. Clean water, clean air, recreation and habitat protection are vital to maintaining this resource. Designation as a National Recreation Area would be ideal for this area. Resources for visitors in heavily impacted areas are needed. Restroom facilities, trash, interpretive info , along with trails and parking are critical to preserving these areas. Added wilderness designation in appropriate areas will also help protect watershed, habitat and the wilderness experience.

The simple fact is that some places are more important to America than others even though its hard to say so when 435 Members of Congress all want attention in their states and districts. The Administration initially indicated that they had the fortitude to make hard choices in selecting specific places that have the most significance to the country – they should do so. There are landscapes like the Grand Canyon, Sierra Nevada Mountains of California, Chesapeake Bay, and r Mississippi River Valley that support some of America's most diverse ecosystems and most unique places and that also contain fabulous historical, cultural and recreational resources. More federal effort from all agencies should be focused on a few places.

The Siskiyou Crest is a valuable and precious ecosystem, and the proposed monument area is a short distance from my home town. This part of Oregon and California have been severely degraded by a long history of unregulated logging and mining, and very little remains of the ancient forested landscape. Thank goodness for the efforts of those who have been working for the protection of what remains. Of course there are always short-sighted locals who do not seem able to see or care about the larger picture and complain they are losing their "rights." I trust that a balanced discussion of the issues will lead to the preservation of this area for future generations.

There are so many resources at the Federal level, especially in planning, construction standards and plans, communication pieces, etc. Making that available to local governments and NGOs for use in conserving the best of their natural resources just makes sense and improves public relations.

There is no better, easier, or fun way to teach our children to appreciate our planet than to spend time with them in our national parks. Full funding is an absolute necessity.

There should be no question as to full funding. National parks have played a huge role in many people's lives. They are a necessity for future generations. They are the ideal places to get away from it all; to enjoy the serenity it provides, along with its beauty and grandeur. We need to protect and maintain God's country that means so much to us.

This commission is the authority on moving forward in the next century of service to the nation in the area of national parks. The present administration must listen carefully to their gathered wisdom and implement their recommendations without delay.

We have beautiful National Parks and fully funding them will ensure they will be available for our children and grandchildren in the future; therefore, you have my vote!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have to fund the parks. Completely. Bring back the CCC.

We leave these to generations to come. Care and respect are mandatory!! Please fund the parks.

We need fees plus government support

We need our National Parks more than ever!! We need more money to develop & keep them up.

We need to fund the Parks.

We need to have funding for our National Parks and to protect them. They represent our heritage and the beauty of our great country as well as being part of God's great work. I have never been able to see a national park in person and if we don't support and take care of them then many people like myself will never get the chance to see these awesome places. Nora Reed

We need to increase funding with reasonable user fees. This is where respect for our parks starts, by showing visitors that the parks are a privilege, not a right to use as you please. The fee demonstrates that you are using a service that literally does not grow on trees, but one that is precious and tenable. Our parks need TLC!

When foreigners leave the US an exit fee should be assessed (much like Costa Rica does) and the money go directly to the National Parks. This would increase funding and all at no expense to the budget.

White bread becomes very boring, and in fact, can be unhealthy. Our national parks should reflect the ingredients, the people, who make up this nation. Expand, diversify, become more fully inclusive.

Yes! It is a wonderful (yet relatively quaint) thing for Congress to designate a National Scenic Trail. But it is a truly noble thing to COMPLETE a National Scenic Trail. The Appalachian Trail is complete. Great job!! Now please take the steps necessary to complete the ten other National Scenic Trails -- before it is too late.

Yes, I strongly believe we should expand our National Parks to include all our country's history. What better way for visitors of all ages and places learn about our rich heritage?

Yes, National Parks and other sites need full staffing. And they need to be protected from off-road vehicles, snowmobiles and guns. If we don't take steps to protect and preserve them now, they won't be available for our grandchildren.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yes, our parks must have the full funding. They are our heritage.

Yes, with something as important and valuable as preserving and enhancing our National Parks for now and in the future, we need to pay fairly for it. It is well worth it!

Our national parks are a finite resource that, once lost, cannot be remade. It is imperative that we work aggressively to protect the parks (and other natural resources)!

Our parks have been neglected for years. Increased funding is essential to remedying

Our population is changing, and the character and accessibility of our National Parks must change with our demographics in order to survive as America's Best Idea.

Our young people are spending far too much time doing passive activities - which does not help foster their curiosity about the world, stimulate their brains or get their bodies moving. I believe our society is in real danger of creating a society that cares less and less about nature and our world, which is why the America's Great Outdoors initiative is so important, and will help get our young people reconnected to nature and help those organizations who are doing something about it. The U.S. has some of the most incredible terrain in the world, much of it at our National Parks, and everyone should have a chance to experience it.

Restricting recreational use FROM these areas would go a long way to prove agencies are serious about this issue. If water quality in these areas are important to protect, agencies should stop ignoring the increase in recreational activities that damage riparian flora and cause siltation in the streambeds.

"Federal Government already controls what is taught in public schools" This is an unfortunate fact and the primary reason things are the mess they are. The federal Department of Education should be abolished and the federal government should get back to doing the things it's actually SUPPOSED to be doing. Education is a state and local issue. If you want to change education, start there.

You have a point that some (or many) Americans may have obese trends. But this is not a good solution. I have a hard time believing anyone would promote the idea that the Federal Government make it a requirement for physical exercise to be performed in order to be allowed to use the land that belongs to ALL of the people. This just seems to me to be such a BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING situation. More government telling you what to do and when to do it, it's scary! post above is so right on, she has the right to live her life in the fashion she desires as long as it's within the law and common courtesy of others! Now may think she is a racist, a teabagger and need a little bit more tinfoil and I guess he has his right to express his views – if they are right or not. But I think there is there is a possibility he really is offering up the extra tinfoil just so the government will be able to track better to see if she is doing her jumping jacks while in camp!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

But GAO really did issue reports...and no I am not a member of the above organization. There are still outstanding lawsuits due to the Federal Government taking land for parks in the 30's. Eminent domain is a hot issue with many other people than American Land Rights Association. How would you feel if someone forced you to sell land or a house that you loved? If you live in a county that already has more than 80% federal land, it can be unpleasant when even more is taken out of the tax base. I do think we need to be more organized and prioritize what we add to federally owned lands.

I think this is just the forum to bring this to light. The policies under Bush, Cheney and the republican lead senate and congress did more damage to our forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and overall environment than all other factors combined. It is imperative that we get representatives that will protect what wild lands are left or there will be no places left to connect to.

During the Great Depression a lot of work was done to preserve and maintain our parks. It gave work to help support the unemployed. Our unemployed population is losing their financial base just as the banks (very foolishly and due to massive corruption lost their ability to function). It is not the fault of the unemployed that they do not have jobs. It is the job of Government to see that our unemployed do not completely lose their ability to function. Why not jobs in the parks?

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!Federal Government already controls what is taught in public schools so.....Why not Outdoor Education in ALL public schools? You can't wait until High School to get children involved in the "Great Outdoors". Children already have their "Boogie Men" in place by an early age. They need assured that the only Boogie Man in the wild is ignorance. Family involvement could be achieved by making an official holiday for getting outdoors. Fund local outdoor information seminars. Not just at the National Parks but right down the city block. Go where the families are. Make it easier for the entire family to attend. Also, why not NOT tax camping equipment for X amount of days per year? Some people just can't afford to get out.

As the administration considers how best to protect America's great outdoors in the 21st century, it is imperative to remember that we face far different threats to conservation than we did in the 20th century. Already facing increased habitat fragmentation and development, pollution, invasive species and overuse, America's great outdoors are increasingly experiencing the effects of climate change. Indeed, climate change is directly threatening many of the conservation investments made over the last century. As the administration draws up its blueprint for conservation in the 21st century, it must include strategies to reduce carbon pollution and safeguard natural resources from the impacts of climate change that are already occurring.

The U.S. must reduce carbon emissions that cause climate change, and Congress must provide long-term dedicated funding for natural resource adaptation. The report should discuss the synergies between climate mitigation and adaptation, and the important role of land use and land conservation in both climate mitigation and adaptation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The administration must develop and implement a national adaptation strategy that clearly delineates how natural resource agencies should practice climate-smart conservation and coordinate their activities across jurisdictions and across the landscape.

Above all, we have a moral imperative to protect America's treasured wildlife and special places from the impacts of climate change. Twenty to thirty percent of species are at even greater risk of extinction due to global warming under even moderate global warming scenarios.

By investing funds to safeguard natural resources from climate change impacts, the administration will revitalize local economies and reinvigorate local communities, all while ensuring our children have the same outdoor opportunities and benefits of nature that we enjoy.

On behalf of Defenders of Wildlife, thank you for the opportunity to provide our recommendations for the administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative. We commend the administration for this important effort to enhance the conservation of our nation's wildlands, and reconnect Americans with nature.

The America's Great Outdoors initiative has been described as a conservation agenda for the 21st century. Global climate change is the defining environmental threat for the 21st century and beyond. Changes in ecosystem structure and function resulting from climate change require fundamental rethinking of how and where conservation occurs. Accordingly, the America's Great Outdoors initiative must work to promote conservation of wildlife and its habitats and, in particular, to assist wildlife and natural resource adaptation to climate change. To accomplish this, the America's Great Outdoors initiative should focus on, and further, the protection of large, interconnected natural landscapes.

Focus on key landscapes for priority investment.

Protect and enhance our federal public lands, including national wildlife refuges, national forests, national parks, and lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Provide dedicated funding for the acquisition of conservation lands and easements by fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Target federal conservation incentive programs to landowners who further the conservation of key landscapes.

Conserve large, connected landscapes to build resiliency necessary to assist wildlife and natural resources adaptation to climate change.

Integrate implementation of the America's Great Outdoors initiative with the national strategy for climate change adaptation, and prioritize those actions that assist wildlife and natural resources adaptation to climate change.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Whether it's the treasured watershed of the Chesapeake Bay that provides wetland habitat for migratory waterfowl in the millions, the spectacular vistas of the Grand Canyon that inspired Theodore Roosevelt to first protect it as a national monument, or the southern Appalachians with rivers and streams containing the greatest freshwater biodiversity on the planet, or the Sierra Nevada Mountains with a snowpack that provides much of California's water supply - some places, due to their ecological importance, their iconic status, or their importance to human well-being, are of key importance to the nation. Consequently, the America's Great Outdoors initiative should focus on key landscapes, and give conservation of those key landscapes priority for funding and attention.

Key landscapes should be those which are particularly important for the ecological and environmental health of the nation. Identification of these landscapes will require close cooperation among federal, state and local entities. For each key landscape identified, priority should be given to funding those federal agency actions that further conservation of the key landscape. For example, the Gulf of Mexico, which supports one of the nation's most productive ocean fisheries and provides vital wetland habitat for migratory waterfowl and other birds could be a key landscape. In developing the administration's budget, priority would be given to actions such as expansion of national wildlife refuges, creation of marine reserves, and regulation of ocean energy development that would further the conservation of the Gulf of Mexico. Similarly, priority would be given to Farm Bill conservation incentives that conserve the Gulf and to integrating federal conservation initiatives in the region with state and private efforts.

We support efforts to shift staff and dedicate grant and other program resources to these areas of special importance.

Our national wildlife refuges, national forests, national parks, and Bureau of Land Management administered public lands represent the best of America. They are home to our most treasured wildlife, contain some of our most scenic and historic places, and embody the ideals of American democracy and values. Protecting our public lands - from poorly planned development, inappropriate energy and mining activity, pollution, and the impacts of climate change, should be a key priority of the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

Priority should be given, with increasingly limited federal budgets, to purchasing lands and easements to complete and buffer conservation areas on federal public lands.

In addition, programs for the management of federal public lands should be reexamined to determine how best to further their conservation and protect them from development, climate change, and other threats.

Efforts should be made to ensure that natural resource management agencies are working cooperatively, across their jurisdictions, at the landscape level wherever possible.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Efforts should also be made to coordinate broad agency initiatives among agencies and to ensure that compatible protocols, modeling methodologies, and data standards are used across all programs. Federal public lands management also should be coordinated with conservation of state and private lands to enhance the effectiveness of conservation measures across land ownerships.

Federal public lands management also should be coordinated with conservation of state and private lands to enhance the effectiveness of conservation measures across land ownerships.

Providing dedicated funding for the acquisition of conservation lands and easements will be essential to the success of the America's Great Outdoors program. At minimum, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) should be fully funded at the authorized level of \$900 million. The Secretary of the Interior has the discretion to reserve 10 percent of LWCF funding for Departmental priorities and we believe this action should be taken to increase land protection activity in key landscapes. Since the majority of LWCF funds are allocated through specific Forest Service, National Park Service, and other programs such as the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund and American Battlefield Protection Program, the agencies administering those programs should amend program guidance to target an even greater share of LWCF resources to key landscapes.

Many federal conservation incentive programs have match ratios that influence partner and landowner participation in those programs. Adjustments in these match ratios could help achieve the goals of the America's Great Outdoors program. For example, planning grants under the Interior Department's State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program, or grants for specific conservation practices under the Agriculture Department's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, could be adjusted to allow 75 percent match ratios for planning and practices that significantly advance America's Great Outdoors priorities.

In addition, federal conservation incentive programs for landowners should be expanded and fully funded, with priority given to actions by landowners that complement the conservation of key landscapes and wildlife on interconnected federal lands. For example, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers four easement programs - the Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Wetland Reserve Program, Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, and Grassland Reserve Program.

In addition to seeking changes in statutory limits on state by state allocations of these programs, the Secretary of Agriculture has significant discretion and should direct NRCS to make policy and rule changes in these programs to amend ranking systems and create other ways to prioritize projects in key landscapes.

Similarly, the Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, which has been providing funding to private landowners for fish and wildlife conservation for over 20 years, should be fully funded and targeted to key landscapes.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Indeed, all federal conservation incentive programs for private landowners should be coordinated at the landscape level to give priority to conservation of key landscapes identified through the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

Climate change is the single greatest threat to wildlife and habitat. Changes in temperature, precipitation, and sea level are literally shuffling the deck of natural ecosystems, significantly increasing the threat of extinction for numerous species. As wildlife seeks to move to more hospitable habitat in response to climate change, such movement becomes increasingly difficult in landscapes already fragmented by roads and other human development. Resilience to the impacts of climate change for wildlife will be enhanced through the conservation of large, interconnected landscapes, providing protected habitat and corridors for wildlife migration. Accordingly, the America's Great Outdoors initiative should give the highest priority to conservation of large, interconnected landscapes that will assist wildlife and natural resources adaptation to climate change.

In addition to the America's Great Outdoors initiative, the administration is developing a national strategy for climate change adaptation. These two efforts must be complementary in design and implementation. A critical factor in selecting key landscapes for conservation under the America's Great Outdoors initiative should be the degree to which a particular landscape will provide resilience for wildlife and natural resources adaptation to climate change.

Similarly, the national strategy for climate change adaptation should include measures that emphasize the need to conserve large, interconnected landscapes to provide protected habitat and corridors for wildlife migration in response to climate change-induced habitat transformation.

Actions that further the objectives of both the America's Great Outdoors initiative and the national strategy for climate change adaptation should be given the highest priority for funding and implementation.

Finally, for the America's Great Outdoors initiative to have a meaningful and lasting impact on federal natural resource policy, it is essential that the administration produce a final report specifying how the initiative's conservation objectives will actually be achieved. We urge that the report spell out detailed implementation strategies. These strategies could include new legislative proposals, Executive Orders, and agency guidance. At minimum, the report should be specific about how each of the federal agencies implementing the conservation objectives articulated by the America's Great Outdoors initiative will allocate their resources and annual budget priorities to achieve those objectives. Without a clear strategy to implement the initiative's conservation vision, it could prove to be a costly undertaking that produces few tangible conservation benefits. With a well-defined implementation strategy, the America's Great Outdoors initiative can fulfill its purpose of providing a conservation agenda for the 21st century.

o Keep doing what America does better than any other nation in the world and provide new, expanded and better protected parks, wildlife refuges, monuments, rivers and trails that will benefit us all.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at the promised and appropriated level of \$900 million a year. This fund – paid for by revenues from offshore oil drilling – is used to protect parks, forests, oceans, refuges and local recreation areas. But it has only been fully funded once since it was created 45 years ago.

Provide annual funding for the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act grant program, which directs funds to local jurisdictions for urban park projects.

- o Increase the opportunities to connect Americans –especially our children – to the Great Outdoors.

- o Encourage the kinds of public/private partnerships that have proven to be so effective in the Chicago Wilderness region, Illinois, and across the country. Communities are developing homegrown, collaborative solutions to conservation challenges and the federal government should support them.

- o Invest in public land and support local economies.

As millions of families, including the first family, visit national parks across the country, we are once again reminded that our national parks are a core part of our nation's great outdoors. As you work to define the administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative, we write to remind you of the centrality of our beloved national parks to America's great outdoors and to encourage you to include a robust national park component in the initiative.

Because of this relevance to the aims of the America's Great Outdoors initiative and in light of the upcoming National Park Service centennial in 2016, we ask that you include a national campaign and partnership to connect Americans to a restored, strongly protected National Park System. Such a campaign can unite in the minds of the American public our efforts to bring education outside of the classroom, to protect our wildlife from habitat loss and climate change, and to encourage active outdoor lifestyles for young and old alike, while also providing important economic and employment benefits.

We would appreciate the support of the Administration and would ask that the following core principles be prominent features of the America's Great Outdoors initiative: (1) a commitment of federal dollars to ready the parks for their next 100 years; (2) a new, viable public-private partnership program to leverage philanthropy as we approach the centennial; (3) a campaign to increase Americans' engagements with parks as we head toward 2016; and (4) a strategy to promote the educational, health and service benefits of national parks.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Keep the OHV roads and trails open for Public use. Maintain the roads and trails and complete the rehabilitation of damaged areas. Enlist the assistance of OHV groups in Rehabilitation Work on these damaged areas. Complete the necessary Law Enforcement work in these damaged areas. This would eliminate the damage from occurring in the early stages. Inform the Public of the enforcement efforts in these damaged areas. That would be a means of discouraging continued and future damage to sensitive areas and would permit roads and trails in or near these sensitive areas.

Increasing environmental education in national parks is essential for the future of the parks. Our nation continues to grow more urban, more engrossed in technology, and less connected with the natural world. The national parks are in real danger of losing relevance for the majority of our citizens. The parks must partner with schools and private organizations to help create the next generation of park stewards. Students who participate in environmental education programs in national parks develop an appreciation for our open spaces and discover that the national parks have more relevance to their lives than they might have imagined.

Open more public lands for everyone to use. This is OUR country, that implies ALL of us.

We have to start valuing the ecosystem that supports as as highly or more highly than our manmade resources. This wild ecosystem is more important than the low-grade gold available there.

Fully Fund the Community Wood Energy Program at \$5M. This program was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill and would provide up to \$50,000 grants to plan and help capitalize locally scaled biomass utilization systems. Such systems increase the economic benefits of low value wood and therefore support forest stewardship efforts. They also help communities transition away from fossil fuel use, particularly for thermal heat and small scale electrical generation.

Maintain and increase funding for those federal programs that have made such an important difference for federal agencies to be good partners in landscape conservation, especially the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Wildlife Program, USDA, NRCS, State, and private Farm Bill financial and technical assistance programs.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge how important NRCS and Farm Bill programs like GRP, FRPP, WHIP, and others have been for land conservation and stewardship in the Crown, and we would encourage the Administration to support and enhance the delivery of those programs to rural landowners.

Based on our experiences and these observations, we strongly recommend that America's Great Outdoors Initiative should be designed to support communities in participatory conservation and to provide specific policy changes and resources that can better sustain working landscapes and local communities, while at the same time empowering people to be responsible landscape stewards.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We believe that one of top priorities of America's Great Outdoors should be to make investments in initiatives that bring together community-based and large landscape conservation.

Support grass-roots initiatives to address landscape scale conservation by providing resources and technical assistance. We believe that America's Great Outdoors should support existing landscape partnerships, enabling them to achieve a higher level of success.

America's Great Outdoors should facilitate community-based conservation leadership and collaboration.

This initiative should provide funding to build the capacity for place-based conservation and networked systems of action for large landscape conservation.

Without an investment in the hard work of facilitating communication and building trust and understanding, it is almost impossible to agree on and carry-out effective conservation action plans. Building this infrastructure from the ground-up helps ensure that there is ownership in both the process and the outcomes, and maximizes the opportunity to sustain this capacity over time. This is perhaps the most important contribution that America's Great Outdoors could make to current and future conservation efforts.

We are talking about federal support for community conservation capacity that includes funding for land stewardship, technical assistance, community outreach, and project level support that may arise from community innovation in conservation.

Create the right set of incentives and opportunities for federal agencies to be effective partners in community-based and large landscape conservation. While there are many good examples where federal agencies are excellent partners, the nature of the administrative system often makes this a challenge. This is not a suggestion for agencies to abdicate their statutory authority, but a realization that agencies bring valuable resources – information, expertise, funding, and authority – to the table. What we need – in the Crown and throughout the country – is a way for the agencies to both empower others to share the responsibility for solving problems related to public lands and resources, and to be empowered to engage in more flexible, adaptive means to achieve their mission and mandate.

America's Great Outdoors should provide incentives, performance measures, and rewards for local agency staff (on program and regulatory side) to participate in place based collaborative groups.

America's Great Outdoors may seek to create "Conservation Investment Zones" that connect protected area management with surrounding private landowners in developing consistent management practices. These efforts exist in some working landscapes using New Market Tax Credits.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Enable and support best practices. One way to make the type of investment suggested here, and to create the legal and administrative space for federal agencies to be effective partners, is to sponsor a set of pilot project or experiments. The idea here would be to create a source of funding and facilitate a national competition to highlight the most promising approaches to community-based and large landscape conservation. A national competition would inspire innovation and generate lessons that could be captured and shared with others. America's Great Outdoors might consider a national competition for innovative community-based conservation and showcase these efforts as best practices.

Encourage public and private universities to play a more active role in partnering with community-based conservation efforts to support large landscape conservation. Public universities are in a unique role to help build the type of sustainable infrastructure contemplated here – given their public service mission the relatively objective, impartial role they play as educators. Universities are relatively untapped assets in supporting locally based efforts through convening, coordinating, and providing technical assistance. Given that they are also training future leaders in conservation, this is a perfect opportunity to encourage their active involvement in achieving working landscapes, working communities, and working people.

Support and Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund: The most crucial and timely opportunity the federal government has now to protect landscapes is to support full, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million a year. Fully and permanently funding this account will allow for broader, more reliable conservation and greater leverage of all resources in the Crown and other landscapes.

More broadly, we strongly encourage expanded use of LWCF funds for conservation easements over private, working lands that are integral to important public lands. While we have had great success in the Crown using LWCF funds for this purpose, landowners from other landscapes tell us it is very difficult to access LWCF funds for conservation easements.

Make permanent the enhanced tax deduction for conservation easement donations. This incentive has been renewed for one, two, or 4 years at a time, and currently - has expired. This incentive is a critical tool for landowners to have, in order to make the right planning decisions.

Fully Fund the new Conservation Forest Land Restoration Program (CFLRP) at a minimum of \$40 million/year. This program is already based on a national competition model that incentivizes communities to work together around a scientifically sound and viable forest restoration program.

I suggest that the Federal government fully fund our National Park system. They belong to us so we the taxpayer should fully fund them. They are a national treasure!

I support full funding for the new project.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think a little more research into the current policy on mining is in order. The mine shafts, tailings piles etc. are all left from old mines. I see alot more responsible activities at active mines than those 100 plus years ago. When does a mine stop being an eye sore and transition into a historical site?

I vote to have the Federal Government totaly fund the National Parks.

I was alive during the 30's and have seen just how much good the CCC camps did for many areas of our country. This would be a superb solution to the lack of jobs AND funding that are so prevelant.

Implement the idas of the National Parks 2nd century commission including more funding

In addition, river protection and restoration should be a national focus, because rivers provide fishing, paddling and other forms of recreation, not to mention their ecological values. They connect our communities to parks and other natural treasures, and they give us clean water - the number one envimetal concern of Americans.

In response to climate disruption, remove stressors on the forests like livestock grazing, roads in streams, and old culverts blocking fish migration. Don't do anything to encourage more logging.

In the western 12 states the federal government already owns 48% of the land. They should sell it to the states & private citizens who have a better track record of conservation.

Increase Funding to Fully Staff National Parks

Increased funding for National Parks is vital to save them from becoming run down and underused. There is such a reward to humans when they connect with nature and the wilderness. National Parks provide this much needed pause especially in a society where we are so on the go and bombarded with stress like never before.

Increased funding is necessary to the preservation of the US. human race. We need to reconnect with nature, and need educators, and rangers to protect what we have. With limited income, many folks are turning to parks for recreation. It's a time to help people understand the importance of nature around them

It can't happen too soon. Parks are in dire need, as is much of our infrastructure.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

allow sale of yearly passes or monthly use fees for locals and seniors. Keep the revenue from these passes in the areas where they are used. Note that the White Mts charge a parking fee at trailhead accesses and locals can buy a pass if they visit often. User fees are better accepted than taxes. Seniors get a lot for free and can mostly afford to contribute to the parks they use.

e National parks should be totally funded. What a thrill to see buffalo trotting down the road in Yellowstone.

Let us maintain our national parks by fully funding. Use our youth to maintain them. Let us keep them in their natural beauty. We don't need mining and all terrain vehicles in our parks. Once the parks are gone, they will be gone forever.

LWCF is oil revenue. LWCF funds have been stolen by Congress for other things. This cripples its ability to protect threatened farms, forests, riparian corridors and shorelines-especially the Stateside program. BTW-These are voluntary programs-the land owner must be a willing seller. LWCF should be fully funded and it should require 2/3's vote of the House and Senate to remove any oil revenue from it.

National parks and heritage site should have permanent sources of funding and keep their own admission fees. Staff should not be slashed every four years in congress' whim of budget. Long range planning is essential to public lands and adequate salaries are important to attract and hold valuable people. Treat the Public Lands as the jewel that they are and fully fund their plans to protect their charges.

National Parks are a national treasure, but they need proper funding so all Americans can enjoy them. They are not Disney properties where one pays a fee to a private, for-profit corporation. They belong to all Americans and it is the responsibility and actually the privilege of the U.S. government to make sure they're well cared for. That means money. Funding national parks allows them to be used for both education and recreation.

National Parks are a treasure to all

National parks are our legacy. There will be no way to replace them if they are not maintained. We have to preserve their essential wildness and character for generations and for the health of the planet.

National Parks are too important for ALL Americans to not have full funding.

National Parks deserve FULL Funding

National Parks deserve Full Funding.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National Parks have been chically underfunded for years and that really has taken a toll especially in a time when they are more heavily visited than ever. The National Park system is our heritage so let's protect it and invest in it for future generations to enjoy by fully funding the park system. It would be shameful not to!

In both cases, the corruption of money in our electoral and governing processes is destroying our democracy, our soul as a nation, and the world itself. We are no longer a nation of, by, and for the people.

Our "Great Outdoors" is NOTHING to the monied powers that actually control every aspect of our government and culture.

I believe that shielding our park and forest districts from poorly planned development, mineral extraction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration.

If you have the opportunity to select another nominee for the Supreme Court, choose one with knowledge and kinship with the natural environment, not another person with nothing but an urban, eastern background. We need another William O. Douglas on the bench, one with a visceral relationship with nature. In fact we need nine such justices.

. Replace Secretary of the Interior Salazar with someone who understands--and will fight for-- protection of the natural environment.

Washington must recognize that the most effective conservation program(s) varies with state. Increased effectiveness and efficiency is accomplished through:1) close relationships between federal and state employees, 2) use of state forest assessments to establish criteria/goals for grants, and 3) flexible grant criteria tied to state assessments.

Incentivize by establishing market value for ecosystem services

Wetlands are a very important issue everywhere in the world, with sea levels on the rise. Our government needs to take the lead in planning ways to mitigate the effects of global warming on our economy and our global food supply or there will be a food crisis eventually. A really big one that is sure to affect us here in America.

Before Federal dollars are spent to buy easements an assessment such as an EA should be completed. Some of the questions that should be asked, documented and made public: What is the long range plan for the area? How does this Tract fit into that plan? What is the impact of this easement on surrounding owners? (most often it increases their land value) Why are Federal dollars necessary? What is the future of sponsoring agency and who will administer the easement if they cease to exist.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I believe a much cheaper solution is to developed a system of rewards in the form of annual Federal tax credits for landowners who don't subdivide their land and allow the public to use it. It could be administered by NRCS and modeled after the Current Use Law of NH with modifications. I would be willing to volunteer for a National working Group to developed such.

- Reduce defense spending to fund robust land acquisition, habitat, conservation, etc. programs for all lower levels of government. Even if all we did was buy land and give people access to it, that would be better than not having it protected from development.
- Require outdoor and environmental education in education curriculum levels preschool thru college.
- Take seriously implementation of the UN Urban Environmental Accords to: 1) protect critical habitat corridors and other key habitat characteristics (e.g. water features, food-bearing plants, and shelter for wildlife, use of native species, etc.) from unsustainable development; 2) ensure that there is an accessible public park or recreational open space within half-a-kilometer of every city resident.
- Incentivize/fund green jobs, green industry innovations, renewable energy, housing innovations, and zero waste.
- How about a national reforestation initiative/campaign?
- How about a higher profile Get Outdoors campaign?
- Please BE BOLD in behalf of having a future!
- Help us fund Nature in the 'Hood' programs.
- Promote national values other than materialism, instant gratification, consumption. Don't shy away from helping U.S. recalibrate its fundamental values and how wealth, success and wellbeing are measured. Help us leave a fundamentally different legacy than the one we have now.

Please tell Obama to REPEAL THE P-R GUN TAX, give some of the \$ to crime victims, and STOP STATE WILDLIFE MGMT FROM QUALIFYING FOR IT BY "GROWING HUNTERS"!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mr. President, conservation biologists will tell you that, in order to ensure species long-term survival, these wilderness cores must be connected by means of wildlife corridors. You should order that Federal Agencies adopt policies to establish such corridors immediately, and then your administration should work to have these embodied as the law of the land. Furthermore, since many of our key core wilderness areas are beset with potential destructive private inholdings, you should seek funding to buy out as many of these as possible. This does not have to add to the administrative burden of your Presidency. There already exists a very effective non-profit, The Wilderness Land Trust (www.wildernesslandtrust.org) that pursues this goal. They just need some additional funding to make it happen. In the interest of full disclosure, I proudly serve on the Board of Directors of that organization.

LWCF and other federal initiatives should designate a portion of the resources to directly support, where applicable, year-round outdoor recreation and education facilities, programs and activities. Outdoor recreation, environmental learning and nature discovery need to occur year-round.

Rail to Trails connects people to green spaces and supports fitness in a fun, healthy way by allowing folks to bike, run, walk and rollerblade close to home. Enhance the Dept. of Transportation's efforts in converting abandoned rail corridors in suburban, urban and rural neighborhoods across the country.

Support recreational fishing and beginner birding activities. Along with bikes, animals are a great way to introduce kids to the outdoors.

Support alternative and affordable transportation methods to link visitors to outdoors. For instance, our park is accessible by public rail transport - but the last leg of the journey requires additional transport via taxi. Two communities that border the park, on the other hand, were able to secure a federal transportation tourism grant to purchase a shuttle bus to move tourists around the towns. This system could easily serve as a conduit for transporting folks to the park if there were flexibility in the funding/use guidelines, or it could provide a similar transportation grant to significant parks that could benefit from such a service.

I believe that all life is interconnected and wildlife should be protected at all costs.

But designating trails is not enough. We need sustained programs which help fund needed trail maintenance and programs which map trails and make info available to the public -- including info about current conditions. Best tool now is the Recreational Trails Program (see post on this program).

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Designation of a national scenic byway or All-American Road is by the Secretary of Transportation and does require the involved municipalities and agencies to collaborate on a corridor management plan to recognize and protect intrinsic values (scenic, historic, recreational, cultural), but the plan does NOT utilize any new federal controls or requirements. Nor does it prevent safety enhancements of the roadway. The goal is for communities and agencies to shape growth and change, not try to block it. And we are now approaching the 20th anniversary of the first round of designations (of which there are now 150+ for some 35,000 miles of road). The results are encouraging. Economic value of the designations is proven by increases in visits and use of the featured assets of the corridors, and local pride and awareness of the corridor value is widespread and greatly increased.

Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened. Standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter. Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent.

Again, if you do not like OHV/ATV then partake in the millions of designated wilderness acres. You won't find us there. Who has made the biggest footprint on our beautiful national forests? What about all that fossil fueled asphalt or concrete to build all those roads, you travel on. Wind and time will take thousands of years to cover (not restore) that. But look at the wagon trail ruts left on the Oregon trail, you can hardly find them. The only ones I have seen where on protected farm ground, that the farmer has diligently protected and preserved and that was only a couple hundred years ago. I am all for government policing of OHV recreation. Please donate your tax dollars to any anti-access organization. Or just write a check to the US Treasury and in the memo, write to help police our national OHV areas and to help keep those dirt roads open.

As a struggling ATV enthusiast, hunter and outdoorswoman, I see the benefits of protecting our environment and natural resources. I find it very interesting that today's national forests, BLM and private land is even here today for us to enjoy due to today's environmentalists. Conservation is the answer to improving and sustaining our environment, managing our national forests by continued support from the public from fees charged to access and enjoy the forests not closing the roads and keeping our public lands from the public. I for one am against anymore tax dollars going to our national parks, most of the visitors are from across our borders that have not contributed a dime to sustain. Whereas keeping all our national forests open to the public, foreign and domestic, sustains the state and local economies, not just our government, to be spent in other mismanaged divisions. I have enjoyed the natural wonders and woods of the Pacific NW for over 50 years, I have not seen Yellowstone.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are many, many ways to enjoy America's public lands while preserving them at the same time. In fact, each promotes the other. Using the land for recreational activities OF ALL KINDS can generate revenue, promote land resource education, and of course provide Americans a wonderful way to relax and enjoy this country. The easy way out to protect our lands is to limit anyone from using it. It's cheap and it doesn't require any thought or foresight. But the reality is that it's not complicated or expensive to find a way to manage public land that allows everyone to use it and preserve it at the same time. There are no lack of enthusiasts who will devote their FREE time and knowledge to this cause. Just give them a chance. This country is at its best when the citizens are involved and managing it at a ground level. Not when bureaucracy and limited interest radical groups are making the decisions.

It is blanket laws and rules like these (declaring wilderness and also the no more wilderness act) that ruin it for everyone. There is no reason you cannot make a rule that keeps oil companies and the like from destroying wilderness areas while still allowing outdoor recreationists to enjoy it. I see some of the good intentions of designating land as wilderness but until it is better thought out and fair I cannot support it. Demote.

Oil companies don't have permission to drill on public land without first leasing that land from the Government. Designating an area a wilderness restricts the government from leasing that land. It also restricts the public from accessing it and restricts the government from maintaining federally funded roads and trails through those areas. As to the decisions of the Bush administration, if you don't want all of our land sold off to oil companies, don't elect a president whose entire family and their fortune are built on oil. When your president (and the majority of his Cabinet) are oil barons, that makes THEM a special interest group. There is a lot of cleanup and damage control ahead of the new administration. Hopefully with a responsible concerned administration, the public land will be used appropriately in the best interest of the public, rather than in the interest of profiteering. If the Obama administration wasn't concerned with appropriate use of public lands then this motion would be very valid, however, seeing that they ARE concerned with appropriate use of our public lands this motion is a stumbling block for them in their attempt to correct the problem. The fact that the current president has launched this national dialog bolsters my hope that he and his administration have OUR best interests at heart. Let's not tie their hands from fixing the problem created by their predecessors.

I know there are several very long hiking trails in this great country. I wonder if there is, or there ever will be, a coast to coast or border to border OHV trail system. Yeah, it might be dual sport and require a plate, but think of the possibilities.

I strongly support and applaud this idea. We need more roadless areas designated as permanently protected wilderness. I am one of the fortunate few: I can walk to a BLM wilderness area near my home in Utah. I wish that more Americans had a similar opportunity.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think there are two separate issues in this idea. On so-called "below cost" timber sales, I agree that the Forest Service and American public should not be subsidizing or losing money to facilitate private timber company profits. The companies won't bid on a sale that is not profitable, so why should the federal government offer one that is not beneficial for the public interest? On clearcutting, I agree that it is not appropriate in most cases. Even major natural disturbance processes like fire, disease, and high windthrow tend to leave some standing trees and snags across the landscape, and these provide important structure and habitat moving forward. However, there may be some limited cases where small clearcuts may be appropriate, but I would tend to question anything larger than 20 acres.

I strongly support and applaud this idea. We need to protect and restore "night sky" viewing opportunities, especially in urban and suburban areas where there is too much wasteful light pollution at night.

I strongly support full funding for our national parks. With additional funds, I would hope that more NPS interpretive rangers could put on school assemblies or class presentations at urban and suburban schools. And more field trips to national parks by school students would be wonderful. Young people need that connection to our national parks so they will care about them as future taxpayers and voters.

I strongly support and applaud this idea. I would love to see a proposed shortgrass prairie national park be considered. Imagine what it would be like to bring back healthy bison herds, wolves, prairie dog colonies, black-footed ferrets, and much more over a large, connected landscape. There are already many large BLM and Forest Service (national grasslands) shortgrass prairie land holdings in several states. A feasibility study could look at these holdings and assess the pros and cons to determine which overall area would be best suited for a new national park. Many of these areas are currently economically depressed due to low cattle prices and low land values, and the rural communities are losing population. Converting existing BLM or Forest Service lands into a new national park, perhaps combined with some willing seller acquisitions around this "nucleus" to expand the size and make it more manageable at a larger scale, could create a major tourist draw that would bring one or more of these depressed rural communities back to economic and social life. Of course, the locals would inevitably fight this initially, but come to love it later.

Cut the military budget by 75% and use the funds for our National Parks and for development of mass transit and alternative energy sources.

The Federal lands belong to the American people and we should all be allowed to use them within reason. In the west there are several areas closed to Bikers and OHV yet open to Horses and Hikers. Common sense must prevail and the agencies that guard these area must realise that they are there make sure the lands are used in a responsible way only.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our National Parks in their pristine condition are the greatest treasures that this nation has. They need to be protected from degradation in quality and the wildlife in them needs to be protected and enhanced. In particular they need to be protected from overuse overdevelopment noise air pollution and other threats posed by our overpopulated and industrialized society. decrease immigration and encourage smaller families so that overpopulation does not destroy all the progress that has been made in the past century and which may ultimately destroy our parks. THIS IS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ITEM. HOWEVER IF THERE ARE TOO MANY CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN OUR PARKS WILL BE OVERRUN AND DESTROYED AS THEY HAVE BEEN IN OTHER NATIONS. Remember that our overpopulation MUST be addressed if we are to protect what we have and pass it on.

I am sending this message through an advocacy group that asks you and other decision makers to work to support and maintain our national parks. I am sure you are familiar with that group's very persuasive arguments and you will receive many copies of the letter that was in this window. So I am replacing that message with an idea of my own. I propose a multifaceted "package deal" that would directly benefit families in the lowincome bracket while having a stimulative effect on the general economy and drawing public attention to numerous worthy causes within the government and in the community at large. Please consider offering packets of vouchers to people who have little to spend on personal experience and the broadening of their own lives that would enable them to have these experiences. What I suggest is that the government enable a certain number of recipients from below the poverty line each year to take a "really great vacation" and see some part of the United States that they would normally never get to see. The packet for each family would contain a voucher for rail travel by Amtrak to take them to some exciting destination far across the country. Send for example a family from urban New Jersey to go hiking in Glacier National Park. There are literally thousands of possibilities using the resources of Amtrak lowcost motels and the National Parks System. The benefits would include the opportunity you desire for American children (and their parents) to encounter the great outdoors and see some alternative ways of solving life's issues and living the life we are given. In addition there would be gift shop purchases and ways of spreading the wealth around on a modest scale. The packet would include vouchers for simple healthy meals and lowcost lodging and the enclosed literature would be educational in addition to encouraging the travellers to take advantage of the educational offerings of the National Parks as they exist. As a teacher of career skills to lowincome adults I see many Americans who would benefit beyond what words can describe from an opportunity to go where they have never been before and see a world of new sights and thoughts as a family over a period of 45 days. It would give the children plenty of material for "show and tell" at school and the whole family wonderful memories to share forever. I don't have a clue how such a program would be funded. There may be funds for a pilot project somewhere in some existing program budget. There may be some way for the Congress to provide some seed money to be matched and augmented by private foundations. Or a direct appropriation might be possible. In any event I have thought through this idea at length and am prepared to make a more extensive and detailed presentation. I can be reached at 704.983.5525 and I would be delighted to come and discuss the elements of this package with you and other appropriate persons. Just let me know.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our National Parks are indeed our greatest treasure. We have treated them like 3rd world citizens and need to step up our care so future generations can share what I have lived. I also believe Senator Tom Coburn is on the right track for what is best for our country. Please heed his words in the following quoted letter: "I agree the financial sustainability of the National Parks Service (NPS) must be improved. Unfortunately however Congress has allowed for the deterioration of the current NPS system through mismanagement and an inexcusable lack of oversight. To reverse course I believe Congress must stop the tide of new parks and programs authorized until we can figure out how to meet our current commitments to these national treasures. While we do not know for sure how much land the federal government already owns we know that it is more than 30 percent of all land in the United States. We cannot keep adding new land until we can sufficiently take care of the land we already own. Our grandchildren deserve better. I have worked tirelessly to improve the management and sustainability of the NPS in order to increase the public confidence in Congress ability to take care our public lands. For illustration during consideration of the Interior spending bill (H.R. 2996 which became Public Law 111180 on October 30 2009) I attempted to persuade my Senate colleagues to set funding priorities for our current national parks and public lands. The Interior bill for instance increased spending for the Department of Interior by \$4.6 billion (16 percent) over last year's funding which does not even account for the more than \$10 billion the department received in stimulus funding. The bill also funded nearly \$400 million for new federal land acquisition while the Department of Interior currently faces a maintenance backlog ranging from \$13.2 billion to \$19.4 billion. The Interior bill also included over 303 earmarks totaling \$244.5 million which siphoned funds from NPS maintenance needs. Despite the millions of dollars of known waste and duplication within the Interior bill the Senate rejected an amendment I offered that would have required certain federal funds intended for land acquisition to be spent to reduce the maintenance backlogs that threaten the health and safety of visitors at national parks and other public lands. My amendment would have saved taxpayers approximately \$263 million and helped to ensure we are properly taking care of what we already own before we add even more land (to see the vote totals please click [here](#)). I also offered a similar amendment that merely prohibited spending on new projects until we had taken care of existing ones (to see the vote totals for this vote click [here](#)). The rejection of my amendments is another example of shortsighted politicians in Washington legislating for their own political interests rather than what is in the longterm interests of our nation. Congress is out of touch with the priorities of the American people. I believe that increasing oversight of the federal government will increase transparency and force politicians and bureaucrats to be accountable to the American public. PLEASE forget the current path of destruction and mismanagement and heed Senator Coburn's words. Work with him. His plan can save the parks from our own politicians.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for making a commitment to America's Great Outdoors. Protecting our nation's historic and natural resources in the national park system is an important part of our nation's past present and future. It provides a historic chance for present and future generations to learn about the past to recreate and to protect the environments within them. As important as it is to expand those parks particularly in sensitive areas it is important to protect those already there that are threatened by inappropriate development. Gettysburg National Military Park may be the most important historic resource in the nation a site that memorializes a battle where over 50000 men and women were either killed wounded or missing over three days in a battle that likely saved the union from becoming two nations one free and one not. There are plans to potentially place a casino one half mile from the battlefield. The hearings on this project will begin in August and it would be a very important word from you that could stop this project from moving forward. There is only one Gettysburg and we can not take the chance that allowing a development such as this right on the doorstep of american history will affect the character of the area and potentially diminish the impact of the park by harming its allure and special character. I ask that you consider making a statement against the casino and urge that you take the time some weekend while at Camp David to visit there with your family. It may be the most important historic resource our nation has and deserves to be protected from unwarranted projects that may be fine for other locations but not for Gettysburg.

Reestablish the Youth Conservation Corp (YCC). I worked as a site coordinator in the Black Hills of South Dakota for 4 years. The respect for our national treasure and work ethic the youth learned were a lifetime asset to the youth and our nation's greatest treasure. Get the environmentalists out of the way. Due to litigation actions we will lose the entire Rocky Mountain Forest because of the pine beetle infestations. The forests are not healthy in large part because the National Parks have not been managed as they needed to fight the infestations. The regulations will not allow any cutting of standing trees. The forests needed to be thinned for the past 20 years and have not been due to absurd litigation by environmentalists. Mr. President take on those that are not allowing the professional park personnel to do their jobs.

I use our national parks. They require more funding and allowing each park to retain a portion of its fees for park improvements is a great idea and long overdue.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A centerpiece of the "America's Great Outdoors" Initiative should be affordable access to and thoughtful preservation of our nation's great playgrounds and classrooms our national parks. Fees for national parks are already prohibitive to many people. In fact my 20yearold daughter just returned from a longplanned for and hardearned road trip to Alaska volunteering on organic farms studying flora and fauna and camping her way to the Artic Circle. It was disheartening to hear that she spent no time at a longdreamed of destination Denali National Park. With great anticipation she arrived there only to find that in addition to the \$20 vehicle/admission fee she had to pay over \$40 for a shuttle bus into the park her cheapest option since visitors' vehicles are barred from entry. While she agreed wholeheartedly with the objective of keeping traffic out of the Park it was akin to extortion to charge Americans \$60 to see the majesty of their own publicly owned lands. On principle she refused to enter. Surely we can provide free or cheaper transportation into this magnificent place and others like it so all may know its grandeur. Park fees continue to rise and those who could most benefit from a free or affordable recreational experience are those least able to afford it. While wealthier families have a host of recreational opportunities available to them poorer citizens and their families should be able to rely on national parks as an affordable destination for day trips and vacations. National parks belong to all of us and no one should be barred from visiting them regardless of income. One suggestion might be to provide a free or subsidized annual national parks pass to families receiving federal or state assistance such as food stamps. While it may seem contrary to the goal of making parks more affordable and thus accessible to poorer Americans accessibility and its oftaccompanied development must be curtailed. Anyone desirous of a truly momentous outdoors experience should be afforded the opportunity; however creating that opportunity should not compromise the very essence of the offered experience. Our national parks are ever approaching an amusement park ambiance with concessions congestion and too much concrete. With greater funding for parks perhaps we could eliminate profitmaking ventures that interfere with a true appreciation of nature and its sublime absence of commerce. We need to adhere to our national parks' mission of preserving our wild spaces. To this end we must limit the footprint we leave on those areas. The most natural way to limit congestion and paving of park lands would be to do as Denali National Park does and make entry into the park communal albeit more affordable than that park's buses. While Americans with Disabilities should be enabled to enjoy our parks paving should be extremely limited so as not to ruin the overarching aesthetic for all.

Teddy Roosevelt will forever be remembered for establishing our national park system and when I think of adventure in America I think of our national parks. I urge you and your administration to take the following actions:

1. Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe clean and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016.
2. Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers.
3. Preserve for all Americans present and future large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems ensure wildlife conservation maintain public access to parks and open spaces reduce the impacts of climate change and protect our cultural heritage.
4. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active healthy outdoor activity that will help them lead long healthy lives.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You sir are no FDR and no TR. Perhaps after the total botch on financial reform you might try to redeem some of your term by paying attention to the protection of our natural resources and maybe make up for the Gulf spill in part. And reminds us of how the oil companies continue to get away with low and no payments for the country's property.

STOP ALL MINING and FOSSIL FUEL extraction around the National Parks immediately on principle. Clean up all pollution and prevent any future contamination of waters and skies and grounds in the National Parks. Remember people live in some of the parks such as the Havasupai Native Nation in the Grand Canyon. This is their long historic home. Keep it clean and say no to miners and attempt to extract resources there.

Thank you for your leadership in health care global peace climate energy and environmental issues. Please consider the importance of America's national parks in your Administration's agenda. America's national parks ARE America's national treasures and something that all Americans can get behind. Please know that America needs more parks for people to enjoy. In the Las Vegas Valley we're working on creating a new national monument that preserves and protects a significant Ice Age Fossil site an area that will surely provide insight into global warming and cooling periods. Please consider using The Antiquities Act to create this new national monument and bringing new sites into the system that better represent our changing country and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. The proposed new national monument in the Las Vegas Valley Tule Springs Fossil Beds will provide a significant wildlife corridor that will link four federal agencies.

we need to complete the parks that were promised such as the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. We don't want our wildlife to have to date their cousins in order to reproduce in an "island park.

Please remember the importance of protecting our national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities.

Approximately 1 million acres of Greenspace are being lost to illegal as well as other immigrants each year. To end this defilement of the environment the illegals must be sent home by removing the jobs magnet with Mandatory Everify as well as curtailing all legal immigration to stabilize our population with careful attention to stop the further degradation of our outdoor spaces.

Our National Parks should be interesting beautiful safe places to take our children so they will have memories of their own. There is no place for guns in the parks system; no shooting ranges no animals to kill no sporting shooting events to attend. Even the rangers don't carry them. What guns do do is make a child's experience a scary one and makes for a worrisky visit for the parents. Please exclude guns from our National Parks once gain.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The remaining parks are impacted with too many people wanting to use them. Camping sites must be reserved six months in advance and even then it is virtually impossible to get campground spaces in the summer months. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

Please increase the funding for the National Parks; make them a central pillar of your "America's Great Outdoors" initiative.

Consider protecting the soundscapes of the national parks as much as possible. It is terrible that there may be as few as three places in the US (including places in the backcountry) where there is uninterrupted natural silence for at least 15 minutes. Limit overflights with small planes/helicopters and persuade the FAA to change the three or so flight paths near Olympia National Park so that one park will preserve natural sounds. This is important both for people and for wildlife (especially diminishing populations of songbirds).

At the very least please evaluate and engage in restoring the National Parks we already have.

In the spring of 1980 my husband and I canoed the 100 Mile Waterway in the Everglades. The thought of oil seeping into the park is sickening. This is fragile territory and the main water source for Miami. I am very disturbed that Yellowstone's wolves are being killed. Those are my wolves since I am a taxpayer. The famed Cottonwood pack brought thousands of tourist dollars to the area. Now they are gone. Bad public policy for sure.

I would like to see motorized vehicles strictly restricted in our national parks. Use electricpowered shuttle buses to move people around. There are too many roads in our parks now and the roads are destroying wildlife habitat interfering with wildlife being able to get to feeding areas and keeping them from their normal range. Motors do not belong in nature! Don't bow to the lobbyists from the jet ski manufacturers and the snowmobile manufacturers and the dirt bike and ATV manufacturers! These motorized "toys" destroy the land erode the land terrorize and stress wildlife and very often kill wildlife and totally wreck the wilderness experience and the peace of nature! As an older worker who has been unemployed since 2007 I will soon be living out of my backpack and I will depend on the parks for places to pitch my tent which will be my sole shelter.

I encourage you to support and uphold citizen and public interest efforts to continue securing and preserving national parks and national forests and improving ways of introducing urban and suburban youth to them so the resources can be preserved for future generations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am an active National Park and Seashore user and feel strongly that there is a strong link between a strong and well funded National Park System and the America's Great Outdoors Initiative ("AGO"). I applaud the administration for their efforts to promote AGO and when I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks and seashores. They further engender personal reflection in an increasingly fastpaced and digital culture.

Please save our wildlife sanctuaries especially the one in Arizona that the smugglers use.

Being a biologist a member of Concerned Scientists and a long time teacher I think our national parks. This money should definitely be spent quickly and as originally promised to support parks seashores forests and waterways across the country rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise.

National Parks are more than a place of pretty sights and wild animals they restore our soul and make us better people. They bring us to places we've never dreamed of even if it is our 16th visit in the same park. We started this great idea of setting aside land for the People now we need to show the world our pride in our beautiful country and how amazing this land really is.

Our parks are treasures of the earth that we must preserve and protect so that our children's children's children can enjoy them like we have. We depend upon the balance of the entire earth ecosystem for our survival. Keep our National Parks. User fees are fine to help but the country must support the basics of the land.

America's national parks are in deep trouble. For the last 30 years the system has been grossly underfunded the only thing that prevents its collapse is volunteers (like my wife and myself). Delayed maintenance and understaffing combined with overuse are causing the parks to decline they won't survive another century of overuse and abuse.

I am thrilled when I see that you are taking your family to see our national parks. Presidents and citizens have worked very hard to preserve these areas for future generations. Please provide funding and legislation to ensure the parks will always have an important place in our country. Protection from oil and gas companies is especially necessary at this time. As added notes of concern the BLM should not be allowed to continue the mistreatment of the nation's wild horses. The cruel roundup and/or selling of these animals to end up at a slaughter house in Canada or Mexico is totally unacceptable to many Americans. The Yellowstone bison should be allowed access to natural migration corridors especially during the spring birthing season. Hazing of the bison by government agencies influenced by the cattle industry must stop. Americans care about the future of these incredible places and wildlife so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. I would welcome the opportunity to talk to you about these issues.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When we went to the national parks in Utah it was my first time. I was truly awestruck! Words cannot describe the amazing beauty of these places. Please continue to invest in them.

I am very concerned that we are not appreciating the value of our national parks and hope that you will do anything you can to support and nurture our park system everywhere.

Please rescind the recent legislation allowing for concealed weapons in National Parks. This is an affront to the very meaning of National Parks and poses a serious danger to people and wildlife.

This land is our legacy especially now as it becomes increasingly apparent how fragile these lands have become in the face of overharvesting of resources and overdevelopment of unprotected open space.

LEAVE the wild horses ALONE you tool! .

. GET THE GUNS OUT OF OUR NATIONAL PARKS .

Keep the National Parks and related wildlife areas (national forests wildlife refuges etc.) from encroachment by industry and commercial ventures. This is a time to encourage and emphasize alternative energies on already exploited lands so that my and your precious and currently protected lands remain just that protected from exploitation and degradation.

President Obama please bring First Lady Michelle and your two girls to the Great Smoky Mountain National Park! Due to the economy record numbers of people are spending their vacations in this beautiful National Park this year instead of traveling to farther places. Frankly I can't think of a better place to go camping and be so close to the beauty of nature!

Please also work to restore and improve the National Mall in Washington DC so that it will be a welcoming place for visitors and fitting symbol of our dedication to environmental quality.

We have our national treasure the National Parks because of farsighted "average" Americans brilliant visionaries and planners others in high political office. I hope we as a people with the help of our elected officials will always protect and cherish the National Parks not to mention maintain them by every possible means. We all have to do our share to keep our National Treasure available always for all Americans.

So put back the funding that all of you in Washington without exception for either party nor the pork that still flows along with legislation in the nations capitol and RESTORE THE MONEY THAT OUR PARKS AND PERSONELL HAVE DONE WITHOUT FOR SO VERY LONG. It's our country and we are to steward and enjoy it we must care for it and the people who help keep it safe and whole for the people and animals who call it home and visit within it.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Something we don't need in our national parks are motorized vehicles and guns. Our parks should be a place for enjoyment of the natural environment. ATVs etc disturb the peace and beauty of these areas. There are plenty of other places outside the boundaries of national parks where ATV snowmobiles etc can be enjoyed. Our parks should be a safe environment for visitors especially children. Guns bring in the likelihood of violence.

Please ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe clean and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Please preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems ensure wildlife conservation maintain public access to parks and open spaces reduce the impacts of climate change and protect our cultural heritage.

I want to include our "wild Mustangs" in this. They are wandering our public lands and being forced out by the BLM and the cattle ranchers. They need to be in a national park where they will be protected from helicopter roundups. Citizens need an opportunity to see their mustangs running free and protected like the other wild animals that reside in our national parks. Madeleine Pickens has some good ideas with lots of backing from us. Please listen to her.

When I think back to the legacy that CCC gave us in the 1930s I often would like to go back and tell those guys what wonderful places they created. They would be shocked to see the wanton development but could be proud that what they built continues to exist. Let's have a new generation of people who leave a larger legacy of federal parks to honor the work that was done so well. As an outside person I can only say protect the undeveloped areas from wanton greed that is so much a part of the American culture.

Every President leaves behind a legacy. Whether good or bad people will remember what that President did during their time in the White House. I hope that as the current President of these United States of America you will make the right choice by funding our National Parks and helping to continue support for them even after you have left office. Conservation and National Parks may not be at the top of the list for funding but when you think about it the wilds and Great Outdoors go back to the most basic aspect of human life.

National parks fiscally speaking take up a portion of the budget known as "budget dust". To keep these beautiful and priceless pieces of our national heritage alive takes fractions of a percent of the national budget. Their worth cannot be considered on a spreadsheet or with numbers and words alone. They exist because our former presidents and leaders believed in preserving the beauty of this country forever. Let's not sully that preservation with shortsighted budget gouging or greedy corporate pressure to open the lands to their filthy insidious fingers.

Our parks are our future. Please do all you can to fund them.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have been visiting our national parks for 40 years and just have a few to go before I see them all. My husband and I have taken our 3 sons to many parks and national forests. When they were younger they loved working on getting their ranger badges. The national parks forests and forest employees are what the govt gets right. I have traveled all over the world but I have never experienced the excellent services our park employees provide be it scientific or informational. Please do all you can to make the parks and forests a priority for your children and mine.

Please preserve our National Parks system by providing the funds necessary to sustain wildlife to preserve these lands to maintain public access and to improve public access for our children and our children's children. Our country has many wonderful national parks which my husband and I have just begun to enjoy in our retirement. I would hope that these lands are there for future generations to enjoy and use. Our country's national parks are some of our country's greatest assets. Please see that they are funded adequately to ensure their use for many generations to come. Thank you

President Obama it will be a good idea to set up educational programs that will encourage and educate young people and young adults more about the importance of the environment and how we can all help to preserve the natural habitats and the environments in the communities we live in. Teach us the way to heal the earth especially from the damages done from the likes of polluters and big corporations like BP and chemical factories. There is a calling for more good people to stand up for the environment and good causes that will help people worth fighting for Mr. President Obama.

I recently got to visit three National Parks in California (Alcatraz Island San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park Muir Woods National Monument). Through this visit I was able to put money back into the economy and experience some of the great joys of our National Park System. Despite the crowds it was clear that the National Park System should be an economic priority and should receive stronger funding. I ask you to consider in your next budget strong increases in funding for our National Treasures. I can think of many things that receive funding that are not as high of a priority to the greatness of this nation.

Bring back the Civilian Conservation Corps It will create jobs and help restore America's landscape!

Please protect the beauty of our amazing planet & the beautiful & precious wildlife that depend so much on these habitats for survival. Life is so much worth living knowing places & creatures like this share our home with us. Without these marvelous places on our planet what would it be like? I could never imagine. With so much going on around us it's nice to know we have places like this on earth that are beautiful & peaceful. God created such amazing unique places please let's keep it that way forever beautiful & forever preserved & protected for it is sinful to let it disappear forever. We must always protect the amazing habitats & creatures that the Almighty created for we must always protect his creatures & creations. Let our future generations have places like this on earth to enjoy the innocent precious beauty as we do.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. These places are treasures to me. Let us please not allow them to be underfunded and fall into disrepair. .

. Over the last seven years I have spent most every summer in our great southwest national parks. I have recently taken my two youngest grandchildren out there. They would rather go to a national park than Disney. They earn Jr Ranger badges learn about the environment and recycling and get a chance to explore the great outdoors without much cost involved other than meals and motels. My daughter recently (June) hiked the Grand Canyon from the North Rim to Phantom Ranch and then up to the South Rim. This came about after her first trip to the Canyon in 2008. We need to do all that we can to get people out to our National Parks and get them active in the grandeur of our country. Please help to see that funding is in place for the celebration in 2016. Please do all that you can as our president to insure that these parks are there for your grandchildren and their children.

. I live just down the road from the Rocky Mountain National Park and am surrounded by public land. We are just a couple hours outside of the metro Denver area if that. I don't know how to succinctly convey the importance of public land in particular the National Parks. Public land provides economic recreational health and educational opportunities for a wide range of folks in addition to the habitat it provides for diverse species. However many folks who opt to take a break from the city or their office lives need education about as well as protection from the wilderness. Info centers trails and maintenance education programs toilets! maps and such are all crucial. I have spent some time working volunteering and collaborating with the Park Service and I know that these programs are underfunded as much as they are needed. Please keep the parks for the public!

A President started the National Park Program now it's up to every current President to protect them. . .

. . . I agree with the points stated in this above petition. In Alaska we have many wild places & grand national parks like nowhere else. These need to be preserved for the health of our wildlife and people without the intrusion of industry development and other activities that bring many varieties of pollution that besmirch the natural order we are trying to preserve. In Denali the development inside the entrance to the park takes away from its natural beauty and intact ecosystem found deeper in the park in my opinion. I can only hope this cancer isn't allowed to spread out to any further. Over the years I have witnessed firsthand how this development has created a tacky tack freak show village right outside and inside the park for the sake of attracting people for commerce. This should not be the purpose of our national parks. Even so Denali is a jewel. Let's work to keep that park and others in their natural condition rather than "developing" them.

I would like to see the lease of our federal lands to private interests like cattle ranchers and oil and gas. . .

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. Our parks have a way of reaching people who would otherwise not be interested in wildlife and conservation. . We must have more park rangers.

I would also like to thank you for your outstanding efforts and accomplishments in permanently protecting more forest from being consumed for corp. profits. T.R. would be very proud of you.

. The parks are the best way people can get outdoors and they should be protected staffed funded and encouraged to the fullest. .

. . National parks are good investments in our future. Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe clean and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems ensure wildlife conservation maintain public access to parks and open spaces reduce the impacts of climate change and protect our cultural heritage. Strengthen the capacity for federal regional state and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife plants and rivers beyond park borders. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active healthy outdoor activity that will help them lead long healthy lives. I'd rather my son take his family to the park than go to war.

During the Great Depression when I was growing up some of the older guys signed up for CCC camps. They were a motely group but in a few weeks they were squared away and after that they worked like beavers and made our parks like they are today. My Father in Law was one of them. He told me if it weren't for the CCC he would probably been a bum or in jail. When you are planning for the CCC renewals think about taking guys off the street who have nothing to look forward to and stand back and watch them turn into valued citizens and proud of what they did for their country. .

. Preserve the parks to improve the quality of the air we inhale for life. Preserve the land that our forefathers once traveled for exploration.

. . Many people have trips to foreign nations as vacationing goals but my vacation goal is to visit all of our National Parks. We are so blessed to have had Presidents who have supported our Park system by adding new Parks or by providing the funds to support our present parks. By ensuring preservation of our special lands these Presidents have given the people of the United States a lasting treasure. I hope that you will also consider this approach to ensuring a visible tangible environmental gift as your legacy. Please support our National Parks so that future generations of Americans can enjoy the natural lands as I have.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. . . We were thinking that we couldn't afford a vacation this summer but then we remembered that our national parks are still there for us. We can visit Rocky Mountain National Park for a fraction of a cruise to Alaska and see more breathtaking mountains. There are so many interactive things to do like campfires hikes and ranger managed programs that explain the geology of the Rockies. What would we do without our national parks and the great hardworking people who staff them? Don't underestimate how important they are to our fellow citizens from all walks of life as well as for future generations. Keep them intact well maintained and readily available to everyone.

. We currently find ourselves very concerned about obesity among Americans. Providing interest in the outdoors will also help get people moving. Our National Parks are a very majestic place to exercise and enjoy the company of family and friends. Please consider seriously the advertizing and promotion of all our National Parks.

President Obama National Parks our wildlife (also the abused wolves in Idaho) the beautiful wilderness areas the beautiful water (lakes rivers and oceans) need to be cared for and saved from those who want to profit from them!! President Obama please step up and help us keep people from buying these lands and harming them! We must buy back land that is close to a national Park and has slipped into the wrong hands! We also must protect our wildlife like National Parks so they will not all be killed off by greed! We must protect all of our water from pollution! Our Country America must be preserved for posterity! Mr. President please protect air land wildlife water and oceans so our planet will survive! NO MORE DEEP WATER DRILLING PLEASE!

. Please also protect the animnals that have made the parks their home that is very important to me. .

When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of the jewel of our National Parks Yellowstone. There is no other Park like it in the United States perhaps in the World. Visitors from all over the World come to Yellowstone to see its wonders and its incredible display of wild creatures who live and thrive within its borders and along its borders. The wolf packs and bears need your help to survive. They are targets the minute they step outside of Yellowstone. There needs to be a designated space so that hunters do not kill these creatures when they step one foot out of the park. Especially when adult wolves are killed their puppies do not survive. I know you have so much that is important on your plate. I hope you do not forget them because if you do they will disappear. Please please keep these animals on the endangered species list. With all due respect Secretary Salazar is a rancher and bows down to ranchers wishes especially when it comes to wolves and bisons. Let's hunt what we eat...not what we stuff. Yellowstone is a special and enchanted place and for me and for thousands of others. Please save the animals so that our children and grandchildren can witness the incredible beauty of this special place and the magnificent wild things that inhabit it. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think our national parks are to be used and treasured. When I think of our country I like to think that we respect our beautiful parks...and even more importantly our wild horses that are struggling to live free...without the horrific round ups by the BLM!!! These horses were supposed to be able to live free under a 1971 law...that was sneakily amended by a Senator Burn and a Senator Reed!!! President Obama you promised no lobbyists in your cabinet....but Kenth Salazar was a cattle industry lobbyist!!!..This is a national disgrace!! When are you going to live up to what you promised...and do what the people want?!! When word gets out what the BLM has done and still plans to do the American people will be outraged as am I !! ..

. Americans care about what is left of our beautiful horses roaming free...a symbol of our free country and a lasting treasure of our heritage! How could we betray these beautiful animals...all for the greed of special interests!!? I expect you to take action in this matter.

I believe one of our greatest national treasures are the many beautiful National Parks that we have here in the United States. My parents never had a lot of money but we had enough to take a trip to a national park when we got the chance and I believe that is what taught us to understand our great nation a little better. I have seen some of them when young and full of wide eyed wonder and I have taken my own family to see as many as I can and again even as an adult I stand in wide eyed wonder at their beauty. Now I want my grandchildren to be able to make these same trips to see the parks in their time. With this anniversary coming up for our National Parks please take the time to recognize the importance of our wilderness Land management areas and National Park areas for the wild animals and for the wonder in each and every one of us. I feel we need to focus our attention to the National Parks Land management areas and wilderness areas and ensure we maintain their future. Americans need to get out and see their beautiful country more and marvel in the diversity and yet harmony of it all. I wish everyone had the opportunity that I have had. I don't even mind that I may never leave the United States to see other countries as there is so much wonder to see here in our own back yard. The national Parks Conservation Association has worded some points below that I would like you to review. . This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks sea shores forests and waterways across the country rather than just another broken federal promise.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe clean and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. I am currently volunteering in a national park because they do not have funds to hire workers to do all that needs to be done there to preserve the park for future generations. Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. We don't want private land in parks being developed in inappropriate ways that detract from the park. Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems ensure wildlife conservation maintain public access to parks and open spaces reduce the impacts of climate change and protect our cultural heritage. Strengthen the capacity for federal regional state and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife plants and rivers beyond park borders. this plan can be winwin for all involved. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active healthy outdoor activity that will help them lead long healthy lives. If kids don't get into parks they won't know to take their kids to our parks. This will erode the support for national parks. when they are gone they will be gone forever.

I remember the first time I went to a national park and saw the beautiful Sequoia Trees in California. There was almost five feet of snow on the ground and this magical canopy of green and white was supported by these majestic redwoods. It was so amazing and has inspired me to see as many national parks as I can. I plan to see Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks this year bringing my total of visited parks up into the teens. I have a long way to go but we need your help to ensure that I and generations after me have the ability to see these one of a kind places.

Get private enterprises out of the parks! These profiteers care only about the bottom line massive executive bonuses and of taking advantage of whoever they can as much as they can in essence they are parasites. Ronald Reagan handed over parts of our National Parks to these corporate interests in the 1980's and now it is time to cleanse our National Parks of these corporate parasites for good.

Instead of continuing to extend unemployment how about attaching some public service to the extended benefits? Remember the great work done by the CCC? Our parks need help!

With Teddy Roosevelt as a great outdoorsman and Park proponent the support for National Parks should cross both major political parties. . . .

Your administration needs to take the following steps: Recreate the CCC jobs that worked so well during the Depression and use those workers in national parks monuments wildlife refuges and conservation areas. . . .

We need more public access to seashore locations like Acadia National Park and the Cape Cod National Seashore along with all the items noted below. . . .

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please help save our park lands for future generations to enjoy and for the preservation of animal species that dwell within them. This is part of the American Heritage.

My husband and I just returned from Alaska where we spent several days in Denali National Park and in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Since I was ten years old my family and I have often planned our vacations around our country's beautiful national park system. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year. We ask you to please take the following steps:

Dear President: I'm 65 years old now and still visit America's National Parks several times each year. On many occasions I take my grandson and his friends. I have visited just about every park since I was a kid and they are absolutely vital to preserving the essence of America the Beautiful and they must not only be protected through sufficient funding but must also be expanded wherever possible.

p.s. I was so happy to know that you and your entire family headed out to Acadia National Park recently. I am an ardent supporter and donor to our National Parks and happen to believe that they are certainly our most precious natural resource. I will be so appreciative as you pursue every action within your power as our chosen President to see to it that they are honored and preserved for our children and grandchildren. Bless you Mr President for your recognition and demonstration of the value of our precious National Parks.

Please support our parks.

ALL THE ABOVE IS A DREAM WHICH I ENDORSE HOWEVER WHAT IS NEEDED MORE THAN ANYTHING IS JOBS....JOBS....JOBS JOBS...WHITH OUT THEM THE AMERICAN PUBLIC CAN NOT HAVE THE REQUESITE INCOME TO USE OUR PARKS. THERE FORE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT PARK BUDGETS BE MORE WAR TIME LIKE REALISTIC TO CUT BACK EXPENSES F WASTE EXCESSIVE FAT TO INSURE THAT FUTURE GENERATION AS WELL AS CURRANT ONE WILL HAVE ACCESS AND NOT FIND GATES LOCKED TO THEM. THE ABOVE APPLIES TO STATE COUNTY & CITY BUDGETS FOR SURE AS WELL!!! I MAJORED IN RECREATION IN COLLEGE AND SEE A LOT OF WASTE IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM AND I HAVE BEEN IN SERVERAL PARKS IN THE WEST EAST AND CENTER OF AMERICA. WE NEED TO GET OUT DEBT FIRST BEFOR WE SEEK SELFISH NON PRORITY THINGS!!!! ATG AGE 78 YEARS OLD....IS SEE CLEARLY WE ARE HEDDED DOWN A VERY LARGE DEBT COURSE WHICH IS NOT SUSTAINABLE!!!!

All of the above is true with the exception that YOU CAVED IN TO THE NRA and allowed a ryder to be attached to the Credit Card bill that allows LOADED GUNS that can be taken into the parks by any visitor. I would be loathe to walk the trails or camp now in these beautiful lands. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LOADED GUNS except to KILL wildlife and people (accidentally of course) in the case of persons. WHAT AN ENDING TO THE LEGACY OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S HARDEARNED WORK TO PRESERVE ALL THIS FOR GENERATIONS !!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

President Obama I know you and your family recently visited Acadia National Park in Maine and I share your deep appreciation of the many treasures our National Parks contain. Please act now to protect and preserve this precious natural heritage; I know the National Park System is severely underfunded and I would hate to see harm come to these sacred places because of our collective neglect.

We are counting on you to do the right thing with the wildlife and the environment.

After visiting Acadia National Park over the weekend I hope you will continue to put strong funding toward our national parks. They are our legacy to our children and future generations.

With our children we have vacationed in some of wonderful National Parks. Yosemite Grand Canyon Bryce Zion are some of them. It was a great experience we all treasured. We must protect our natural treasures for the next generations to enjoy. THIS IS OUR LAND. We must guard it well. Please do what you can to help

Please save our National Parks for our kids to enjoy as well as yours. Thank you

No more wilderness areas please. We need a moratorium on locking more land away from young and older Americans. Wilderness areas REDUCE access by all but the extremely able-bodied and even some of them cannot reach the interiors of many of the newer so-called wilderness areas and national parks like Death Valley NP.

We care about the future of these incredible places so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities.

Our National Parks are the last of the great places in this once pristine country. Please do whatever you can to preserve and enlarge and increase the numbers of these wonderful places.

We do care about the future of these incredible places so they will also be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities.

I am very concerned about the possibility of a casino very close to Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania. It is a travesty and brings dishonor to our country to allow such a thing to happen. I hope your administration the Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation will speak out clearly that a casino does not belong anywhere near Gettysburg

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Through the 71 years of my life I have visited many of our National Parks and Forests. I am convinced that they are not only wonderful for the obvious esthetics and food for the spirit but also for a greater understanding of the earth and the vital need to protect it for future generations. I encourage you to do all that you can to protect and enhance our parks and our eco systems to ensure that future generations can reap the benefits of their good care. The National Parks and Conservation Association has developed a list of several needs for the preservation of this system. I encourage you to put that plan into place.

Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

We have seven grandchildren and want them and all of their generation to be able to enjoy our national parks as we have and their children as well. These are resources for the mind body and spirit and our greatest national treasure. Please take all steps to protect our national parks and to conserve them for the future. Our national wildlife is a second treasure; we have been at best negligent in providing habitat and corridors so they may live in peace with human beings. Finally the economic benefits of preserving our living natural resources plant and animal are huge. It is foolish and shortsighted not to take that into consideration when considering conservation and preservation issues.

We have a great many troubled youth who could use the discipline and income working in our National Parks. Why not take the CCC as a model to put our youth from broken homes jails homelessness and a life of desperation and give them an opportunity to work and live in the great outdoors. This will give them the character to help straighten out their lives and make a contribution to society and have a decent income to build a useful life. Not only will such a program restore the health of our youth it will benefit our parks which Americans care about now and wish to preserve for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and restoring our youth to mental and physical health.

I grew up in California 70 years ago when you could eat any fish you caught in a stream camp in most any open area drink any snowmelt water in the mountains and enjoy the wonder of nature and wilderness not that far from your cabin door. Most people live surrounded by concrete and asphalt nowadays and the national parks are the only way they have of connecting with our planet our home our common womb. Not only do they provide family entertainment and vacations education climate moderation beauty and spiritual renewal they cannot be 'revived' in the future if they are destroyed now. Just as the Conservation Corps helped provide work for many and preserved the outdoors for posterity we need current programs that protect and preserve our parks in this generation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I used to run a large afterschool program in Los Angeles County for the University of California Cooperative Extension (4H ASAP 19892002). The program served children living in public housing in the City of Los Angeles and in the County of Los Angeles. There was and is a huge need to bring inner city children to our state and national parks and I did my best to come up with ways to make this happen. However transportation costs made even day trips to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area almost impossible. I was never able to pull off even one trip to the nearest national park Joshua Tree a place I personally love and visit often and this is something that I still regret. Metropolitan Los Angeles is a vast ugly unnatural environment that is hostile to healthy child development. No after school program has the resources to address this. Only dollars for transportation and overnight accommodations that would allow these programs will help make a difference.

I love our national parks and have visited many of them over the years. But now I would have serious second thoughts about going into our parks because people are allowed to take their guns when they visit. I would not feel safe knowing that someone could be shooting at targets wildlife or even people. Where there are guns there will be killings. My husband and I feel so unsafe in our country now we're talking about leaving. It saddens me greatly that a country with so much wealth and potential is in some ways spectacularly backward. We squander our resources spend billions on wars instead of education and health care and are rapidly heading towards a fully armed populace thanks to the Supreme Court. At times with John Roberts calling the shots I feel like we still have W in the White House. He seems determined to turn our country into one run solely by corporations and right wing groups like the NRA and the rest of us the majority matter not. Give us back our national parks gun free and well managed.

National parks play an important role in connecting people to the outdoors. I fully support increased funding for our National Park System and oppose allowing concealed weapons or loaded guns in our national parks. Our parks should be a place of peace and quiet as well as a safe haven and refuge from our everyday stresses.

When you took office my wife cried with joy. Though a lifelong Republican (a real one not one of these greed mongers and pretenders) I found myself thrilled and expectant. As a teacher I know what it is to have great hopes and expectations and then to come to earth and accept reality for what it is. I have gone through it every year for the last thirty. It doesn't mean you must face disappointment you simply must realize that most change is slow nearly imperceptible. However the ruinous greed and wholesale plundering of America has gone on now for far too long; someone must say "It stops! We begin change now!" My wife and I had hopes your election signaled that the process of reclaiming America might begin. Protecting the rights of Americans should be the job of the government and ensuring that everyone has equity in this complex world is a difficult job but a necessary one. And it is your job. All Americans deserve the same protection the same opportunities and the same ability to dream. Saving the wildlands and National Parks of America from exploitation is just one of the things that you can do to see that the promises of your campaign are realized. And it is one step toward that change so many of us desire.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I care about the future of these incredible places so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities.

I don't know how to express to you how valuable the national parks are to me. They are places of such beauty and peace and they are truly our greatest treasures. I know that your administration has restored funding cut by the Bush administration and I am very grateful for that. I hope that you will continue to support our parks. Among other things I urge you to fund the Land and Conservation Fund and to begin spending the money in it which has been building up for years unused. That belongs to the people and should be used to restore and maintain our parks.

My wife and I are retired. The highlights of every year are our visits to National Parks. Please do everything you can to keep the Parks strong and effective in continuing to bless our people by their preserved presence and vitality. The struggling bison of Yellowstone Park cry out for life.

America's national parks are incomparable treasures. Sadly years of delayed maintenance and cries for privatization have weakened this great system. I urge your administration to take the following steps: The administration should prepare our parks for their next century.

Thank you for all that you are doing for this country and the environment. I add my voice to the many thousands of others who urge you to continue to support our national parks.

I am writing to urge your administration to preserve and expand our National parks program. As a native New Yorker I have benefited from the parks in our state enormously. There is the Statue of Liberty the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge and the Delaware River all of which I use regularly. I am most concerned about preserving the quality of the water in the Delaware River. Gas drilling threatens to spill impurities into the waters. After the disaster at Deepwater in New Orleans we have an opportunity to husband our wondrous natural resources including clean waters beautiful lands and healthy environment. I would ask that the advice given the National Parks Second Century Commission be taken seriously with regard to critical habitats especially freshwater and marine areas and that corridors connecting protected areas with broader wildlife ranges be conserved to ensure the ecological integrity and longterm viability of national park ecosystems. This money would come in very handy in supporting parks seashores forests and waterways across the country.

Also think about banning ATV's and Snowmobiles in the parks because most of the most precious critters in those lands can't outrun machines. This is not a video game or cartoon that the squashed come back to life they are dead and gone forever. I have visited most of the parks in America a long time ago and the experience was truly life changing. If you don't believe me then go to them and see for yourself!

Bring back the CCC!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I urge you to champion the protection these places deserve.

Remember you are our green president our future for the earth.

And don't destroy them by logging or drilling for drops of oil.

And finally PLEASE do not allow a casino to built on the hallowed ground of Gettysburg.

Please set an example buy visiting the parks with your family and letting the country see you doing it.

National parks play a tremendous role in helping my children appreciate the great outdoors. This summer we were able to travel to Zion National Park Bryce Canyon and The Grand Canyon. Without national parks a great American treasure will be lost. PLEASE use the power of your office to preserve what now belong to All Americans. Keep to as public land for all to enjoy learn from and share.

Please remember the importance of the wildlife like our wolves. More elk caribou deer moose means less trees.

PLEASE HELP US PROTECT WILD ANIMALS AND ECOSYSTEMS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS!!

Do the right thing. Insure that our Nation's Parks our American history are cared for and loved and preserved for our childrens' children.

There should also be someone in charge of making sure monies is equally divided so 'conserve' wildlife there is much going on that is unjust.

Lastly Americans need jobs. The Natl Parks need serious TLC. How about a conservation job corp? It's not original but a great idea for now!

I BELIEVE THAT YOU NEED A MORE RESPONSIBLE CABINET TO ENSURE RESPONSIBILITY IN OFFICES OF THE ECONOMY ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION LABOR SECURITY AND TECHNOLOGY

Stop the killing of species that should still be on the Endangered Species list. The Mexican Lobos population is down to 42 wolves thanks to your Administration's policy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am from WA state and enjoy visiting the national parks here. When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year. I have visited many parks in the west and hope to see more of our national parks throughout the country. Our national parks are one of the best ideas this country has ever had. We need to protect and preserve them in every way! I know many Americans visit them but there are still many who have never been to one thinking it too expensive or not worth the visit. This image needs to be changed. Every American should feel welcome in our national parks and every American should be encouraged to help preserve them. Young people especially could benefit from working in them. Another effort like the CCC could help restore and maintain trails and buildings an area where young people and newly unemployed people could be hired to work. Please consider this and all the ideas for maintaining our country's true treasures our National Parks.

There are so few places in the big beautiful country where we can feel and enjoy NATURE in all her glory...please help us keep this important and vital resource to help us know the wonder of our lands.

National parks are good investments in our future. After all is said and done the disappearing National Parks could be just a memory and the culprits that much richer. We as a species are selling our heritage future and lives to people that only care about their immediate comfort on this planet. Rampant kickbacks and payoffs are dealt with and ignored on a scale that is an embarrassment to us as a nation and a people. From the Amazon to China to our own parks we are killing our planet at an alarming rate. And all that is said is "We must do something!" When legislation is passed the usual timing on it is 10 to 12 or even more years before it's implemented. By that time it's forgotten and the government has gotten another one over on the American people. But the real consequence isn't just felt by the common people....it will also be felt by everyone that was involved in passing the lie. I have absolutely NO faith in the human species to suddenly come to it's senses and say "Enough is enough!!!" We are far too simpleminded and greedy for such an advanced thought as that. People are stupid and lazy as a species. They believe that some invisible man will come out of the sky and save their insipid asses. By the time they realize that it's been a lie for centuries it will be far too late. They will be praying to an empty sky wondering why their invented god didn't save them! I guess we're doomed.....I could go on for hours about it but I'll stop here. Please come to your senses and save our planet..... s.

Our national parks are the best thing the American people have ever done for the generations that follow. Period. We need more land devoted to preservation. May I suggest the Christmas Mountains in Big Bend Texas. The idiots in office here are trying to sell them.

When I think of unemployment insurance I think that everyone who receives unemployment insurance needs the opportunity to 'work' or 'volunteer' for our national parks! .

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Listen to the American People and renew our national parks by providing permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We LOVE our natural places of beauty!

We believe our parks are one of the best programs ever initiated in this country and hope you will offer strong support to their preservation and revitalization. Thank you.

. PLEASE BRING BACK THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS. It's the kind of jobs program we need. It did good lasting work brought people together and helped stimulate the economy. We need it again.

Please hear my plea. The health of man depends on the health of the world around us. Please do all that you can to ensure a quality experience for all that want to visit a national park.

People like me with limited income enjoy our only vacations at our national parks. They have fallen into great disrepair in the last decade. Please save the regular peoples parks and make protecting these wonderful wild places a priority in your budget over oil co. tax breaks.

. DO NOT ALLOW ANY CORPORATE PROFITEERING for Natural Resources Within park limits. These lands MUST be safe healthy ecosystems for ALL to enjoy and have access to NOT just corporate pillagers!!

. Every school child should have the experience of at least one field trip to a National Park. This would be the start of a life long love affair and stewardship of the environment that is so precious to all of us.

. Protect and nurture the last wild buffalo herd one of our national icons in Yellowstone Park. Stop the hazing and killing of them; let them roam free; support Buffalo Field Campaign and their important work!

. Through the Sierra Club the American Hiking Society and the North Country National Scenic Trail I have served on many a "volunteer vacation" doing all kinds of trail maintenance flood restoration "bogwalk" building...you name it. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year. If not now...when? If not you...who?

. Promote the Passport to Your National Parks program and the accompanying children's booklet get kids involved and challenged by learning about and visiting the different parks and becoming aware of all the places America has to offer and needs to maintain so they are there for future generations. There's little sadder than going to a place you visited as a child full of wonder to find it's now roped off and separated from visitors. Invite them to do the same as your family does visit a different park in a different section of the country each year. Our family trips to many of the National Parks when I was young and then with my own children remain some of my most cherished memories and gave me my love of the outdoors.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The National Parks system is truly a treasure. Please please please reverse years of neglect and outright hostility toward our parks from greedy self-serving Republicans and fully fund and protect OUR parks. . . .

. Please take the following steps: Renew the CCC and WPA in addition to extending the funding for the unemployed. Offer the unemployed a "wage" for maintaining and updating the National Parks. See BELOW!! . . . These funds could be used to establish OBAMA'S CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS and OBAMA'S WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION!

National parks help preserve the remaining natural world as well as the cultural diversity of our nation and contributing to the health of our people. First I want to mention the most important thing of all please do not allow anyone else to construct roads in the many roadless areas of our forests as it allows parks destruction in the future for economic value. And please enforce the construction of small passage ways beneath our roads connecting our few prestine forests that way wild life is not killed crossing the road or get mixed up in our city life.

. Protect the Wildlife that lives within the parks and forests. Keep endangered speices on the Endangered list. Track down and punish to the strictest letter of the law all poachers polluters and crimminals who attempt to harm wildlife and/or it's sanctuary.

Bush cut the budget in favor of bigger profits for corporations. This needs to be fixed and you can do it. Ken Salazar should never have been hired. Mr. President one of your big mistakes. We need an environmentalist in that job. Thank you. . . .

As a child I had the good fortune to spend lots of time with my grandparents. My grandparents told me how the WPA and the CCC saved a jobless generation and our national parks and forests and other public assets. We need the WPA and the CCC once again! . . .

I absolutely love visiting our parks they are a precious commodity and should be protected at all costs! Anyone can afford to go nature is wonderful and good for people in so many ways and we need to protect the nature that we have left. We cannot continue to abuse our land! . . .

I love our National Park system. I go to them any chance I get. Since I've been in all our 50 states that adds up to a lot of parks. WE NEED THEM. TAKE CARE OF THEM. They may be the only places left in this country to see something natural we pretty much destroyed a lot of the rest. . . .

RESULTS BASED ACCOUNTABILITY. IS THE NATIONAL PARKS PROGRAM WORKING?? YES IT IS !!! THAT'S WHERE THE MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT. ARE THERE PROGRAMS IN THE FEDERAL SYSTEM THAT ARE NOT WORKING?? YES. IF THEY ARE NOT DOING THE JOB THEY ARE SUPPOSE TO DO CUT MONEY THERE. IT CAN BE A SIMPLE AS THAT. . . .

. Stop letting the influence of big oil and therefore ORV's and the ever insidious boating community take over more and more of the land necessary to preserve biodiversity and PEACE! Get rid of driving on beaches and force the need for a local economy composed of electric buses or the like to transport folks TO the beach not ON the beach! . . .

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Repeal the law that allows guns in national parks. This was and is a horrible idea; guns are the antithesis of what an experience in a national park should be. The recent episode where 2 people were killed one on each side of a dispute in a national park makes this point in the most obvious and tragic way.

Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe clean and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active healthy outdoor activity that will help them lead long healthy lives.

Hi Mr. Obama I still think you are the best president ever. But I have a request for you. We need strong national parks to preserve our country's true heritage and most of all to give us all a place to treasure the wonders of nature. We need a place to take our kids away from computer games and into REAL life.

Understand that though Americans may be too busy trying to find work or just too broke to travel we love our National Parks. A paid conservation corps would be useful to give unemployed citizens from the middle and lower economic classes experience jobs AND the ability to get out into the parks to take care of the areas we want to preserve for coming generations.

Our National Parks need the immediate help of the Administration. Having had the opportunity as a young man to work in a few of them and having visited several of them in later life I am fully aware of their importance. I am also aware of the need to maintain them financially and the great need to upgrade the infrastructure. I would urge your administration to take the following steps: Take the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission which is a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. Take advantage the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new publicprivate partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.

TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO PRESERVE RAIL TRAILS AND RIGHT OF WAYS FROM BEING BROKEN UP SPLIT AND SOLD OFF. FORMER RAILROAD BEDS HAVE BEEN LOST FOR PUBLIC USE IN FAR TOO MANY TOWNS ALREADY. ALSO BIKE TRAILS NEED TO BE BUILT OR ROADWAYS WIDENED TO ALLOW FOR BIKERS. I realize these things are mostly state and locally controlled but the Fed. Govt. could offer incentives and aid.

Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems ensure wildlife conservation maintain public access to parks and open spaces reduce the impacts of climate change and protect our cultural heritage. We were finally able to travel to Yellowstone and what a truly great treasure we have in our National Parks. I cannot imagine no longer having the wildlife and ecosystem available to the citizens of this great country.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. Our family has used the National Park System for 45 years! Our grandchildren are beginning to see the importance of conservation of ALL living things by visiting our National Parks. We make sure they are subscribed to a children's nature magazine that emphasizes these ideas. Any thing that you can do to enlarge our Parks educate young and old alike there and conserve every inch of precious ground would be our greatest gift to them! .

When I think of America's great outdoors I am grateful that my parents introduced me to our national parks at an early age. Your administration would help Americans become better connected to our natural and historical heritage by taking the following steps: Consider the impact of noise in the national parks. One snowmobile in Yellowstone one logging truck in Yosemite or one oil exploration vehicle in Denali are each one too many. The noise from one vehicle can spoil the enjoyment of many visitors not to mention frighten some of the animals the parks were meant to protect. Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission a group of wellrespected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century.

. We have visited many of the National Parks over the years and have enjoyed the scenery and the Ranger talks. We have been sad to see the lack of funding for the parks which has limited the number and scope of what the Rangers are able to do. Please help by providing more funding to maintain the parks and hire more Rangers. We truly enjoy camping at the National Parks and hope to continue doing so in the future. Thank you for your consideration. .

Since this stupid "War on Terror" is making the rest of the world unsafe for Americans I think investing in parks is a good idea. Cut about 30% off the war budget and give it to parks. Take another 30% off the war budget for healthcare since I can't and never will be able to afford it myself. Don't try to say the gov will help me cuz that's not what you are about. You are all about helping the corporate elite. . .

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

HERE IS A LETTER THAT I SENT TO MY REPS EARLIER TODAY:

Dear [Decision Maker]: Please support funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the oil spill response and energy package that is expected to be on the floor next week. I care about the future of our national parks they will be better protected in the long term if this provision is adopted by Congress. PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL. EDUCATION ABOUT THE CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF THESE RESOURCES IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL. OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDRENS' FUTURES DEPEND ON IT. THE LONGER WE WAIT TO ATTEND TO THE SAFETY OF OUR RESOURCES THE HARDER IT IS GOING TO BE TO FIX PROBLEMS IF THEY REMAIN FIXABLE. THE PLANET IS BECOMING ONE BIG GARBAGE DUMP AND SOME OF THE "TRASH" i.e. TOXINS LEFT IN THE GROUND AND WATER RESOURCES MAY NEVER BE RECOVERABLE. NANO PARTICLES OF THESE CONTAMINENTS ARE ALREADY FOUND IN FETAL BLOOD SAMPLES AND FOOD SAMPLES AROUND THE WORLD. THE POTENTIAL BRAINDAMAGE LET ALONE OTHER DAMAGE IS ONLY GOING TO ADD TO THE FEDERAL DEFICIT AS THIS WILL LEAD TO A DRAIN ON THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY AT LARGE BY THE NEEDS OF "TREATMENTS" TO ADDRESS THIS POISONING. This legislation will guarantee that a portion of revenues from offshore oil and gas leases are appropriated as originally promised for the protection of our national parks forests wildlife refuges trails rivers and recreation areas as well as grants for state and local parks and recreation. For too long the promise of balancing resource extraction with resource protection has gone unfulfilled. The chronic underfunding of LWCF has meant \$17 billion collected from the profits of oil and gas companies has accumulated in an account in the federal budget but is being spent on purposes other than those originally promised conserving our precious natural and cultural resources for our children and grandchildren. It is time to keep the commitment about how those funds should be spent. This legislation provides a deficit neutral way to finally keep this promise to the American people. The Gulf of Mexico oil spill illustrates the wisdom of the Land and Water Conservation Fund's design. In exchange for the environmental risks inherent in developing finite offshore oil resources AS WELL AS LANDBASED RESOURCES OF OIL COAL GAS WIND AND WATER Congress intended that a portion of the receipts be dedicated and reinvested in conservation assets across the nation. The Gulf spill tragedy provides an opportunity to fulfill the promise that Congress made to the American people in 1965 by creating the Land and Water Conservation Fund. After the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 the state and federal trustees of the oil spill settlement decided that the highest and best use of the natural resource damage funds was to protect and conserve lands and habitat. The Exxon Valdez land conservation precedent highlights the urgency for Congress to make a similar investment of the assets of the LWCF in the wake of the Gulf spill. I AM ALSO EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE HEALTH OF OILRECOVERY WORKERS AND THEIR LUNGS IN THE GULF. EVEN THE REPORTERS THAT ARE OUT THERE ON THE OILCOVERED WATERS ARE AT RISK. EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THESE PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BREATHING APPERATUS/FILTERS WHILE ON THE OIL SLICKS. PROBLEMS COULD FLARE UP FOR THESE FOLKS IN MONTHS OR YEARS. THE DAMAGE BEING DONE DAILY IS JUST FRIGHTENING. AND HAVE WE FOUND OUT WHAT THE LONGTERM EFFECTS OF THE DISPERSANTS IS GOING TO BE ON HUMANS AND WATERS AND THE INHABITANTS ALIKE??? I urge you to support an energy bill that includes funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and please oppose any amendments that would weaken the LWCF proposal in the bill.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We always find money for things like war and other things that are destructive or benefit us in some way. But we don't seem to find the money or effort to help save the natural part of our world to just leave it as is. I implore you to do so so that future generations can see what our world looks like outside of cities roads and other man made changes. Natural beauty means more to some of us then those man made things. . . .

. I have visited many parks over the years with my children who are now grown. The parks have helped teach them a love of nature and also encouraged them to hike and camp canoe etc. as adult hobbies. It is my hope that the parks will still be there and be in as good condition as they now are for their children and grandchildren. Your administration needs to take the following steps: Think about establishing a program similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps (who built many stillstanding buildings and other things in the National Parks) as a part of the stimulus program.

: Invasives cost the country 120 BILLION DOLLARS each year. How about a personal appeal from YOU asking people who care to remove their invasives and STOP the reseeding? Also Please ask the National Register of Historic Places to require REMOVAL of all invasives by 2030 on any property registered nationally? Finally Please give no more federal monies for ANY PROPERTY (or highway) in which the invasives are not removed from the property in question. . . .

As an educator I realize that children need time outside. With so many inside distractions many children lack oportunites to be outside. Lack of nature actually increases violence! Please consider the many organizations that can help children learn and enhance their outside opportunities as the Boy and Girl Scouts and the YMCA/YWCA. Not only do children develop a respect for the outdoors they learn social skills and develop healthy bodies and self esteem and life skills. . . .

Below is message i support My own is that i am in colorado as i write the gunnison sage grouse needs tp be on the endangered list I live on the tex coast the wjopping cranes need more space. So do the brown pelicans. And the humans for coastlines free from private ownership that makes it impossible to walk or bike or horseback ride around what is possibly the only long open coast left. Now is the time to extend padre island and aransas wild life to preserve the wetland and coast of Calhoun county peninsula . . .

As a seasonal ranger with the National Park Service I see firsthand the important impact Redwood National Park has on visitors from all across America and around the world. Our national parks are some of our greatest treasures and as such deserve our greatest attention and care. Please fund the National Park Service programs fully and allow them to accomplish their great potential in service of our nation's citizens as well as the many visitors from around the world who also appreciate their amazing qualities. . . .

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Frankly the National Parks are one of our most treasured and fought for national resources. Presidents of long ago fought to make National Parks a reality. Don't let this change by cutting funding. If Michelle Obama wants to decrease obesity one way is through diet another way is to get out and move! Also when the economy is tight and people are choosing staycations what are they choosing? Camping Overnights locally. Where can they do this? Our National Parks. But help keep the rangers so they can protect and maintain them. . . .

. . . Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe clean and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. . . Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems ensure wildlife conservation maintain public access to parks and open spaces reduce the impacts of climate change and protect our cultural heritage. . . Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. . . .

. . . I live in Louisiana and what has happened to our coastline is a travesty. We rely on the federal government to provide the monies to protect our wet lands coastal habitat and water purity. So...why was this monumental cleanup effort in our gulf put in the lap of BP? We have so many earth and water scientists at the ready and they were not even consulted about this spill. What was that all about? I like so many other citizens demand that offshore drilling be stopped. We need a comprehensive jobs program in place to transfer the petroleum workers to developing clean fuel technology. Why can't we as a nation look to the Scandinavian countries and pattern ourselves in developing clean energy as they have done? This country is light years behind and we need to catch up. We could be doing so much more in this quest. We could be doing so much better.

My goal is to visit ALL of the U.S.'s National Parks National parks while I am on this earth. So far I have only got 16 under my belt. But hoping to retire next year I am looking forward to "filling" up my bucket list. Last year I had the pleasure of visiting Yellowstone National Park (for the 4th time) but this time with my 9 and 5 year old grandchildren. What a glorious experience! The opened my eyes to many things we adults tend to overlook. We also met a young woman from France. She has long had a desire to visit the U. S. for the sole purpose of visiting our National Parks. And now she was. Renting a car and seeing 9 parks in 3 weeks. Our National Parks are our heritage. They National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year including those from other countries. Your administration needs to take the following steps to help preserve our parks: . . .

It's time to move beyond the short-sighted policies (and myopic thinking) of the past.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for declaring National Wilderness Month. As a lifelong Westerner who grew up on the National Forests of Utah and California, I agree that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." Unfortunately the greatest unprotected wilderness in the lower 48 -- Utah's wild canyon country -- remains in jeopardy from policies leftover from the Bush administration. I'm a SUWA member and I agree with their analysis:

When declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, policies remain in place which threaten the natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. The "No More Wilderness" policy and resulting land use management plans for 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah have left 80% of these lands open to oil and gas drilling and designated an astounding 20,000 miles of ORV routes. In some of the plans, every single riparian area has an ORV trail, leading to pollution, erosion, shrinking water availability and lost wildlife habitat.

Please set aside as much wilderness as possible! These pristine wildlands are our nation's natural heritage and should be placed in escrow for ours, as well as, all future generations.

I completely agree with recent statements that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. This is unacceptable to me, my family and friends and the future generations that may seek out these quality lands in our Nation and particularly Utah. In the past 15 or so years I've explored each and every wilderness area in Utah. I have no new wilderness areas to explore. I'm counting on the Obama Administration to serve its people by setting aside more wilderness. This action will be a legacy that future generations will cherish.

When declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place that threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet, and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. The Bush administration's "No More Wilderness" policy and resulting land use management plans for 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah have left 80% of these lands open to oil and gas drilling and designated an astounding 20,000 miles of ORV routes. In some of the plans, every single riparian area has an ORV trail, leading to pollution, erosion, shrinking water availability and lost wildlife habitat. Right speech is always welcome, but specific action (which accomplishes something) would be even more admirable (and more valued by future generations).

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

After 35 years in Massachusetts, I think I can finally call myself a New Englander, and I love my home here. But I also have a great fascination with the wild lands of the Colorado Plateau, especially the canyon country of southern Utah. I've made nearly annual trips to that country for almost 30 of those years. When declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." I know you must be tired of dealing with the wreckage bequeathed you by preceding administration. However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country.

That needs to be reversed. Southern Utah is an amazing place. Driving through it you can see mesas and buttes of different heights and colors, that stretch over miles. It is easy to imagine what was here and has disappeared due to erosion over the centuries. It is a place where the geologic history is easy to see and marvel at. This area does not need 20,000 miles of ORV roads. They do not need access to every square inch and that is what they want. Too many operators of those types of vehicles have no regard to where they are driving through or over. They care only about their fun. People who will intentionally ride through an area that is off limits just to prove they can't be stopped, have little sense of right and wrong. And they have done that with ORV's in Paria Canyon earlier this year.

If this administration actually cares about Wilderness, as opposed to simply saying pretty things about Wilderness, then you must begin to protect these precious places so that they will not be ruined for the next several hundred years by careless ORV users and oil companies.

I recently was privileged to visit Utah and experience some of its majestic beauty first-hand, and I implore you to give wilderness-quality lands in Utah the protection they deserve.

The Land Use Management Plans from 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah put management prioritize archaic values that assume that climate change is not occurring. This is not an approach that the Obama administration should support. When declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." Please protect these areas.

Thanks for declaring September as National Wilderness Month. Supposedly, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. The Bush administration's "No More Wilderness" policy and resulting land use management plans for 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah have left 80% of these lands open to oil and gas drilling and designated an astounding 20,000 miles of ORV routes. However, I have taken numerous trips throughout these lands across south and central Utah and, well, literally ten million acres of land there deserve to be designated "wilderness." You would do a wonderful service to this and future generations if you started designating some of these acres as wilderness. Of course, it also would help address the potential devastation of climate change, as well.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I urge you to restore the proper manner of land review which highlights those areas holding wilderness values and gives due consideration to their designation as wilderness. I urge you to be sure we are not governed by policies that cannot value wilderness and fail to do all that is necessary to protect our natural heritage to the greatest extent possible. With all the pressures on our world today due to increased human populations and varied human impacts on our world, we need more than ever the capacity to judge such impacts and limit them, particularly as that pertains to wild lands largely remote from previous human intrusion. To value such lands and determine patterns of preservation is at the heart of our national contribution to the world, even as we also do things to detract from natural values. Please allow wilderness designation a proper and critical role in protecting this land.

The wilderness values of my home state, California, and other states, especially Utah, are very important to me. These are world-class landscapes and are my favorite places to visit when I take a vacation. We have a pressing need to make significant progress in protecting our natural and cultural heritage from off-road vehicle damage, oil and gas development, mining development, and other threats. They are too important to be lost by compromise or political extortion or simple inaction. Protecting these lands is just as essential as legislation dealing with the other crises we face, such as assistance for those affected by the current economic conditions, education reform, the fight for human rights, and the fight against terrorism. If we desecrate our land, all these other issues will in time lose their meaning. In fact, you could use wilderness protection to create jobs - our wilderness "border" is just as important to patrol and guard as our international borders. Let's fund some public lands warden positions and equip the wardens with American-made products like helicopters and uniforms. Let's fund scientific and cultural research on these lands. Let's fund restoration of already damaged wilderness areas. Let's develop ORV parks in appropriate (non-wilderness) places to provide recreational opportunities that don't damage our national heritage. Let's provide grants to small businesses to develop non-destructive eco-tourism and environmental education programs. Let's fund development of technology to survey and protect the lands, such as using satellites to recognize improper use and identify the perpetrators. So once again, thank you for your leadership in declaring September as National Wilderness Month, but please back up your words with deeds. I am proud to be represented by a President who shares my environmental values.

I am a native Utahn and have been active as a member and volunteer of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. I have spent a great amount of time exploring Utah's magnificent canyon and desert areas with my children and now with my granddaughters. I mourn the likelihood that these lands and wildlife will be lost for future generations if action isn't taken very soon. Please make protection happen now!

We need more wilderness.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I ask you to bring the actions of your Administration into congruence with your words. Your words: "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." are inconsistent with BLM's lack of action in addressing the fact that America's wilderness quality lands located in Utah are still subject to the Bush Administration's policy of excluding wilderness designation from the spectrum of acceptable land management prescriptions. The passage of time is transforming these Bush Administration policies into Obama Administration policies. Policies threatening the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country.

Please remove the Bush policy of No More Wilderness and protect Utah's spectacular wild spaces from rampant energy development and ORV use. Future generations will look kindly upon such a decision.

Please enlist Sec. Salizar's assistance and go forth to bring about a new beginning to name more wildernesses across our great country.

We need MORE wilderness---not less!

Many issues will be part of this administration's legacy. Please, make wilderness protection part of your legacy!

I wish you could take a kayak ride down the Dirty Devil in Utah, as I have. Then you would, without hesitation, INCLUDE this redrock masterpiece in September's National Wilderness Month. You would put your HEART in your own statement: "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." You would NOT ALLOW policies from the Bush administration to remain in place. To do so, to allow them to stand, is to threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country -- where the Dirty Devil runs.

I grew up in Colorado and developed a deep appreciation for the beauty of American wilderness. When declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you stated "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country.

Please remove Interior Secretary Salazar, as he has allowed the failed Bush policies to remain. Obviously his agenda is in conflict with his job.

When it comes to wilderness preservation, we have no second chances, particularly in area already damaged by human intrusion. Please take action to preserve the delicate and fragile environments that remain at least partially pristine before it is too late.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have always believed that wilderness is essential to the health of the planet and the health of humans. As a lifelong resident of Pennsylvania, I've traveled often to southeastern Utah -- including BLM Wilderness Study Areas -- for the kind of physical, spiritual and emotional rejuvenation that comes from experiencing the peace and life-altering beauty of wild places. When declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you alluded to the power of wilderness when you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." Yet, as of this writing, you've continued policies from the Bush administration that threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. Specifically, I expected -- and continue to expect -- more from your administration.

Although you declared September as National Wilderness Month, "No More Wilderness" policies from the Bush administration still threaten wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. It's time to dump this policy and start moving forward in protecting our children's heritage.

During National Wilderness Month we should recognize that the redrock country of Utah has been waiting for years with a proposal ready for enactment. This would be a perfect time for the administration to move that forward.

Thanks for the proclamation for Wilderness Month. Now please let us have some action! The Bush Era policy of "no More Wilderness" as brokered by Gale Norton and our own Governor Mike Leavitt are still in place! Please have Sec Salazar rescind that terrible policy and allow the BLM to consider - and have Congress implement - more wilderness. The resource plans for 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah were rushed through under pressure from development, extractive and motorized lobbyists. As my dad said, please (respectfully) put your money where your mouth is (respectfully).

We have fought 8 long years against one of the worst environmental Administrations in history. Your election represented hope for all of us who love and respect our natural heritage. To not at least modify these disastrous RMPs for OUR public lands in Utah would be deflating to say the least. Please bring that "change we can believe in" to environmental policy.

I could give you reasons such as ATV impact, Climate Change, pollution, erosion and general irreverence to the land, but as an educated person, you must realize this. Now you need to enact your responsibility as an elected official to protect delicate lands such as those in Utah for our future generations as stated in the reason for National Wilderness Month. We look to each one of you elected officials, regardless of political party to do the right thing and protect these few gems left or American Wilderness.

Please protect the unique beauty of Utah.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Mr. President, Please reverse Bush Era polices still in place that degrade the protection of lands of wilderness character in the U.S. There is much that the BLM can revise in their management polices that will enhance the wilderness quality of public lands including incorporating considerations of climate change in granting protected status. Please take stronger action to reverse the worst of the worst environmental policies at the BLM. This organization is too locally controlled and too often makes decisions about public lands that all own based on local politics. Just like the MMS needed serious reorganization so too does the BLM in my opinion.

These lands are a vitality important to keep wild and free and safe for future generations of Americans to enjoy and soak in their grandeur, beauty and uniqueness. Land once lost can never be reclaimed from either the drilling or the ORV routes and all the damage they cause. To despoil such landscapes for a few more thousand barrels of oil or the machines that are a part of Americas crazy love affair with burning all the oil seems such a poor tradeoff. Furture generations won't much remember the oil, they will cry in sorrow over the loss of such beauty.

Tonight we are camped at Millsite State Park in Ferron, Utah. We spent the day touring the northern section of the San Rafael Swell. These lands need permanent protection from coal mining and oil and gas blight. From the huge coal fired plant spewing haze causing pollutants into the air, to the bullet holes in the canyon walls and road signs, to all of the OHV "trails" scarring the landscape it is clear that these lands need protection from all of those who do not care in the least for pristing wildlands that can support wildlife. We only saw cows today, not a single antelope or bighorn sheep. How sad. Thousands of people come from all over the globe to see the redrock country of Utah every year. I hope in years to come there will still be something to see.

Too much of our wild lands and special places have been lost, we must fight to preserve what little remains.

You promised change if you were elected, I voted for you but you have not brought change to Washington! Now is the time to throw out all of the Bush Administration policies!!

Utah is grandiose! Utah is unique! We absolutely need to preserve its beauty. We can't be complete without this food for our souls.

The San Rafael Swell/Wedge Overlook area in southern Utah's redrock is especially deserving of protection! Please consider designating this spectacular country as a National Monument under the antiquities act!

Please ensure protections for wilderness quality lands in Utah!

We have visited these remote areas for over 25 years, and we have seen them gradually disappear--just during that short time period. Please stop their disappearance.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These lands are irreplaceable, and thus need protection from abuse by those who do not appreciate them. Please protect them.

In January 1964 I sent a statement to the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs to be included in their hearing in Las Vegas, Nevada on legislation to establish the Wilderness Preservation System (HR 930 and HR 9070). I wrote that "as one who has enjoyed wilderness areas in California, I wish to see a bill passed without concessions to those who would seek to destroy these areas by developing them. I realize the threat that these and other land areas face from an expanding population, and I feel that this Wilderness Bill would preserve the best for the enjoyment of future generations." The Wilderness Bill passed, and the nation has been blessed with the preservation of many unique wilderness areas that my grandchildren can now enjoy. In celebrating National Wilderness Month we need to renew our efforts to continue to preserve wilderness-quality lands for even future generations. When declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, there are policies from the Bush administration that remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West. I am especially concerned about the policies for lands in Utah's redrock country which I have enjoyed in the past. These land use management plans deserve better study and review than that!

The Bush plan for "No More Wilderness" has no place in America in 2010. Expansion of wilderness designation and protection, including those BLM lands in Utah with wilderness qualities needs to be a priority for the Obama Administration in order to protect those lands once and for all against local interests whose only concern is ever greater utilization and destruction.

Our country's wilderness deserves protection and preservation. I applaud your recognition of that fact.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a longtime backpacker, and a wilderness-lover and advocate, I am thrilled that you've named September National Wilderness Month. When you did this, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country, where I often hike. The Bush administration's "No More Wilderness" policy and resulting land use management plans for 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah have left 80% of these lands open to oil and gas drilling and designated an astounding 20,000 miles of ORV routes. In some of the plans, every single riparian area has an ORV trail, leading to pollution, erosion, shrinking water availability and lost wildlife habitat. In addition, I have personally observed the destruction of ancient ruins in some of these back country canyons in repeated trips. Turkey Pen ruin in Utah's Grand Gulch, for one example, on my first triip there in 1983, had an intact ceiling (one of the few left on any ruin) and a large number of turkey feather blanket remnants and pottery shards lying about. The second time I visited, in 1995, the roof was showing signs of destabilization and there were only a few artifacts left. The last time I was there, 2007, the roof had been caved in and there were virtually no artifacts left. The degradation was obviously the result of increasingly easy access to the site made possible by ORV enthusiasts. I've found that the easier a place is to get to, the more damage results because these intruders do not seem to have the respect for the wilderness and its attributes that those who reach it only with difficult hiking have.

Please protect Southern Utah as one of the Nation's last best places! Mr. President, you have visited Grand Canyon, but have you visited non-stop spectacular Southern Utah? The "Take Back Utah" organization feels that ALL of Utah should be open to their ORVs when they already have 20,000 miles of ORV routes. That's right, 20,000 miles!!! Routes that have torn across formerly pristine desert and redrock land causing accelerated erosion and slashes of ugly trails. Desert land does not recover quickly, if it ever recovers at all. Please end this destruction! Mr. President, there is much on your plate, but you are the man to put a stop to this. Thank you for all you are doing and I look forward to voting for you again in 2012. The rest of this email was written by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and I completely agree with its content:

I'm truly amazed that after more than 18 months in office more has not been done to offset the Bush administration's ill-conceived plans to turn the public's land over to private exploiters! I'm afraid its one of many reasons that your Administration has, and is, losing credibility. You have recognized this when, declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country.

I visit this area regularly and have seen the results of this mismanagement directly. We need to protect the last remaining wilderness areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have visited some of these fragile places and been awed by them. Please stop this destruction and save these gorgeous places for future generations.

It is time to give our wilderness at least the same kinds of protection we are giving Illegals in our country illegally. Time to spend on our wilderness what we are spending on anchor babies!!

Please commemorate the National Wilderness Month of September by preserving and taking good care of the quality wilderness land in Utah. As in Norway, there are big problems with all the ORVs crisscrossing terrain and serious difficulties in keeping those vehicles on the recommended trails. The big tracks they leave take so many years to dissolve. The ORVs are also disturbing shy animals on the verge of extinction when they drive outside. As a young girl I happened to read some National Geographic Magazines at a neighbour. They opened a new world to me. And I was so impressed by photos from the Grand Canyon and other magnificent spots in the U.S. Please tell the BLM to take proper care of wildlands in Utah, so all of our descendants also will have the chance to see this magical landscape.

I hope you will work to ensure that these beautiful lands are preserved for long into the future.

We need REAL PROTECTION of wilderness areas. Please UNDO the policies of the Bush administration that open wilderness to extreme environmental damage.

When these priceless redwood trees are logged and gone there is no chance to save them. Act NOW TO DO WHAT MUST BE DONE.

There are footpaths and cowpaths all over the west that have been falsely labelled as roads for the purpose of ATV and dirt bike use. These should be protected from erosion by including them in wilderness study and quality restrictions for hiking, biking, horse back riding, and river transit. Access for lumbering and mining and drilling can be regulated to reduce impact on open range areas. It is not necessary, here or in the wetlands of the Gulf, to cut straight access across undeveloped land. Please focus on the long range and reverse the destructive policies of the Bush administration.

When declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, policies from the Bush administration remain in effect in your administration, which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. That greatly differs from your stance on the subject of climate change action

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

During the past 25 years, my wife and I have spent several weeks each year hiking, photographing and in general marvelling at the majesty that is America's Red Rock Wilderness in Southern Utah. The quiet, the strange beauty, the total solitude of this area is a thing to be cherished. However, during the past 10 years we have noticed marked changes in the landscape, the overall quietness and the destruction showing up in the general landscape and the ancient dwellings, pictographs and petroglyphs. Most of this damage can be traced to the Bush era's misguided, anything goes, "No More Wilderness" policy that gave a green light to off road vehicles of all kinds and law enforcement and BLM non-enforcement that made those abuser feel like THEY were the protected ones rather than the land that belongs not only to us, but to future generations. We can't pass on to them a land scarred with OHV tracks, looted or simply ridden-over ancient dwellings, and an attitude that one can go anywhere one wants on a monster, noisy machine. We, indeed, you must take a stand and do what is necessary to protect this land. And, it won't contribute to the deficit, it won't raise (or lower taxes) and if President Clinton's proclamation of Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument is any indication, preserving beautiful lands, protecting them from OHV abuse and excessive energy exploitation, preserving the solitude is a boon for tourism in the area while actually creates jobs. Do the right thing. Stand up for Utah's Red Rock Wilderness.

Mr. President--Please protect all our wilderness lands and animals from ORV pollution and destruction, oil and gas drilling, coal mining and climate change. Also please rescind the "No More Wilderness Policy" immediately.

Please stop the destruction of Utah's beautiful lands. Please designate the wilderness quality lands in Utah as Protected Wilderness Areas! This issue is very important to me.

President Obama-- Thanks for declaring September as National Wilderness Month. It was very timely for me as I have just returned from vacation at Yellowstone National Park, our nation's first designated national park. As much as I love visiting our national parks and monuments, it is also essential that we protect "the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places", especially those still remaining wilderness areas. However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten our ability to do this throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. Please push to enact the America Red Rock Wilderness Act while rescinding the Bush administration's ill-conceived "No More Wilderness" policy that will decimate wilderness quality areas with drilling and ORV use. And, while your at it, in your spare time:), please revisit the 2008 Resources Management Plan, another short-sighted, wilderness unfriendly fiasco. Thanks and keep up the great work.

I know that other vitally important issues have been demanding your attention. Wilderness advocacy, while not affecting as many people and not as tangible a benefit as health care or oil cleanup, may in the long run be more important. Wilderness, if not protected, is forever lost -- lost to us, to our children, our children's children -- forever. I am disappointed in this administration's progress to protect our wilderness areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The redrock country of southern Utah is some of the most unique in the world, and will be a national treasure long after our time IF WE PROTECT IT. Please protect it for my children and their children.

So many of our public lands, forests, and open spaces have already been ruined by development, drilling, OTV/ATV use, and roads! Enough is enough! Our wilderness, forests, and public lands are under threat from so many angles. They desperately need to be protected. Our parks and forests are supposed to be a place of peace and quiet, for us and for the animals who live there. PLEASE let our public lands stay as beautiful and peaceful as Mother Nature intended!! Their future is in your hands! PLEASE help save the wilderness for ALL future generations!!

All this leaves wilderness-quality lands out in the real wilderness. Who will rescue this land for our children?

Please establish more wilderness protection in Utah. I lived there many years and know very well how precious and fragile are Utah's wilderness quality lands. Thank you.

We are traveling to Utah later this month and wish to continue to do so because the lands are intact, not because they have become a moonscape of drilling rigs and trucks and roads. For crying out loud, DO SOMETHING!!!

I personally know the wild beauty of Utah's redrock country, as I have been a frequent visitor since 1989. I live in the Chicago area and happily drive 1400 miles to visit places like the San Rafael Swell to hike in the quiet backcountry with camera gear in my pack. Talk to Sen. Durbin, a fellow Illinoisan and sponsor of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (S. 799) since 1997, and he will tell you why Utah's wild places must be protected and preserved. Illinois' other senator, Sen. Burris, is a cosponsor of the Act. Thirteen congressmen from Illinois cosponsor the Act (H.R. 1925), including three Republicans.

Once wilderness is gone, there's no going back. Why allow vandalism affecting future generations?

Thank you for declaring September as National Wilderness Month. However, I have hiked and camped in Utah's redrock country which continues to be threatened by the Bush-era policy of no more wilderness. Land use management plans for 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah have left 80% of these lands open to oil and gas drilling and designated an astounding 20,000 miles of ORV routes. It is past time to protect these precious lands.

Utah is the most spectacularly beautiful state in the country. It's awe-inspiring scenery needs to be protected. I have already seen what the oil and gas industry has done to NINE MILE CANYON. Please don't allow the rest of Utah to be despoiled as well. Thank you!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Utah contains large tracts of pristine wilderness that is unbelievable beautiful, serene, peaceful, and spiritual. There is nothing like it in the USA and for that matter, the world. It must be preserved. I am counting on you President Obama and you Secretary Salazar to investigate this and change the current management plan to protect this last remaining wilderness. As one of your campaigners and supporters, I have walked the streets to help elect you because I believed you would do what is right for Americans and future generations!!! I look to you to stand up to special interests such as oil and gas companies that have financial interest in America's LAST remaining wilderness lands. The BLM management plans for 11 million acres will ruin this land--believe me I know--I have walked this fragile unreplaceable landscape for 20 years. I left my family in Michigan to be near it. We have to save this President Obama!!!

Save our country please. Make sure it is " Oh Beautiful, for spacious skies ..." etc. Now is the time that will continue or end.

I plan on visiting Utah and do some exploring and sight seeing this great state. There is nothing that can destroy a trip more then seeing the fragile areas destroyed by the use of ORVs! We need to protect these areas by creating more wilderness areas!

Being able to go out in the woods just to sit and relax and get away from the real world, is the only thing that keeps me going! The chatter Of the Mountains keeps me alive! please protect All of our land!

Only way to preserve all these precious scenic beauties is for YOU & Congress to fulfill your promise & enact & support legislation for such!!!

save are national parks also

Please protect our outdoor spaces for our children and our children's children.

If you have to cut back on the number of government employees, do that, but save our outdoor spaces.

My family and I just got home from a week long vacation in the Adirondack mountains in New York. We hiked Mt. Jo as a family (the youngest is 2), and enjoyed exposing our children to the great outdoors. It is a place to rejuvenate the spirits and breathe in fresh air. I cannot imagine what the world would be like without outdoor spaces. Local building creeps closer and closer to the borders of national and state land. Poisons produced by Hydrofracking leach into the water systems - killing wildlife and endangering human life. Isn't losing the Gulf enough? Something needs to be done to protect and increase outdoor spaces. Our Governor does not share our interest in protecting outdoor space. I'm hoping that our President will do better. Protection now ensures the future of the spaces, the forest creatures, and the plant life that is only seen there.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please seriously consider the economic and social benefits of protecting and expanding our extremely valuable and limited parks, forests, trails, and wildlife refuges.

I was raised the the Northwest in the outdoors& forests & there is no better pl;ace to be saved for our upcoming generations. This is prob one of the most impot=rtant things to be preserved!!PLEASE!!!!!!

I love this country and don't want to see natures wonders all turned into condo's and parking garages. Protect our rights to our great American outdoors.

Please protect our lands from Big Oil and Mining companies that will inevitably destroy these beautiful places in the name of greed. If we continue to abuse the Earth as we have done in the past we our future generations will live thru some disastrous times as a result of climate change.

The River is still semi clean but having grown up hear I have seen it's beauty slowly deteriorate. I would love to see new regulations put on it's use.

I just returned from a three week backpacking trip in the Sierras. While I was there I thought about the trips I had done there with my parents, and the trips they did there with their parents; a big part of my love for the mountains, national parks, and forest lands is what they mean to the history of my family, as well as this state and country. We need these places to be taken care of, and well.

There are more users for the land than just 4 wheelers, oil and gas and cattlemen. Listen to the rest of us please

Please allow my daughter and her children to have the same great outdoor memories that I grew up with.

In this time of economic trouble, The Civillian Conservation Corps of the great depression would be a great way to help put people back to work. Stop giving money to banks who are afraid to lend it and invest in real outcome oriented endeavours.

Given the record levels of heart disease and obesity, the need has never been greater to get the American public off their couches and onto the trails, whether they walk or ride!

please listen to our pleas, our outdoor our in great need of protection and funding. i go hiking often and find new homes being built further and further into our great forests and it seems that we our losing more of our parks national and city. these spaces need to be protected please help protect these spaces so that future generations can enjoy them as i did and do.

Not only is protecting these areas important but funding for management (prescribed burning, invasive species control, and restoration), research, and monitoring needs to be allocated for the long term.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The American wilderness is one of our greatest treasures and must be preserved not only for generations of Americans to come but as a lasting testament and example to the entire world. So please take this opportunity to do a great service for our country and protect our legacy as a nation of Great People.

There are ways to do this without closing these lands to the development of domestic energy sources. That means oil exploration Mr. President. Protect our shared outdoor spaces without caving in to ""wacko"" environmentalist groups. They are NOT the majority in this country as you are about to find out in November. The people of this country want energy independence and do not want to wait for solar, hydro or wind power to deliver their max potential of about 30% of our needs combined. I'd happily hike or cycle by an oil field that was responsibly maintained and designed so that I could afford the gas to drive back home when I was finished. Oh, by the way Mr. President, you can't spend your way out of debt. If you do put some laws into place that help protect our wild spaces you should get the money from some other less useful program/s. I already have taxes that are high enough to cover my enjoyment of open spaces.

I often walk my dogs with my husband on Colorado's Open Spaces. We need more Open Spaces throughout the country.

Too often beautiful lands are under private ownership and thus inaccessible by the American public. This is our land and we should be able to enjoy its beauty. Please increase the amount of land available for public use.

. Let's support a healthy lifestyle too, by allowing Mountain bikes where ""mechanized travel"" is not allowed.. it's doesn't seem fair to group bicycles with snowmobiles and motorcycles.. one thing about large areas of protected land is, it's kind of hard to access.. Please help to open greater access to bicycles on our public lands.

The outdoor spaces that we as Americans have to enjoy are dwindling.... . However, as you work to conserve America's special places, do not forget to include those who use those spaces now, and consider their stewardship of those areas. I am specifically concerned with the willingness of the government to designate as wilderness areas that are currently used for activities, specifically mountain biking, that can not be done in a wilderness area. As a mountain biker, I know that many hours are spent designing and developing ecologically responsible trails and use plans, and maintaining those trails in a way that respects the environment. I fully support protecting the great outdoors, but just ask that you consider all stakeholders in doing so.

My children and I go to our state parks several times a year for camping or enjoying a picnic. These spaces are enjoyed by many thousands, if not millions of people each year. We need to save as much of the wilderness as we possibly can.

It is so important to retain the parks, forests, wilderness, trails, and other scenery. Once gone we cannot get them back. Please do your best to keep them safe.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For my granddaughter, her granddaughter and the future generations to come. Please make the right decision.

Oregon is where I live, and it one of the most beautiful places in the United States to live, and I want it preserved as much as possible.

I am also asking for the creation and expansion of environmental education opportunities for children and adults. Through education, citizens will be activated to play a more important role in the conservation and the preservation of our great outdoors.

Please do not allow them to be used for and destroyed by mining and foresting.

Please fight to protect our public lands from the greedy depredations of industrial special interests.

So far you are very questionable in my mind with agreeing to build the Moske that is an OUTRAGE and you should be ashamed of yourself for even letting the words ""I support it"" touch your lips. At least do one thing right and protect our beautiful land.

That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to start winding down drilling, pumping and digging for fossil fuels. Do not resort to nuclear unless and until there is clean fusion reactors. Put an end to this environmentally destructive madness. Instead, create a new industry (with JOBS) that is focused on making solar and fuel cells, etc. the power of choice. By not developing and using solar, we are throwing away the opportunity to take the lead in the world technologically, restore energy independence and boost our economy when it badly needs it.

This includes actual legislation towards CLEAN ENERGY.. we are not stupid and are sick of this oil driven society dragging everyone's spirit down.

I'd also appreciate if you could push extra hard for alternative energy and help say ""NO WAY"" to Fracking of Pennsylvania etc.

Please protect our wild spaces, they cannot be rebuilt and are not less valuable than transient ""progress.""

I'm 12 and my dad and I are big time campers. I would like it if instead of just endangered animals all wildlife was protected

Please make sure we don't lose our natural lands ...

I want the my grandchildren to enjoy America's great outdoors too... We need to improve our declining National Parks and bring back the rangers to protect visitors, educate visitors, etc. at our National Parks and and monuments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For our Childrens Children Sake and the Earths Please Help as much as you can.

The money that is being spent in foreign wars could be spent here, at home, to better preserve our environment and keep our Earth alive and healthy for many years more.

When you look around at the different parts of our beautiful country of America, would you rather see hundreds of skyscrapers, especially where large forests used to be. . .Or would you like to see the real America, the America that our founding fathers came too, or the America that looks like China. The air being completely polluted, and you have smog rolling in. Instead of a light morning for. Something that anyone who lives on the coast of Maine has seen in their life. It is a truly beautiful thing, you should come see it sometime. I shall take you out on my brothers lobster boat and you can go to haul with him. By doing that you will the true working America. Not the people that sit in offices all day. The kind that get up and a do a hard days work, every day. They do it because they have too, to support their families. If forests, and rivers, and the right to lobster gets taken away. . . Well, you are ripping apart hundreds of families and ruining their lifestyle. If you make sure all these things stay, you are getting the support of hundreds of people, who work in the true working America.

Please help preserve the wild! It's all we have of the original America!

I work in public health so I see the various ways money is spent for programming.It disturbs me to see the public parks in our area have done away with lifeguards. I SERIUOSLY DO NOT THINK THAT A FEW TEENAGE JOBS TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN is a waste of tax dollars...I see the horrible waste in medicaid managed care,(i wonder if our elected officials are aware of the freebies that are given away to entice people to choose a particular managed care) and yet our families are not protected for summer entertainment!!!! I would welcome he opportunity to discuss issues that are destorying families.

I voted for one President who I thought would do a lot to help the environment but sadly Clinton did little. In 2008 I voted for you and so far I am dissappointed.

Looking back at the accomplishments of previous Presidents creating, saving, caring for our great outdoors ranks high as a great achievment.

Please help save the wild bison that leave the park and walk into Montana and are killed by the state.

The outdoors are one of our greatest assets! Please protect them and keep them open for our kids!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We currently camp in our State Parks and plan to travel and visit our National Parks when we retire. Please protect them for us and our future generations. They need to be able to see the beauty of our natural earth!!!

I know you know the importance of our natural resources, and I have been reading a book by Thomas Friedman, ""Hot, Flat, and Crowded"", that I think you would be interested in as it expounds on how the environment and economies are intertwined. It promotes green concepts and the preservation of our natural resources as a direction to sustainable growth. I hope you get a chance to read it, as I think its in the direction or environmental policy was intended to go. Please way the cost heavily on allowing companies to take from public lands resources that belong to us at pennies on the acre and bring our country into an environmentally conscious focus.

With out these areas protected, and useful to the general public, those that would do things illegal would destroy it! Please save it, thank you.

It is in these places that I find myself, where I find peace and serenity. I think when people have peace of mind and well being, that we are better people all around. Better people make for a better county. Please protect our outdoor spaces.

State + local lands should get there fair share of any federal funds provided to protect these important lands.

Consumers need support against urban sprawl...we need your help since real estate developers seem to have deep pockets to fight our efforts to save a few trails!

Please help stop the needless butchery of mother nature.

Funding maintenance and children's programs at our city, county, state and national parks!

* Additional resources to help with Station Fire recovery and a public education component associated with the NRA to track recovery and educate the public about wildfire, including a National Service volunteer recruitment to help maintain the lands.

We Californians love conservation and our outdoors, we want to ensure them for future generations.

Americans deserve this Administration exhibiting farsighted intelligence in regard to protecting our natural resources and environment. The recent horrific events in the Gulf and the changing weather patterns, which have wrought great devastation on some areas of this nation must be acknowledged and action taken to stop the course of these events.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

And PLEASE FORCE BP TOPUBLICALLY DISCLOSE PROPRIETARY GEOLOGICAL MUD LOG DATA FOR THEGULF'S DEEPWATER HORIZON, BECAUSE OF GIANT METHANE BUBBLEUNDERNEATH, AND THE SAFETY OF RESIDENTS ETC.

But I must stress that all the most important and ultimate goalis to protect these natural lands with the utmost care byteaching all the importance to our own survival, health, andhappiness. Our kind cannot survive well in a sickened world.Therefore please put in your utmost effort to brighten thefuture for ourselves and for those who cannot not speak.

I am excited to learn that you are in a position to recommendprotection of wild areas such as the San Gabriel Mountains around Los Angeles.There is a gestalt principle at work here. Protected areas must be contiguous or will not thrive. Animals and plants disperseover a territory; they cannot cross highways or commercialzones. To preserve a natural environment that benefits the airand water we depend on and offers residents an outlet forrecreation and education, the entire ecosystem must be allowedto function.* Management must consider the needs of predators in the region-- mountain lions, bobcats, bears, etc. -- and designrecreational areas that do interfere with the animals'migration, reproduction, or search for food.* Protection of the D.E.L.T.A. rescue sanctuary must beincluded. If Los Angeles County continue to harrass thisoperation, we will lose it.Thank you for considering my comments, and good luck with thisimportant issue.

I have lived within sight of them for most of my life,and enjoyed recreating in them many times.These mountainsbenefit our quality of life and the health of our families byproviding us with clean air and water and incredible naturalbeauty. Our region's youth obesity and diabetes crisis hasbrought new urgency to connecting our people and communitiesback to our mountains and rivers.* Additional resources to help with Station Fire recovery and apublic education component NOT associated with the NRA, butrather with a non-gun-proponent, pro-animal group opposed tohunting, to track recovery and educate the public aboutwildfire.

I truly believe that we need our innate, natural surroundings in order to appreciate the simpler things in life. In an age ofelectronics and gadgets, we truly need deliverance and need togo back to our roots! Please strongly consider our requests for the people of America who have yet to see and appreciate the beauty of the natural mountain environment!

Not allowing private owners/developers to build more unsightlyhomes/housing units on the hillsides, that take away from theareas natural beauty and displace the animals from rural areasto urban areas, where they cannot survive. Offer landowners fairmarket value for their land so it can be preserved and/ordeveloped for parks/recreation areas.

If the government won't protect these areas they will be lost forever. We the people, have all ready shown that we are not responsible enough to do it.

It belongswith the other National Parks/Recreation Areas approved byprevious presidents. Please join the list and become a "creator of parks" and not a destroyer of natural beauty.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

On the High Desert side of these mountains we have some of the best quality water in the North Americas! We need to take actions to protect the future of this invaluable watershed! Our wildlife needs to be managed in a realistic way that allows for hunting when it can be a valuable resource to replace the role of our depleted or missing apex predators in maintaining healthy wildlife populations.

our mountains and rivers cannot be replaced. Do not let them be ruined by people trampling and camping. I urge you to recommend the creation of a robust San Gabriel Mountains National Preserve that would keep human impact to the very least. People need to respect nature and not misuse it when they do not even have a respect for their own health. * Recognition of the importance of wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers. It should address opportunities to expand these resources and support Nature right to be protected from people using it for their personal needs. * a major effort to keep nature free from cars and motorcycles. Buses can be used for viewing. * A small management structure in Alternative C in which the National Park Service takes the lead in creating a partnership between the Park Service and the Forest Service (which would continue to manage the San Gabriel Mountains). * Enhanced educational and interpretive programs so that kids--and everyone--can learn more about native habitat, plants and animals. These programs can take place outside the preserve with supervised talking walks.

Please make gardens out of some of this public land. Teach people to garden and to grow vegetables. The LA schools are a good example of this this right now.

Prohibiting building of commercial and residential structures. Enhanced protection of wildlife residing in these beautiful areas.

The San Gabriel Mountains above our homes, from Santa Clarita to San Bernardino, have been a major source of inspiration for myself and have also served as one of the main reasons for our good health. Without an access to preserved wilderness, I can't imagine surviving when I would be exposed to noise and air pollution through day and night.

The simplest way to improve people's health and thereby connection to the environment and nature is to eat a diet high in raw fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, to the extent of 60% to 100%. This eradicates addictions, diabetes, as well as many other "modern living" diseases and this also preserves the resources of our planet. A natural life, that includes growing at least part of one's own food supply, leads to a natural connection and empathy with nature. It's as simple as that. In terms of specific regional issues, the San Gabriel Mountains soar above our homes, from Santa Clarita to San Bernardino, providing much of our public open space. These mountains benefit our quality of life and the health of our families by providing us with clean air and water and incredible natural beauty. Our region's youth obesity and diabetes crisis has brought new urgency to connecting our people and communities back to our mountains and rivers. * Enhanced educational and interpretive programs so that kids--and everyone--can learn more about native habitat, plants and animals, as well as growing fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect the Old Growth Redwood forest from destruction by CalTrans at Richardson's Grove State Park. Also along with that, a ban on cutting old growth redwoods by the timber industry. Pine is the fastest growing evergreen and is much better for construction. If people want the look of redwood, let them buy redwood colored wood stain for their pine lumber. Fishing used to be a big thing here in Humboldt County, CA. The fishermen are complaining now because fishing has gone downhill. This is a direct result of overfishing the Coho Salmon and polluting waters. PLEASE also STOP B.P. FROM DRILLING OUTSIDE OF ALASKA! We, here on the Pacific coast do NOT want to see a repeat of the disaster in the Gulf! B.P. with their corporate practices have murdered sea life, birds, and plants in the Gulf as well as humans. PLEASE, I beg you, do not let that happen here too. They are endangering not just livelihoods, but various species' lives, including humans. We cannot have this happen to our country! Many lives depend upon you taking control of this country back from the corporate and political murderers! We, the "peasants" and our children and grandchildren have as much right in this country as the conservative wealth. There are far more of us as well!

It is time to tell Big Biz to take a hike (they pretty much have anyway - job outsourcing) and, since they want to leave our country anyway, leave it AS IT IS!

Protecting our wild lands is one of the most important missions our generation has before us. It will insure the well being and even survival of those yet to come. Protecting our natural world should be our most treasured duty.

These lands do not really belong to us - we are merely stewards with the ability to protect the land from harm caused by us. Please make this protection a priority. Too often, of late, decisions come down on the side of economic gain rather than caution - we use "not enough proof" as an excuse to go ahead with untried practices. Time and again, we then have to clean up the messes - frequently with more untried ideas - rather than waiting for science to catch up, or just stepping away secure in the knowledge that we do not know enough! We only have one planet - we are quickly reaching the point of "no do-over's."

We should protect our public lands for wildlife and people and from the harmful activities of many corporations.

My personal comments: This isn't just all about people! It is our responsibility to protect our wildlife, to share this earth with them, see that they have their own space and water and shelter and rights. Also, the wilderness protects our lives with oxygen, quiet places to restore our spirits and beauty to enchant us. Don't abuse our awesome world; let it thrive. We should all consider the burgeoning human population--there won't be enough water someday, everyone will be fighting for land. Let's be sensible and set a limit of 2 children per family--some will be outraged of course--but we must think ahead. Simple arithmetic will warn us about increasing our population. Have the courage to do the right thing. We should also decrease the herds of cattle, sheep, etc. Their wastes are despoiling our land, water and air.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our public land belongs to all residents in the USA as well as to all Earthlings. Our public land provides us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. The USA as well as the entire American continent is stunningly beautiful and unique. I urge you to implement the following priorities: Protect the watersheds from toxic waste. Protect the wolves, bears, mountain lions, sea lions (and all other animals) and fish from oil spills, pesticides, and hunting. Please stop offshore oil drilling, stop the use of dispersants, stop the use of pesticides, stop the use of chemical fertilizers, stop GMO production, stop overfishing, stop whale hunting and stop cruelty in general.

Water is an essential necessity for all life on earth. We need to protect the source of good water first and foremost. Too many exploitive aggressive invasive man made activities destroy this essential source of survival. Protect water first and to the ultimate degree possible...our lives depend on it. Respect mother nature and the outcome of eons of evolution.

Stop all ocean industrialization. When the ocean dies, so do we all.

Ensure enough water in the Sacramento and Klamath/Trinity Rivers for the healthy return of their endangered Salmon and Steelhead runs. If they disappear they will become shameful ghosts.

Our public lands become more and more valuable with each passing year.

Please for the sake of all Mother Earth, humankind and all of God's other creatures do what's in your power to protect us all.

Rural America needs funding to support these treasured places. Much of what our great country means to our citizenry and visitors alike is found in rural regions. Please help us to help ourselves! Your support through funding and recognition of these important sites is necessary and rural America needs your help!

Please consider including the preservation of our rural pioneer cemeteries in this initiative. These are examples of our cultural heritage that need to be saved for future generations. Thank you.

Each day we read of historic sites that are being lost or threatened with development. Some are just amazing that they would even be an issue such as the USS Olympia battleship in Philadelphia. It was so much a part of our history during the Spanish American War and the thought of it becoming a fishing reef is beyond belief. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage.

History as a whole is important to help our youth understand what unites us in this nation. Please continue to fund Teaching American History grants which also make use of historic sites.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Funding these historic preservation and heritage programs and historic and archaeological sites in our National Parks and on public lands are important. This will ensure that America's Great National Heritage including our natural historic and cultural legacy can continue so that all Americans and especially young people can better understand learn from and appreciate our rich and diverse past. Please do all you can to put history back in the conversation about our National Heritage.

There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage. Specifically our maritime and naval heritage ships such as the USS Olympia USS Hornet USS New Jersey and SS United States deserve preservation and access as symbols of our our national history and the produce of our laborers and natural resources. I advocate for the creation of a maritime national park that would bring together these great vessels.

Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage and to the American people.

The federal and state governments have not adequately contributed to the preservation of African American heritage sites. Federal state and private lands that provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation are also intertwined with treasured African American historic and cultural sites and landscapes. These historic and cultural sites reflect the African American voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage.

Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. As a resident from the beautiful Grand Canyon State I believe we need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important for our children and grandchildren.

Please protect The Crane Estate and Crane Beach in Massachusetts. Please also protect Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square Pennsylvania. Please also continue to protect Mt. Desert Island / Acadia in Maine. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of locations resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage.

Historic preservation really does mean economic development for America's small to mid-sized cities like here in Pittsburgh and throughout the "rust belt".

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here in Hingham the Save America's Treasures matching grant for critical repairs to the 1681 Old Ship Meeting House has been a catalyst for community support for preserving its history and the democratic principles developed and practiced in colonial America. Historian David McCullough said " Landmark Buildings are parts of our life: they are not just buildings. They are aids to navigation through daily life. They are where and who we are in time." These grants provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes.

In small towns and especially rural communities I see that we need outside resources like the Trust to provide accurate unbiased guidance. Rural people are intensely proud of the heritage that surrounds them but we often lack the connections and knowledge to preserve structures and sites -- so they disappear. The National Trust is clear in its commitment to just such communities.

Full funding of the Historic Preservation Fund and Land and Water Conservation Fund is critical to our natural and cultural heritage. Protection of our drinking water through these initiatives is of greatest importance.

I have been involved with the Boy Scouts of America for over forty years. The Scouts have enjoyed the federal state and private lands that provide the opportunity to connect with the outdoors promote conservation and recreation. My Boy Scouts stand ready to help.

Americans need to connect with the outdoors more. Towards that end federal state and private land can provide Americans with that opportunity and at the same time promote conservation and recreation. These lands are also intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. It costs money to maintain natural and cultural sites and landscapes. Environment shapes human societies and people in turn affect their environments. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of locations resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage.

Natural and cultural sites and landscape areas whose resources are closely related to one another are inextricably linked . Environment shapes human societies and people in turn affect their environments. Historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of places resources histories and voices whose uniqueness helps all Americans celebrate our shared heritage. Federal state and private historic and recreational lands provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors as well as promote conservation and preservation. These resources are intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. There has been a need for over a decade for additional funding for our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands. Please bring funding for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources. Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. Important places and lands still need your help to guarantee their preservation. We need more permanent protection for the sites lands and landmarks that are included among National Parks Monuments and Trails so important to our heritage.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In New Bedford Massachusetts we have a rich history and architectural heritage that needs to be preserved for residents visitors and future generations.

There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. For example I live near Detroit Michigan where the concept of the assembly line process in industry was introduced in the early 20th Century and the automobile industry ruled the economy for nearly a century. -- Remember the old saying "What's good for General Motors is good for the nation." ? Well it still rings true. -- There are many wonderful historic and architecturally important buildings and sites that are now turning to dust throughout the city. They can and should be saved revived re-tooled and repurposed in the 21st Century as a sign of America's resilience and resourcefulness.

The buildings and their settings together with the natural landscape and the decisions we have made about preservation conservation and development have shaped the cultural landscape of this country. As a retired State Historic Preservation Officer I have seen the results of the lack of parity for over a decade between funding for our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands. Please bring funding for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources. .

Federal state and private lands that provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation are critical to our well being and our freedom. The natural environment is more precious than any built environment since it sustains our life and all the resources for sustainability of our planet and our life form. You must continue to preserve open space and create spaces that all Americans from any socio-economic background can enjoy not just the wealthy and privileged. Large open natural spaces of significance need permanent protection and vigilance.

We need your leadership to end the disconnect between appreciation for great natural landscapes with the cultural (human-made) heritage that is indelibly imprinted on those landscapes. We need funding to conserve cultural landscapes as part of our nation's heritage. Let's stop spending our national wealth to destroy other countries and use it to enlighten and uplift Americans at home by preserving our heritage.

There has been a lack of parity for over a decade between funding for our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands. Please bring funding for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources or we could lose them altogether.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama I come from Kentucky Ohio West Virginia and now live in NY. I came from pioneer stock who lived off the land and preserved it. I am dedicated to preservation of our heritage in all areas whether cities country creeks lakes rivers or mountains. I have hiked in the beauty of countries around the world and in the USA. I am a practicing doctor at a major medical center in NYC. PLEASE increase support of preservation and conservation thereby providing our children and grandchildren the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation. Our cultural and natural sites and our built sites in nature and landscapes are not replacable once destroyed. Witness the mountain top removals in WV by coal mine companies. Without rich natural environment and landscapes we lose our humanism for one another and for our humanism. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of locations resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage. Our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands are desperately in need of additional support funding and conservation. Americans connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources and these remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage. I bicycle every possible chance on the Harlem Valley Rail Trail converted from the former NY Central RR. This opportunity must be extended to many many more. I thank you for your continuing efforts to improve our great country. I am grateful for all the efforts you are putting into getting us back on track in the USA THANK YOU.
Linda D Lewis M.D. 320 Central Park WEst NYC NY 10025

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There has been a lack of parity for over a decade between funding for our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands. Please bring funding and needed environmental regulation for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources. Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection such as those in SE TN. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage but please do so in a way that will rightfully respect the rights of private property owners in all possible ways so that it can be a nationally happy and proud experience for all. In SE Tn we continue to need much help preserving from annexation unwanted (transportation etc.) development and/or spot rezoning etc. areas such as Apison Collegedale Ooltewah Summit Chattanooga and parts of adjoining SE Hamilton Co SW Bradley County and on into Georgia as well as some other areas in and around these. We need to retain our rural historic farming and cultural geo heritage and promote much more natural/heritage/agri/cultural/arts tourism. Along with the important history of DeSoto's route The Red Clay State Historic Park/Area Sacred last council grounds of the Cherokee Indians the area of SW Bradley Co. is also said to have been where the left flank of Sherman's army camped out on the way to "Sherman's famous March to the Sea". We need more effective national protection and restoration for these farming and historic scenic areas with incompatible developments such as the huge substation in SW Bradley Co. removed and other housing developments already in the area renamed to be more respectful and compatible with the area that they are in with no more formal nonfarm friendly housing developments businesses transportation developments or expansions etc. to come later. We need to preserve our significant railroads and roads such as Tunnel Hill RD Red Clay Road Blue Springs Apison Pike and many more in the area. We need the homeland many of the current area residents ancestors first settled in to be preserved for future generations. The Red Clay State Park would benefit from having an upgrade with interactive exhibits for learning a restaurant in the park welcome center (like the one at Fall Creek Falls) more screenings of concerts (ie Brule Reconciliation of the Cultures) movies etc. or even live performances at Red Clay instead of everything being at Ooltewah/Collegedale. Also everyone should be able to create art call it Native American etc. for the right to self expression unhindered by the Government in doing so with rights to create and engage in Native American or historical arts fully protected. Everyone needs to be able to express who they are ie Native American Cherokee Indian etc. mixed Native/White heritage etc. when describing themselves in exhibiting their art/craft etc. as this is how people connect to their private or nations history and they should not be prevented from doing so so that everyone can freely "advertise history or culture". Hopefully in the future we can have more Christian naturalist preservation minded Democrats in this cong. TN 3rd district if we are allowed to and if we can have a good fair chance to do so along with a Democratic GOV etc! Also our first female TN Senator (democratic) would be very good to vote in in our next Senatorial election! We need different leaders because our needs are different than who we currently have in office with many issues that are more tourism arts and agricultural oriented among other things! We need to bring back Native America Rural America etc. and preserve the back country of the USA forever!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

However I hope you will not leave out of the equation those historic and cultural artifacts (both inside and outside of national parks) that tell the story of our country. Our historic buildings and landscapes have been sadly neglected and de-funded through a series of previous administrations. Please include Preservation funding in this initiative!

Especially in slow economic times Americans need more than ever to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage.

Please restore the commitment our country once had to preserving its wilderness areas its national parks and its heritage sites. It shouldn't have been possible for a Wal-Mart to consider building a store on a Civil War battlefield and similar attempts to destroy lands and buildings once deemed crucial to our history continue to be under similar attack. iOnce gone there is no way they can be recovered. If you want to make clear just how much more committed your administration is to preserving the country you will speak out loud and clear about saving our natural cultural and historical treasures. Save--and perhaps even expand--the federal state and private lands that enable Americans to connect with the outdoors. Help them realize that conservation and recreation are intertwined with our most treasured sites and landscapes. Such areas contain resource closely related to one another. Environments shape societies and peoples just as people affect their environments. For over a decade there has been no adequate funding for the historic cultural and wilderness areas in either our National Parks or other public lands. Please bring funding for cultural resources back into balance.

Please look at the ways preservation and conservation of our unique land resources intersect with our preserved historic sites. Please help fund the America's Great Outdoors Initiatives with that in mind. The outdoors is intertwined with the preservation sites and continues to make significant contributions to our nation.

There has been a lack of parity for over a decade between funding for our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands. We can't let these places degrade; we can't allow them to suffer our benign neglect. Once they're gone they'll never come back - and we as a nation can't afford that! Please bring funding for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources. Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. Especially as the population continues to grow and development continues to push into more and more areas we need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage.

I support several private programs that conserve our cultural treasures both built and natural and others that give children from the city access to them. The value of the federal government's programs is also clear and adequate funding should be maintained.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal state and private lands that provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation are also intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and culture. Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources and these resources connect Americans to a higher more idealistic state of mind and state of being. This beauty and idealism is what we all ultimately seek. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage.

I live in Michigan a wonderful state that has seen its share of difficult economic times of late. What is a constant source of pride however is the natural beauty of the Great Lakes and the thousands of lakes streams and rivers that cover the entire state. But adjacent to these bodies of water are the towns and cities that grew up because of them. They're rich in history distinctive one from the other economic engines that are resilient and destinations that draw vacation dollars into local hands. There has been a lack of parity for over a decade between funding for our historic and cultural resources. Please bring funding for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources.

We are a small very historic town in NE North Carolina. We can attest to the value of supporting the preservation of our historic sites. Save America's Treasures grant program helped us save and guarantee continual preservation of one of our nation's most important buildings the Cupola House built in 1758. We trained local craftsmen and workers in the art of preservation. We added over \$250000 to our local economy and will continue to add more with increased tourism. Our nation must not lose sight of our heritage and the people and places that sculpted our destiny as a free democracy. Please reconsider and provide the funding required to keep the valuable asset of the National Trust Save America's Treasures funded. It is a true economic engine of our country's future.

Dear President Obama I am a retired urban and environmental planner in Southern California. In my retirement I am active with our local historic preservation group. I am on its Board of Directors and also write our newsletter. I have found my life's cause--everything I did before was simply good training for what I am doing now. The preservation of our historic buildings and landscapes is so important to our generation's legacy for if they do not survive they are gone forever. Dr. Aref knows me you can ask him about me if you wish.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have just come from our local Historical Society meeting this Thursday evening. We are struggling to restore a Sheriff's home and attached Jail built in 1880. A few weeks ago I visited an archaeological dig with my nephew and his family at Fort Michilimackinac. We saw first hand items that have been unearthed that were here long before the territory was settled by the French and English. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage. There has been a lack of parity for over a decade between funding for our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands. We appreciate the funding for cultural resources trust it will be brought back into balance with our natural resources. Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need more Parks Monuments Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our heritage. The Rail-Trail projects undertaken across the country are an excellent example of connecting people back to the land.

Some of this heritage is mine from before the Revolutionary war. My family arrived here in about 1650. Our second homestead still exists from the late 1600's and is part of a historic site. We need to preserve where we came from!

Americans need to continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources. I have done so throughout our wonderful country and I cannot imagine not providing this opportunity for future generations. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage.

I did not vote for you and personally I believe that you are screwing up this country. But this may be a way for you to redeem yourself a little. Historic landmarks are important you can replace trees and butterflies but you can't replace history.

Another area that needs support for preservations are many of the lighthouses around the United States coasts. These provide great exercise of climbing and beautiful views of our country. These lighthouses and the people who were the light keepers offer valuable history lessons to people of all ages.

The great outdoors especially parks wilderness and historic lands and objects in federal and other state and local controls are our nation's legacy. Their majesty will far out last any administration generational fad or temporal crisis.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal state and private lands that provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation are also intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. I have done several cross country road trips over the last 50 years and I have seen the changes that development has brought. It is important that we preserve open lands for future generations!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Natural and cultural sites and landscapes areas whose constituent resources are closely related to one another are inextricably linked because environment shapes human societies and people in turn affect their environments. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of locations resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage.

Please help save the historic buildings so our children and grandchildren will have something to relate to in the history of this great country

There has been a lack of parity for over a decade between funding for our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands. As a result their architecture and the treasured artifacts they house have had sub-standard care and are deteriorating at an alarming rate. Please bring funding for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources.

Every great society and people has a rich culture and sense of their history. We need to preserve our culture within our arts music historic landmarks and parks now and not as an afterthought. Please bring funding for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources. Our history is so short compared to many other countries and we need to be aware to preserve the history and culture we already have. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage.

Federal state and private lands that provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation are also intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. I am told that there has been a lack of parity for over a decade between funding for our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands. I also know that our schools have cut back education in history and social studies in order to emphasize science and math. This means that a generation is growing up with little knowledge of its cultural history and fewer historic and cultural places to visit. If a nation doesn't know or care about its past what does that say about the quality of its future? Please bring funding for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources!! In addition there remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage.

I realize that you already have a full complex and difficult agenda. I'm optimistic though that you will continue your good work on behalf of our people by lending your support in this area. Historic preservation can I know seem somewhat remote from our immediate problems. But in the longer term our history will continue to play a crucial role in defining who we are. Preservation can be a vehicle for creating American jobs that will make a genuine contribution to our society. It deserves a place in your already commendable legislative record.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While public and private investments in historic properties dramatically improve the tax base and the economic viability of neighborhoods communities counties and states there has been a lack of parity for over a decade between funding for our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands. In the Preservation Community we like to say "The greenest building is the one that's already been built." Imagine the resources embodied in any historic structure - hundreds of years of sunlight incalculable human and financial resources - all of which continue to serve humankind without additional inroads into the environmental integrity of the planet. With that image in mind I trust that you will bring funding for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources.

As island owners on Rainy Lake very near Voyageur's National Park for almost 25 years my husband and I see every day the importance of Federal state and private lands that provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation and that are also intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. Natural and cultural sites and wilderness areas abound here thanks to Voyageur's Park but need more funding to purchase the last privately held cabins and land within the park boundaries. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of locations resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage.

Do not compromise the wilderness with oil drilling when cleaner renewable energy sources should be explored instead.

As more & more Americans are struggling with job loss and other hardships this is one area that you can preserve for Americans to enjoy and be proud of.

As a professional museum curator and historian I feel very strongly that America's historic sites are critical to helping the next generation understand our past.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree with the statements given about providing for our National Heritage. We have just found what we believe is a Cherokee built cabin hidden under a hotel here in Cave Spring. By that discovery all manner of people have come forward talking to each other. A side effect is that many are claiming Cherokee blood no doubt truly spoken for this area and for Georgia. That we are all related no matter our colors is making us more connected and gives rise to more tolerance of each other than ever. This is definitely worth some thought as money is allocated. People are our resources too. Therefore the statements below should be heeded. Federal state and private lands that provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation and are intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. Natural and cultural sites and landscapes areas whose constituent resources are closely related to one another are inextricably linked because environment shapes human societies and people in turn affect their environments. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of locations resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage. Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage because once we know where we've been then we know where we're going.

Please make historic preservation a priority for the 21st century.

As a person who has worked extensively with museums of all types it is vital that we continue to preserve our history and heritage.

If not for the Save America's Treasures Grant we would not have been able to preserve the colonial era Memorial Cemetery in Ste. Genevieve -- the oldest cemetery in the State of Missouri. We need programs such as S.A.T. to provide support when local resources are simply inadequate to the task. Local money sufficient to match the Federal money dollar for dollar was raised but without S.A.T. as a partner the project would have not been possible.

The Dimock Center in Roxbury Massachusetts is a historical landmark in the inner city and has applied and received several grants from Save America's Treasures over the years to restore our landmark buildings. These buildings serve our most vulnerable and without the support of these grants for bricks and mortar Dimock would not be able to provide respectful environments for our community. We ask for your support in preserving these critical funds.

These sites are part of the complex character and weave of the fabric of our American cultural landscape.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a retired federal museum curator collection manager and director and an active volunteer and board member for the Edinboro Area Historical Society and the Erie Center for Design and Preservation I know firsthand that our governmental program are essential in helping America preserve it's historical and cultural past. At this moment the Edinboro (PA) Historical Society is beginning to look for grants to develop a condition survey and an even larger grant to stabilize and digitize hundreds of rare historic glass plate negatives that reflect the history and heritage of our fine community. Without the trickle-down effect of preservation funds provided by our Federal government much of our culture and history stands to be lost.

The work associated with preserving our national treasures and historic resources is about much more than saving the symbols of our national history. It is about economic development. Construction associated with preserving historic resources is much more labor intensive than new construction which is more materials intensive. So preservation work creates jobs. Further heritage tourism is one of the most popular leisure activities. Heritage tourists tend to spend more per day and stay longer in a place. We need to do all we can to stimulate the economy in these tough times and funding historic preservation programs is a great way to do that.

One of the greatest initiatives in the global culture is the sustainable environment movement. This pertains to the built environment as well as the natural environment. The observation of history and all of its variables shows us how we have managed to get ourselves bogged down in a culture of obsolescence and unsustainable thinking and processes. It's time to get a complete and true understanding of the dynamics that have compromised our cultural values and quality of life. Sometimes we need to take a couple of steps back to make any progress forward. Our built environment and the study of the cultural environment that supported it is an excellent map that directs us in how to proceed - or not in the creation of a sustainable future! Don't destroy that map.

As Director of a private non-profit historic site in the downtown of an economically hard-hit city I see the impact that historic preservation has first hand. Our work inspires pride and civic activism as well as bringing in tourism. We need to work together on all levels to preserve and maintain our natural and historic resources!

The nation's diversity of resources and historical background often makes it overwhelming to know where to start but continued funding for America's Great Outdoors Initiative will help local activists do their part to preserve our national treasures.

Please bring funding for cultural resources back into balance with our natural resources.

Preserve what little old growth forest remains Make safe Native American and other irreplaceable heritage areas

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The fact that these two Republican Senators with at best marginal voting records on conservation and environmental issues in the Senate (Corker with a 7% record and Alexander with a 37% record in 2009, according to the League of Conservation Voters) indicates that even these individuals believe protecting Wilderness lands in Tennessee to be important!

Tennessee must protect its most precious resources. I am asking you as a concerned resident of Tennessee to do everything in your power to help this vital piece enacted.

America is losing at least one million acres a year to development roughly equivalent to the size of Delaware. Coastal lands will be lost at an accelerating rate due to climate change. Unless we protect these areas now, our treasured lands could be lost forever. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, has accumulated during the past several decades in the federal government's Land and Water Conservation Fund. This money was supposed to be spent on land and water conservation and acquisition. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico makes keeping this promise as important as ever. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program needs more funding. Our national parks are routes to healthier lifestyles, and gathering places for local communities. National Park Service programs like the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program supports community led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects. They work with a wide array of community based partners from the conservation, recreation, and public health sectors. This program needs more funding. The park system must evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country. Americans care about the future of these incredible places. Please do not overlook the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are the right places to invest your administration's time and money.

Within this letter are points to consider that will help you understand the many reasons why we need to protect, strengthen and use our National Parks...Our greatest treasures.

We love and use our national parks. They are a resource without parallel in our country. Ensuring the continued funding necessary to keep our parks as a national treasure is an important component of any budgetary concerns. With the exception of the new rules allowing loaded guns in our national parks, the parks reflect what is best about America.

I was fortunate enough to have a family that took us on summer vacations to a number of our wonderful national parks. These remain among my most important memories of childhood. Each one of us has the opportunity to experience the beautiful sights to be seen in our national parks. It would be tragic to let that go away.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need to preserve our land heritage for future generations. We need to provide the park system with the needed personnel to provide the care / and protection of the land, the wildlife, and provide the educational opportunities to the public.

I just returned from an Elderhostel in Alaska, mostly in Denali National Park and the Kenai Fjords National Park. What a wonderful experience! I was awed by the grandeur of Denali, the mountain, and the unspoiled lands around it. Being near the wildlife was amazing. I feel so fortunate to have had this experience. Such areas must be preserved and protected.

P.S. Since the economy is totally screwed up, the outdoors is, for millions of people, the ONLY affordable vacation that is left for them to do. So please don't take that away also.

So does everyone else. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year, not to mention just good ol' clean fun! Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. This is a perfect opportunity to create public jobs. Most of our parks National & State are understaffed and underfunded. They need manpower to maintain trails, build new ones, more rangers to protect the parks from littering campers and patrol them so families feel safe at night. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This is the third time this week I'm hearing about unspent money when things need to be done! What's happening here? Where is the logic? Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers. Again...I smell jobs here. I smell work.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Subject: PLEASE PROTECT ALL FEDERAL WILDLANDS! Our National Forests' and National Parks' Wildlands Are America's GREATEST Resource! July 20, 2010 When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our National Forests and National Parks. National Forests and National Parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, protecting biodiversity, providing clean air and pure water, and contributing to the health of our people. National Forests and National Parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, conservation biology, rare and endangered species protection, science, history, and civics education for millions of people each year.

1. Mandate the U.S. Forest Service to "Provide habitat for viable populations of all indigenous wildlife species." This mandate needs to be implemented throughout the entire National Forest System. By providing habitat for viable populations of all indigenous species, we will restore biological health, biological integrity, and biodiversity throughout our National Forests. This single step by the Obama Administration will be the most significant improvement in public lands management since Congress first established the National Forest System and the National Park System.
2. Permanently protect all roadless areas of all federal lands, starting with all public roadless wildlands on U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management Lands, and for all eligible acreage within all National Parks.
3. Fire oil and coal industry pawn, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar.
4. Hire Bill Richardson, a man who represents integrity, for Interior Secretary.
5. Actively promote the passage of the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA), which will protect 24 million acres of priceless public roadless wildlands in Montana, Idaho, northwestern Wyoming, eastern Oregon, and eastern Washington.
6. Heed the advice of former President Jimmy Carter who supports NREPA and of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of wellrespected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect Americans' public lands legacy.
7. Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our National Parks and National Forests. The Obama Administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new publicprivate partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our National Forests and National Parks for ALL future generations.
8. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support National Parks, threatened habitat in National Forests and adjacent lands, nonmotorized trails, scientific education, conservation biology, seashores, and for cleaning up ALL creeks, rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, and waterways across the country. What has happened with Ken Salazar's Mineral Management Services in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise.
9. Do more to use National Forests and National Parks to inspire and educate young people. Our National Forests and National Parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as forest and park rangers, where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculumbased materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And, the Department

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

of Education should work with the Forest Service and Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. 10. Build on programs that work. Our National Forests and National Parks have tremendous technical expertise and knowhow that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. For example, the Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. 11. We need more National Parks for people to enjoy. Our National Forests and National Parks Systems must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider acquiring endangered wildlands and watersheds to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. 12. Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our National Forests and National Parks can migrate and find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within all federal lands. We need much better cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. 13. Immediately halt all U.S. Department of Transportation funding for new or improved highway construction that severs wildlife transportation corridors or linkages. 14. Mandate wildlife underpasses, overpasses, and marked crossings for ALL highways and other transportation projects receiving ANY funding from ANY federal agencies. 15. A recent study found that every federal dollar invested in National Parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, National Parks and National Forests visitations increased, demonstrating the enhanced value of our National Forests and National Parks to our people in difficult economic times. 16. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, especially our priceless legacy of wildlands, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. 17. PLEASE PROTECT EVERY SINGLE ACRE OF WILDLANDS CURRENTLY IN FEDERAL OWNERSHIP. 18. PLEASE remember to protect ALL National Forests and National Parks, all aquatic and terrestrial wildlife dependent on National Forests and National Parks, and the many programs managed by the U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service that improve our communities. 19. Remember: Protecting our National Forests' and National Parks' wildlands legacy is the BEST POSSIBLE investment in our future. Please keep me posted concerning this important issue.

A lot more protection for the animals that call them home. I go to the park to see wildlife. Our parks deserve permanent protection from oil and gas drilling, poaching, hunting outside of designated areas, destruction for any purpose other than a national treasure and I do not mean man-made structures.

Our national parks must be protected for future generations of Americans. Legislative protections must be strong and irreversible so that no matter who holds power, these cathedrals to nature cannot be abused! These lands belong to ALL Americans and as such should always remain intact.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and knowhow that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. Children learn so much through exposure to the natural world. Perhaps some economic stimulus could be part of the focus on the parks, provide jobs for hardworking men and women fixing roadways, new signs, clearing paths, etc...

>> Put our unemployed youths to work by hiring them to maintain our National Parks. This gives them work and what better way to become connected with the Great Outdoors!

Our National Parks are our greatest treasures. They are our legacies. They need to be properly funded and maintained. Please remove the snowmobiles and all terrain vehicles from the parks. They injure the environment and the animals that live there.

I was watching a show on PBS the other night and they commented that 60% of China is set aside for National Parks. If they can do it so can we.

Reject any and all requests from the greed stricken and absolutely corrupt oil and gas companies for more land or any drilling rights in or near OUR National Parks. They already own too much of OUR land and are always looking for more handouts.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national and state parks. They play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. As a resident on the largest State Park in the Union (The Adirondack Park) I urge you not to cut spending to either the National or the State parks. Here in Northern New York, our park is a great draw for tourists and generates much income for an otherwise economically depressed region! Our state is in dire financial trouble, so federal funding is extremely important to us.

I have spent as much time as I can visiting the national parks, I have enjoyed them. I hope that future generations will have the chance to have as much enjoyment as I have had.

Today I am a senior with grand and great grandchildren. When we raised our sons in a much leaner financial time, each year we took them to visit national parks, or national historic sites, which enhanced their education and their appreciation for God's natural wonders. Our families and younger generations need access to these same wonders and should be so directed to build character and appreciation of our great nation. These gifts are far more valuable than any electronic gadgetry on the market.

The original plan for National Parks was to create a resource available to all Americans. The fact that parking and/or admission fees are now imposed on National Parks limits the availability of these parks to those that can pay. This is contrary to the ideal of National Parks. Our tax dollars should be employed so that no one pays for the privilege to use our National Parks (as the name implies National Parks.)

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

So much has been neglected in the US over the past 30+ years, not the least of which is our parks and open spaces. Meanwhile, there are millions of Americans who are ready and eager to get to work. It would be a matter of plain common sense to establish a WPA type program to solve both problems at once. History shows us that this model can and does work, to the benefit of the jobless AND the country as a whole.

P.S. Have over the years enjoyed many of our national parks. Would like to see this ability to enjoy our national parks as national treasures continue into the future for generations to come.

Most important of all is to educate the public that preserving and nurturing wilderness and wildlife are essential to human welfare that it stabilizes the physical, social and economic worlds. One often overlooked fact is that those civilizations that destroyed life were themselves destroyed.

When Pres. Teddy R. realized we needed to protect our environment and so many parks were protected, we won. Today we have the greed of OIL attacking our national parks, we don't want drilling in our parks!!! We also need to protect our water. Today in Michigan we have 2 companies extracting water from our water table, and someone in Congress who want to drill for OIL in LAKE MICHIGAN. These things cannot be tolerated. We must put an end to the insanity of destroying the environment of the world. Please help us protect our greatest resources and our lives.

I hope and encourage you to make your legacy a great one by keeping word and follow through with being an ecology and natural environment preservation president. Please continue to fund and protect the little that's been set aside as National Parks.

PS: One of the truly grand things we as a people have done was to create these sanctuaries, and care for them. Observation: I notice that the super wealthy always build abutting these great public spaces, if they possibly can tells one something doesn't it.....enjoyment and no maintenance fees.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of the national parks. When I immigrated to this country nearly 30 years ago, America's National Parks were one of the major reasons for settling in this country. Today, my family and I are enjoying these parks almost on a weekly basis. I strongly urge you to help protect and support them for current and future generations alike.

They are important to our country. Please save them.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The upcoming Park Service centennial provides a chance to renew our national parks. We should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. Reinvigorate the civilian Conservation Corps; stop paying anyone to do nothing, there is a park that needs work everywhere there is a person that needs a job. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades, unspent for its intended purpose. This money **MUST** be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just more poured into the drain of entitlements. The state of the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise.

I have been ashamed recently visiting some of our national parks. They seem rundown and shabby in places. Put Americans back to work by making many more jobs available to update the parks. Don't be intimidated by the people who are hollering that government is too big. We have not done nearly enough to put people back to work!

America's Great Outdoors includes our world famous national parks. Our national parks must have the funds necessary to preserve and safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience. The National Park Service's centennial in 2016 is a perfect target for a renewed emphasis and support of our incredible NPS wonders. I would love to see a NPS project, perhaps utilizing those out of work or people like me who have retired, but would love to have another gratifying part-time job. Compensation would be free housing and food and a "bye" on income taxes in any year in which you worked 100 days in a National Park! I would be delighted to participate in a deal like that! We need to fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Please preserve and guard large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. Wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders need attention as well. Improve opportunities to use our national parks without adding to the pollution of our parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. National parks are part of our national pride and play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. Please consider taking the following steps:

Next, you might consider preserving the animals of the land; the animals who had a right to this land long before human beings decided to usurp her. Animals, like the WOLVES, & the PUMA's & the FLORIDA PANTHERS as well as smaller, less obvious animals that all take a part in our Heritage & Our Natural Beauties of this Land we now call home. **STOP THE WAR ON THE WOLVES & OTHER ANIMALS BEFORE THIS COUNTRY DECIDES TO WE'VE MADE A HUGE MISTAKE IN ELECTING YOU.**

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you Mr. President for your America's Great Outdoors initiative. I hope and pray that it will prove a tremendous success. I also agree with and support the aforementioned suggestions and urge you to take them seriously in your plan for the America's Great Outdoors, and that you would always keep our national parks as one of our national priorities. God bless you and your family. Parson

The National Parks suggested I add my comments to their letter, but it is difficult to improve upon perfection. I would like to add though that I've had the privilege of enjoying our National Parks for more than the last 50 years. For me Yellowstone National Park is the one of the most inspiring places on earth. Every time I go there I leave with a renewed commitment to do whatever I can to help take care of our planet. It saddens me to know that some people in our country will never have an opportunity to experience "America's Great Outdoors.. I'd like our country, under your leadership, to change that.

You and your family recently vacationed in one of the parks. I believe that you enjoy these areas. Please consider protecting these areas and include more.

I think kids must learn the benefits to them of the natural world, even direct consciousness elevating ones. This went by the wayside when emphasis was on making \$ and being a business major. Without values of "greatest generation" the result was our present financial debacle! Arts, philosophy, aesthetics were discouraged in schools. We need a Roosevelt scenario for employing young and old and restoring our parks and wildlands. (D.C.)

I ALSO THINK OF LAMAR ALEXANDER AND HIS CONSTANT VOICING OF SUPPORT FOR PROTECTION OF THE PARKS. JOIN WITH HIM TO KEEP OUR PARKS HEALTHY AND SAFE FOR HABITAT. Impose visitor restrictions as needed to maintain a balance between human debilitation of the parks and access to them. Revenue from The Bush tax cuts could be used to increase the value of America's parks more effectively than if it was used too increase the consumption economy that only feeds the redistribution of wealth from the public to the liberal financiers who trade in false assets of their own invention. Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people who are not necessarily privileged enough by circumstance to visit the parks. Volunteers, like ward workers for example, could be organized to get kids in the parks if they were protected from mean spirited litigation and greedy opportunists that use the courts for impeding education rather than improving it. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculumbased materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with handson learning experiences. Parks have the potential for touching more lives than midnight basketball.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My Mother introduced me to America's Great Outdoors, by way of several amazing national parks. At 85, she was still despite handicaps taking the tram to the top of a snowy peak in the Grand Tetons, which she had wanted to see for many years. At 45, she stood on a fallen redwood and exclaimed "Can you imagine what a great tree this was!" Now, I remember her awesome spirit by these adventures together in our national parks. National parks play a major role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health as well as soulful inspiration of our people. Since we are still in difficult economic times, we should invest in these national destinations. Americans care about the future of these incredible places. They are the beautiful national treasures that we expect will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy, even if personal fortunes are not available to be inherited. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are priceless and good investments in our future.

Monies could be directed to busses taking individuals from cities instead of multiple cars. Rangers could host hikes which would ease the minds of parents in knowing that the trails are safe and enjoyable.

With the continued destruction of forest lands and natural areas it is vital that we maintain and hopefully expand the National Parks for protection of natural areas and the wildlife that live there. Children need the experience of being outdoors and experiencing the wonder of nature (and so do adults) and it is sad to think that there may be a day when our natural areas will only be a story told on the internet.

My personal first experience at a national park was in our first national park as a fifteenyearold. Yellowstone was amazing! I saw many animals I had never seen before. While it wasn't my first time in the mountains, as an Iowan at the time, I was still amazed. But the mud pots and painted rocks and waterfalls were dazzling. I would like to see the parks have a steady funding source and for user fees to be either cut or curtailed completely.

And how about getting more jobs for unemployed, bycleaning up and restoring parks that have been neglected? The WPA was not a bad thing, back in the "good old days."

Dear Mr. President; They are our National Parks so of course they should play a large role when thinking of America's great outdoors. Please remember we need to preserve as much of them as possible as pristine as possible for your children's grandchildren's grandchildren! thanks!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks and forests. National parks, forests and recreation areas play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. Recreational use of these Federal lands provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. Allow our public lands to remain accessible to the public for nondestructive recreational uses. Closing access to forest lands due to lack of funding or overzealous environmental concerns has happened far too much in recent years and must not continue. We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks, other public lands, and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Please make saving our National Parks a priority.

The National Parks have been starved financially by the Bush Administration...they want to privatize everything so that the average person can't enjoy the legacies left to us by presidents such as Teddy Roosevelt. We need our National Parks to be expanded and wellfunded.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I spent more than 35 years living and working in the national parks, many of them as manager of an archeological and collections conservation center responsible for assisting parks in the Western states to properly care for their cultural resources. I know from firsthand experience that national parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, in preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health (emotional, mental and physical) of our people. They also provide economic benefits in many ways, both large and small, that should not be overlooked. Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new publicprivate partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for future generations. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in unused revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in this fund. This money should be spent as originally intended to support and preserve parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than becoming just one more broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Because of their experiences living in and visiting national parks, my younger son has himself become a park ranger and my older son has drawn upon his background to creatively illustrate several children's books. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculumbased materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands on learning experiences. My two youngest grandchildren eagerly seek out junior ranger programs in every one of the many parks they visit. Their experiences give them an eagerness for learn more and a broader perspective on life. We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must evolve to more fully represent the history, culture and natural resources of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Please also remember that new units need additional, adequate funding; other units should not be shorted to stay within arbitrarily imposed general funding limits. Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the habitat needed to live and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand politically imposed and continually shrinking boundaries drawn on a map. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are critical investments in our future. Thank you for considering my comments (Io Triumphe 1957).

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Even though I cannot camp in the National Parks any more, I still relish the memories of my experiences in many of them. They were our best vacations for the beauty and serenity to be found there. We are so in need of this remarkable natural foundation of our country!

I would also encourage you to support our National Wildlife Refuges and Marine sanctuaries too and make these places safe from incompatible destructive and extractive uses.

Thank you for considering my comments You might also think about taking some hard core inner city kids and introducing them to the great outdoors, for some of them, it will probably be the first time in their lives that they breathed fresh AIR!~.

Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. As a longtime lover of the outdoors and of our national parks, it is hard to overstate the importance of preserving these gems of the American experience. They truly are "America's Best Idea". Thank you for anything you can do to make sure that all future generations have unimpeded access to these paragons of American culture.

STOP the roundup and removal of America's wild horses and burros, and release the ones already captured.

National parks have for years played an important role in my lifetraveling with family as a youngster; hiking in the Smokies every chance I got while I was in graduate school; taking my mother, aunt and and landlord who were all in their seventies on a trip across the United States from North Carolina to California and the Pacific North West. Now I am a senior citizen and still cherish our national parksI spent my 10th wedding anniversary riding a mule to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. The national parks preserve the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contribute to the health of our people. What a great opportunity to put people who need work to work doing the backlog of work that needs to be done to maintain trails and other infrastructure.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks, forests and wilderness areas. Of those I believe that the I recommend that you take the following steps: Protect the integrity of our parks from becoming "developed" by surrounding them with inappropriate commercial activity and by permitting inappropriate and highly polluting caravans of offroad vehicles to damage young trees and chase wildlife from their habitat.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's national parks must BE PROTECTED FOREVER....& ever! Don't mess around with them. Conservation & environment is priority 1! Please.

First of all, let me say that you and your administration must learn to protect the environment you claimed you cared about before you were elected. Despite that pledge and our corresponding votes, you appointed a Sec. of the Interior in Ken Salazar who has spearheaded the butcher of our nation;'s wolf population, animals who belong here, had been restored at great expense by those of us who care, and who were improving the natural aspects of the environments they inhabited. Right now America's environment is in much worse shape than it was under the reign of the self proclaimed "world's greatest polluter", George Bush. For the first time in over 30 years I am thinking I cannot vote Democratic again if this is the result. I find it incredible that you have sanctioned this type of despicable behavior from your Cabinet officers.

The Asian Carp need to be stopped and they threaten National parks and Shoreline here in Michigan. Please stop them in your home state before the ruin ours!

America's national parks must BE PROTECTED FOREVER....& ever!

Our national parks are national treasures. I love spending time in our parks, enjoying all the wonderful sights and wildlife.

Our National Parks are at the very heart of "America the Beautiful," in every way. We need to ensure the viability of longterm survival of these irreplaceable national treasures that we call our National Parks. It is critical that your administration take the following steps:

I was raised in the outdoors, because we didn't have a lot of money when I was young, we would go to parks within driving distance. I learned to camp, hike, fish and boat in these beautiful places. I learned about the night sky, the local plants and animals from my father who loved these things. Is there anything better than the smell of a campfire and roasted hot dogs? As an adult I found I am at peace when walking through the woods and still often go there now with my husband and family. And though I do not yet have children, when I do, I will teach them to love, respect and admire the natural beauty that we live in. The National parks in our country will be where I continue to go for vacation as long as they exist. There are many people who care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It has been suggested that your administration take the following steps: Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group with a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration could apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public/private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. BUT IF THIS INVOLVES PUBLIC PARTIES 'OWNING' ANYTHING, I WOULD NOT SUPPORT THIS. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Build on programs that work.

Please keep ATV's & guns out of our National Parks...

I'm writing to urge you to protect our national parks. This is a very important issue to me. I grew up camping at National Parks with my family, and I want to be able to do the same with my children. Therefore, I ask you to take the following steps:

PROTECT THE YELLOWSTONE BISON STOP LETTING MONTANA HAZE, CORRAL, VACCINATE AND KILL THEM!!!!

While our children were growing up, we camped and toured some of our great National parks....it was a wholesome experience that helped nourish our children and teach them the beauty and value of God's creation. Camp fire talks by Rangers were very educational, so Last year, my husband and I toured Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota....what a treasure to see the buffalo grazing in the grasslands. I cringe when I think of how the herds have been wiped out for greedy purposes. I am a little concerned now about guns allowed in our National Parks. I don't think I would feel as safe camping as I did a few years ago. Stop the killing of wolvesit is so sad to see how they are slaughtered. Every animal that God created is precious and has a valuable purpose in the overall health of the ecosystem. It would be great for you to take your family to Mt. Rushmore....what an awesome place to reflect our heritage.

I have been enjoying the National Parks for the past 60 years. I am now looking forward to enjoying them with my grandchildren. The National Parks Conservation Assoc. has a plan to keep our parks viable. I heartily agree with them and pray you will take action where possible to maintain or greatest asset.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The National Parks are the jewels of America. They provide outstanding recreational and educational opportunities to all Americans. They must be supported financially to upgrade and maintain their infrastructure and public facilities. More support for expanded staff at the parks is needed. A new program to put the unemployed youth of America to work maintaining the national parks, similar to Roosevelt's CCC, should be instituted. Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and knowhow that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country.

This initiative is a GREAT idea, a step in the right direction, positive, brilliant! I only wish I lived closer to one of our National Parks, or could afford to visit any of them, or could do something for them, the ones I've seen are truly magnificent, and I've seen pictures of many of the rest and know they are too, they are treasures to be preserved, saved, cared for! Thanks for doing this, I hope it works!!! Next on the agenda...JOBS, PLEASE!!! There has to be a way to change this outofcontrol, surreal nightmare of an economy!!! It's so discouraging, depressing, frustrating and sickening what is happening to the dreams of so many people no jobs, no homes, financial ruin, sick, no health care, you know all about it. But for those of us on the receiving end of this insanity, it feels hopeless. And, I certainly don't see a way out of this, I don't see it getting any better anytime soon. But, what do I know, I'm just an administrative assistant, living outside of Detroit, trying to hold onto my little home, like my family members and friends, and I know that's not what this is supposed to be about but I saw the opportunity to reach you and had to take it! I don't know what you can do, I don't know what ANYONE can do, but we need help!!! Please!!! ALL my comments!

Why just use the military to fight with? How about putting those people to work in noncombat capacities for our national good?

In addition, put some stimulus money to work creating jobs, like the Civilian Conservation Corps of the past, to do the work repairing and building park infrastructure, as was used to help create some of our national parks. We are not a monarchy, but the national parks are some of the American equivalent of the nation's "Crown Jewels."

Please invest in the National Parks!

And PLEASE put the wolves back on the endangered list...I don't go to wilderness areas to see white rednecks with guns! America is so out of whack.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I also think of how much of our wonderful open space is being eaten up by development and overpopulation. We need to preserve and protect the national parks we have and create more! Lots more.

My wife and I have visited over 300 of our National Park sites during our 47 years together. Those locations are some of the most awesome and inspirational places we have been. I can not emphasize enough that our NPS must have the money and support to continue the legacy into the 21st century and beyond. Thank you.

And one last thing, use this opportunity for a hiring opportunity and greatly increase the park staff by hiring many more employees and train them from the ground up.

Our National Parks belong to all of us and we need to protect them

What has been lost can never be recovered. Please help us protect these wonderful parks!

When an old retired national park ranger like me thinks of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year, but they could do much more. College professors too need to be encouraged to work as naturalists in summer as they used to when I was a ranger. The ski industry is also an excellent source of seasonal talent. Heliski guides, like I was for instance, could be encouraged to help fill in the shoulder seasons when teachers aren't available. National Forests are especially important in this regard.

President Obama, I realize you have so many decisions to make for so many earthshaking problems we face today, but I hope you will find the time to support this protection of our National Parks, so vital and so taken for granted. Please provide this permanent funding. Thank you for all you do.

WHEN I TAUGHT 4TH GRADE, WE TOOK THE CHILDREN TO THE BIG THICKET NATIONAL PRESERVE. THE PARK RANGERS HAD WONDERFUL PROGRAMS FOR THEM! I LIVE 45 MINUTES FROM THE GULF COAST. Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. IT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL IN THE BIG THICKET NATIONAL PRESERVE. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands on learning experiences. MY HUSBAND AND I HAVE TRAVELED TO 49 OF OUR 50 STATES AND HAVE VISITED NATIONAL PARKS IN MOST OF THEM. WE HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING NEW EVERY TIME! MY GRANDCHILDREN LOVE THEM TOO.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

..Allow no mining or drilling or casinos on land immediately adjacent to parks. They would interfere with the preservation purpose of our parks forever.

The great national parks which our county has are an important part of our heritage, and once they are gone or fall into further states of disrepair, it could be too late. When I recall taking my children and other family members to some of our parks like Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Rocky Mtn. Nat. Park, just to name a few, I remember the wonderful times we all shared by being in these vast and majestic places, places that we need to preserve and keep for generations to come. Perhaps it is time to focus on employing our many unemployed in a new program similar to Rosevelts when we created so many jobs and built parks and systems for the masses, which we still enjoy. Whatever we do, we must help these great places survive, they give so much to all of us.

Those of us in Utah need your all the help we can muster, including yours, to preserve our precious wild lands that give us clean air, drinking water, open space, beautiful recreation areas and wildlife habitat against the onslaught of off road vehicles and a myriad of other threats.

We are asking you to preserve what we have left !

As the author behind the pseudonym of William Sarabande and creator of Bantam Books' internationally best selling series, "The First Americans", I have long attempted through my novels to to be a voice for conservation of our nation's precious wilderness heritage. Our nation's most populous state desperately needs your help to preserve its remaining wild lands that give us clean air, drinking water, open space, beautiful recreation areas, and wildlife habitat.

Take back the Lake Tahoe Basin from developers and their customers. Protect the critical wildlife habitat of the Upper Truckee River marsh and wetland by establishing a core wildlife protection area.

Create more wilderness areas in the Shasta/Klamath region, one of the most biologically rich and diverse ecosystems in the world. Protect the northern Sierra Nevada from "checkerboard" development.

What kind of world do we want to leave behind for future generations? Please do everything in your power to ensure that we preserve our natural resources and respect wildlife. We depend on nature for our survival so it makes sense to take care of her.

And, let's not forget Mt. Shasta or the lava bed area or Big Sur and the Ventana wilderness.

Preservation of California's wild places is a priority for me and the majority of Californians.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mono Lake and the watershed that feeds it also needs help.

Off road vehicles should be banned to prevent habitat destruction.

As a second generation native Californian, I love my state and believe it has some of the most beautiful land and wonderful diversity of species anywhere on earth. I would also like to see a zero population growth policy instituted nationally, as there are far too many people on earth as it is, and our quality of life, not to mention the possibility of life itself for the many species we are imperiling and driving to extinction by choking the planet with our own unneeded progeny, is suffering greatly.

Protect and reform the BLM's Wild Horse & Burro program. The Salazar Initiative is bad for wild horses and burros the Administration must change the business as usual approach and manage these animals on the range and stop the roundup removal warehouse process continued by Ken Salazar.

I suggest that preserving the Pacific coastline as undeveloped should be a top priority for the enjoyment and wonder of future generations. I also suggest that development in the western Sierra's be limited to avoid overuse in all areas above 4000 feet elevation in order to limit encroachment of development and urbanization that would create poor air quality throughout the Sierras (which are fortunately already protected from "local"... i.e. development etc. in the currently protected Wilderness and National Parks. The Tahoe area should have further development curtailed for the same reason to avoid irreversible damage due to overuse and toxic air quality.

Make national forests like the Stanislaus in the Sierra Nevada mountains a priority, as they contribute immensely to our national beauty, wildlife and livelihoods.

Please give special attention to protecting the San Jacinto Mountains and great Desert Area of Palm Springs.

First and foremost I would like to suggest that the Spotted Owl be placed on the endangered species list as there are approximately 200 owls left in California and we need to prioritize safekeeping and preservation of their habitat.

Please protect California.

while I have little faith in you if some monied interest offers you a sawbuck to rape the land. For mouthing a desire to fund the land and serve Californians I must thank you, President Obama. We look forward to your involvement with the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Brushing these areas could improve safety. Also the Forest Service could use some extra help in the National Forests. Some of the most critical areas to protect would be the shorelines...stop all drilling for oil!

Please help us put the planet on the road to recovery.

I believe you as do I have childhood memories of going on trips or outings to natural parks and lakes. Shouldn't we make sure all the generations of America have this chance to form these precious memories?

My state needs your help to preserve our remaining wild lands that give us clean air, drinking water, open space, beautiful recreation areas, and wildlife habitat.

PLEASE CONSIDER THIS IN A LARGER SENSE; WHAT BETTER WAY TO CREAT JOBS AROUND NOT ONLY CA, BUT THE US, ESPECIALLY PLACES LIKE LOUISIANA, WHAT BETTER WAY TO CREATE THE 'OBAMA NEW DEAL', HELP THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY WITH JOBS! .

Watershed and Wildlife Habitat are my priorities.

We need you to complete the job that Congress started back in 1978 by establishing the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area within and directly adjacent to the second largest population center in America.

Please continue to do all you can to protect and preserve our precious wildlands and wilderness. Please!

Hi. Our Governor is working with many of us to preserve and protect all of land in California, but we need your help. Yes we can!

ACHEIVE A SUSTAINABLE POPULATION BY REDUCING LEGAL IMMIGRATION AND STOPPING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION..WHICH AMNESTY ("Comprehensive Immigration Reform") IS IN DIRECT CONFLICT.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

California, one of the most known states in the grand U.S., needs help to preserve its remaining wild lands that give us clean air, drinking water, open space, beautiful recreation areas, and wildlife habitat. Protect our Wilderness: In California, we are working with Congressional leaders to protect the San Gabriel Mountains, the California Desert, in northern San Diego County, and many other regions. Your support of these proposals can preserve our wildest lands for future generations. Address Conservation at a Large Scale: Please support conservation of large landscapes like BerryessaSnow Mountain that include pristine wildlands. This provides us with the best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality, and climate change adaptation while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat: Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. TBy restoring our northern forests in the Sierra and the Klamath, or the San Gabriel Mountains in Southern California, we can spur economic growth by providing needed jobs, and improve recreation opportunities. Green jobs can include removing illegal roads and forest restoration projects in northern forests, and cleaning up San Gabriel Mountains and River areas that lack enough trash cans and restrooms. Most importantly, having two daughters of your own, you understand the importance of teaching ethical decisions at a young age. Hopefully, you agree with Supporting Proposals to Connect the Outdoors to People Especially Youth: Thank you, President Obama, for working to keep California the Golden State. With the busy schedule always piling, please really consider this act. Keeping our wildlife and state beautiful is certainly key for a brighter future.

The Buttes in Chico are said to be where the souls of the local Indians go when they die. The Buttes are unique landforms and should be preserved for the future generations of Californians.

Stop largescale wind power projects (turbines) from being placed in natural, public lands including national forests. Ditto for powerlines.

We need to save our wild open places for our emotional and physical health and that of our children. Stewardship for the future.

Help keep wild lands and forests, hills and rivers free and safe for wildlife : declare them OFF LIMITS to hunters and fishermen and restricted to motorized vehicles of all sorts . Please allow animals their peace and quiet , they deserve it as well as men do. No private cattle on federal lands .

We also need to protect working landscapes, small farms and ranches, rangelands, and working forests for food and balanced harvests.

Reprotect our iconic wild horses & burros on their legal Western public lands before they're managed to extinction by the BLM at huge taxpayer expense. Create ecotourism opportunities/jobs to raise awareness & educate the public/youth about these symbols of our Western culture & heritage & encourage/promote visitation to wild herd areas. Our national treasures deserve their fair share of the public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Stop outsourcing the management of our national monuments, parks and other lands. And, stop closing State Parks and monuments. These are among the priorities that are important to continue those traditions that make our country the country to which people want to emigrate. CCC buildings are still standing proudly as working buildings reminding us of ways to serve our people and the land instead of business interests and those of profit only. To ensure a promising future for California, the nation's most populous state, please consider these priorities for your America's Great Outdoors initiative:

As a California native, I'd like to say that our nation's most populous state needs your help to preserve its remaining wild lands that give us clean air, drinking water, open space, beautiful recreation areas, and wildlife habitat.

As we watch the Gulf of Mexico slowly turn into a permanent toxic sludge pond, we realize that we need to be even more vigilant in our protection of our remaining healthy pristine natural areas from corporate profiteering and destruction and careless abuse. Please add our land and water to the oath you took to "preserve and protect".

Please protect key landscapes on a large scale for the land, for the people, before it's too late. I ask that: 1) The Obama administration conserve large landscapes, including our healthy wildlands, connecting them with working forest and ranch lands, private lands and the connections across these large areas.

I moved to Colorado to experience the open spaces of the West yet all I've seen is prime land gobbled up for development (either building or extraction industries). Over the decades what I've experienced is less access to areas where I was free to hike and explore. Private entities purchase land surrounding the BLM, Forest Service or wilderness and deny access to the public lands behind their properties. Our public lands are not their private playground or buffer zone. Please choose wisely when deciding which areas to protect and make sure access to these wonderful areas is provided. Make sure there are provisions disallowing surrounding landowners to cut off or deny access to these areas. This final point is extremely important as we have seen the ruinous effects left behind by shoddy mining practices and the terrible destruction of ecosystems surrounding oil shale projects. Every man, woman and child need to be a steward of this world and a good place to set an example is in this still-great nation of ours by protecting that which is most precious to our lives. Thank you for your time.

The Obama Administration stops Christo's Over the River project on the Arkansas River in Fremont County, Colorado.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a 20 year resident of Colorado, I know that the public lands in this state are essential to the health and welfare of its people and its economy. Support opportunities for sportsmen to continue enjoying healthy and challenging hunting and fishing on federal public lands. Preserve the values and access that make backcountry hunting a wholly unique endeavor. This can be done through a variety of measures, including through the designation of backcountry hunting Special Recreation Management Areas as has been proposed by the Jarbidge, Idaho and Little Snake, Colorado BLM Field Offices in their respective Resource Management Plan revisions. Thank you President Obama, we look forward to your involvement with the America's Great Outdoors Initiative in Colorado.

It is time to get our priorities straight. The good of the country must come ahead of corporate greed. Left unchecked, corporations will use our wonderful land for profit only

It's crucial to act now to preserve New Mexico wilderness for future generations. Please don't delay!

The birthplace of wilderness, New Mexico, is home to some of this country's wildest remaining public lands. From the southern desert grassland Otero Mesa to the wild and scenic Rio Grande, our vast public lands support native wildlife and plant species, significant water resources, and imperiled desert ecosystems. These amazing places are beloved by New Mexicans and many more Americans for their hiking, hunting and fishing, and river running opportunities. Constantly under threat from oil and gas development, many pristine lands and important habitats have been destroyed.

. Once these wild natural sites are opened to development they are lost forever. They are irreplaceable.

People come to NM to appreciate the open spaces and vistas that we all treasure. Please help us preserve our public lands for generations to come. More and more people need the spiritual nourishment that comes from the land.

With a Republican almost sure to be our next governor, and her ties to the oil and gas industry, New Mexico needs your help in preserving our wilderness. She certainly wn't. She's even running on that sort of platform. Thank you, President Obama. This independent voter still believes in you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect the Corrales Bosque Preserve, a highly successful Nature Preserve along the Rio Grande, with bird counts rivaling that of rainforest populations. This section of The Rio Grande Bosque provides habitat to numerous species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians as well as Native plants, and should be treated separately and with greater care than other restoration areas along the river. Bulldozing techniques for lower bank elevation and invasive thinning techniques including herbicide use should be replaced by a more careful approach to protect species already present. Strict adherence to limitations set by The Migratory Bird Act should be enforced particularly regarding actions of MRGCD, the agency most involved in its maintenance, and to a lesser degree SCAFCA, and also The Army Corps of Engineers, whose levee improvement requirements should consider the effect on precious limited habitat in this unique section of riparian habitat along a much altered and degraded International Flyway.

Increase funding for recreation, BUT ELIMINATE OFF ROAD VEHICLE ROADS/RECREATION AREAS AND RESTORE THEM TO PROTECTED NATURE RESOURCE AREAS. improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010: The bill (H.R. 1612) "increases service opportunities for youth and young adults on public lands (ages 18-24), providing green jobs, improving infrastructure, restoring public lands, encouraging cultural and historical research, improving the health of coastal, marine and estuarine ecosystems, addressing climate change and assisting with scientific data collection."

Instead of spending money on messy wars that don't go anywhere, why not spend the money on our public lands, so all can enjoy them?

I am especially interested in programs restoring the health of San Francisco Bay the water, the marshlands, and the fish and other animals. The Bay has been sadly abused over the past 150 years, and its restored health would help everyone.

We have barely enough of them for the constantly burgeoning population.

While a huge fuss was kicked up at the time the coastal lands north of San Francisco were protected, that public land is now part of what draws tourism here, and creates jobs in our region.

All requests for increasing existing financial support, or creating new programs that need new financial support, should follow the significant reduction of our current federal and state deficits.

Public lands MUST BE 100% PROTECTED!! The San Francisco Bay Area hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. I STRONGLY urge you to implement the following priorities:

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I do not want to see any more of our PUBLIC LANDS seized by the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT!! We have plenty of parks already and it seems as if the GOVERNMENT is having a hard time taking care of the ones we have. I attended one of the forums the president and our illustrious secretary of the interior sponsored and I can tell you they are not interested in making our land accessible to the people. I had to laugh when one of the men there was complaining because the trails in wilderness areas are deteriorating because you can't do any improvements to trails (or anything else) in these areas. Wow, imagine that! I personally have seen hundreds of thousands of acres of dead trees (beetle kill) just waiting to catch fire because these dead trees happen to be in a wilderness area and NOTHING can be done to eliminate this HUGE DISASTER waiting to happen because it's a wilderness area! This is insanity! I could go on and on but the one thing I want you to understand is this, I love this land and I don't harm it by going out in the wild and staying on trails and good roads that have existed for years and years. Locking us out of our PUBLIC LANDS is an attempt to control our movements and I for one do not appreciate any attempt to do that. If you love freedom then let THE PEOPLE be free to roam this great and wonderful land in which we live.

That last thing the US government should do is to take away the land of the people that care for it. Please let the american citizens take care of this land as private property as the only way to conserve our rights. Please put a stop to this land grab.

Our Country is number one in land of the free, home of the brave Our Children need to be encouraged to see our Country it National and State parks The HISTORY in our Nation is learned from the sight, the walk and the touch of the trees and rocks that form our Country. Keep America Beautiful and Save the open lands that make us unique. The Youth of our Country needs your support

Hiking America's great wild places is a way that my family connects with each other, and connects ourselves to the outdoors, a vital part of the human experience.

What is the future to look like? A Dickensian land of industrial soot and barren, treeless soils; of slag and smoke; a country so devoid of any majesty that one must look to the corporate-enslaved media in order to view what our National Parks used to look like? Or, do we do the right thing for (hopefully) countless future generations and stand up to Corporate America by saying that there are some places on this planet that have not yet been utterly devastated by the hands of man for the cause of something as greedy and insipid as profit, and shall not be as long as this government endures?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of the largest challenges faced in the future is how to encourage young people to learn to appreciate the country's natural resources. I serve as Vice-President of the Natchez Trace Parkway Association. The explorer Meriwether Lewis's grave is located within the jurisdiction of the Parkway. The Park Service should use Lewis's story to engage younger generations and to encourage them to explore national parks. The story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition still captivates all generations. Lewis's mission to make discoveries of new species and to carefully record his findings could be modeled by young people in national parks. Many young people today have a fear of nature - it is foreign to what they see on their electronic screens. The themes of adventure, overcoming challenges and discovery that Lewis's story conveys would encourage young people to overcome their fears and to want to learn about nature. An education center should be built at the Meriwether Lewis site on the Parkway to begin to develop methods to use new technology and time-tested hands-on methods based upon Lewis's story. The methods could be tested in the three states through which the Parkway passes. If successful, the methods easily could be incorporated into interpretation at Lewis and Clark-related sites across the country and then to other parks. We are missing out on an opportunity to make continued exploration of nature an enduring legacy of Meriwether Lewis.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too, but if this means that the government can continue to buy vast amounts of land just so they can do whatever they want with it in the future forget it!!! The public needs to continue to have the freedom to buy American property and develop it as they wish. Exactly what is the Federal Government's plan for protecting America's great outdoors?

Ever since early childhood, I have spent a considerable amount of my free time outside hiking, camping and just enjoying the great outdoors. Not only important to me, the outdoors are vitally important to what America stands for. The United States was founded by people who sought freedom. America's wildernesses represent that in their essence. I want my children to enjoy America's great outdoors just like I have. The time to act is NOW.

My husband is from Scotland where history is cherished and respected. I make a point of making sure that my children see America the beautiful. Experience the beach the mountains the cities. Please protect it so that I may share it with my grandkids. I am 35 years old. Already planning what I am going to show my grandkids!!

I am a supporter of yours, and like many others who voted for you, would like to see a strong land protection initiative, one that benefits all areas of our country. Please be bold! People need open spaces, wildlife, and access to the outdoors to live a healthy life! Especially people living in overbuilt places like southeastern Pennsylvania, where I live!

America's environment is in critical condition. I ask you to support the movement to protect the environment so that we can live in a pleasant environment, and not one of waste.

Please stop closing our public lands. That is our recreation is to explore and four wheel in the back country.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thanks for taking on such a great initiative. Please support full funding of the Land & Water Conservation Fund, and ensure that the Recreational Trails Program -- the only national trail grant program in the United States -- receives continued investment nationwide. I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to keep our natural resources available to all, free of charge. Why should we have to pay to enjoy what is naturally there?

Saving and preserving our land is so important! Without the land, trees, plants, water, we cannot survive. Our job is to care for the creatures and living things we have been given. Protecting our resources is vital for our future. Without it, the next generation of Americans may not be able to enjoy America's great outdoors. We also need to work together as a nation to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests. Something must be done before these outdoor spaces are gone forever.

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul" - John Muir John Muir knew it. So did Teddy Roosevelt, Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, and thousands of other great Americans. One doesn't have to be a granola crunching tree hugger to appreciate Nature's wonders. Wild spaces are therapeutic for even the most citified soul. There is something precious and unique about America, one of the last great frontiers of the world. That's why our national parks get millions of international visitors each year; Europeans who need to experience the wilderness because they have none left. Please protect our open spaces and wilderness for future generations. Let our children have the opportunity to swim in a wild river, climb a mountain peak, commune with Mother Nature with the grass beneath their feet, witness other species, besides homo sapiens, fulfilling their circle of life. Protect our wild lands and you protect the nation's soul.

Please include a large Hawaiian initiative in America's Great Outdoors. Hawaii has an incredible number of endangered birds, plants, and other organisms. The last bird extinction in the United States was a Po'ouli in Hawaii in 2003. Unfortunately, the next bird extinction in the United States will probably also be in Hawaii. One estimate is that we will need to spend \$100 million per year over the next ten years to give native Hawaiian birds and plants a chance for survival. Hawaiian birds are threatened by global warming, as well as by non-native invasive species and non-native diseases.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If we do not preserve enough wilderness, the health and sanity of human beings will suffer even more than current trends. Anxiety will increase, war over natural resources will increase, and the Earth will continue to respond with abnormally frequent natural disasters. Please remind people that life is a dynamic process and that if we do not plan for the long term endurance and health of our planet, then we can be assured that we will disrupt the pleasant future for our children, grandchildren, etc. PS--thanks for doing such a great job in a VERY DIFFICULT environment thus far. The people are ready to have courage, now.....go for it!

I take my children backpacking every summer. Despite the initial complaints, they love being on the trails and looking for wildlife, especially lizards.

I want people to think first because this is really important. What is keeping us alive? : Nature. What creates oxygen from carbon dioxide? : trees and What are we cutting down every single day? : trees Now if trees keeps us alive then isn't this and act of suicide because we are killing if not us our later generation?

I want to enjoy America's great outdoors!!! SAVE OUR BEAUTIFUL EARTH & ANIMALS!!

Every American should be able to enjoy the beauty of their homeland. My best to you and your family. You are doing a great job!

I live in western colorado. I am a refugee from washington, dc. There are seldom days any more when the air in this rural part of the state isn't filled with a thic, noticeable haze. It used not to be like this at all. I've been in and out of colorado for the past thirty years, and I see the damage done to the wilderness by rampant development of homes and indiscriminate mining and drilling. wilderness areas need to be actively protected against those who seek short term gain while destroying our natural areas in perpetuity.

Yet another valid reason to support OHV use in the US: Economic impact. Americas active OHV lifestyle circulates billions of dollars within our borders. A typical family's recreation expenditures include RV, trailer, camping gear, ATV/Dirtbikes, protective gear/apparel, accesories, fuel, food, etc. Every weekend, millions of citizens are sustaining our needy economy by enjoying their public lands. We should encourage the growth of our recreation-oriented pastimes. We need more designated OHV trail systems to meet the demand. Thank You,

Having just returned from a trip to Glacier National Park, I can see how important it is to not only set aside lands for national parks, but to also protect the lands surrounding this park and the many others like it. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

New York State's Great Swamp should be a National Park. The 20 miles of New York's second largest freshwater wetlands known as the Great Swamp should be part of the National Park Service. Because of geo-political boundaries, the Great Swamp needs national protection or it will become so degraded as to lose its biodiversity and character as a tri-state recreational wonderland, and its value as a benefit to the regional public health. Under intense development pressure because of its proximity to New York City, the Great Swamp runs through six towns, from Brewster to Dover Plains, and lacks a single strong conservation and management plan. It spans two counties, Putnam & Dutchess, and two watersheds: Croton & Housatonic (Bi-State w CT); it flows into two rivers, the East Branch of the Croton and the north-flowing Swamp River; and it is governed by two state regulatory agencies, DEC & DEP. Because of NYS Home Rule, local municipalities can and often do fly solo on significant land and water use decisions, despite the impact on the shared ecosystems of neighboring towns and States. Much of the Great Swamp lies above and serves as a recharge area for the Harlem Valley Aquifer. The Aquifer serves five towns and villages with four governing bodies, and supplies drinking water to over 20,000 residents; another 5,000 are estimated to come on line over the next 10 years. The Aquifer's public health benefits are being ignored right now as the Town of Dover grapples with a solid waste facility asserting grandfathered status under current zoning laws prohibiting the industry, and proposed on a site over our drinking water supply. Similar decisions are being made by Dover and neighboring towns without serious regard to the cumulative impact on the Swamp River, despite monumental efforts by NYS DEC. Without protection at the Federal level, we have no hope to save this remarkable and significant Outdoor Space. I propose the National Park Service work with New York State and conservation groups to extend existing NPS boundaries within the area which border the Appalachian Trail to protect and conserve The Great Swamp. Thank you,

Save our open space, clean air and water! I want my kids to be able to enjoy the outdoors as much as I did growing up.

I think an increase of smaller neighborhood schools would create more opportunities for reconnecting children and their parents to the outdoors. This could also have a positive effect on the whole community.

I want to be able to enjoy America's outdoors for the remainder of my life. It is important to our way of life that future generations be able to enjoy the outdoors too. Please take a stand and support conservation of our parks, forests, lakes, shorelines, wildlife refuges, and so many other outdoor spaces.

How about employing Americans like Roosevelt did during a great economical down turn with the creation of "The CCC" instead of bail outs to banks and so forth.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please educate the people who input on this forum that: We have to remember that we are voting on things we want the Federal Gov to implement, manage and support financially, Almost none of these ideas should be run managed and supported by the Feds, although many ideas are good, these are ideas that families and local government needs to implement and support. I mean come on, "create an agency to help kids get outdoors" have you ever heard of the Forest Service, National Park Service or the Bureau of Land Management? This entire Forum is an exercise in how to prove to American citizens how under-educated American citizens are on public land issues. All this forum will accomplish is more funding for the Feds to create BS "agencies" that try to control our lives, by deciding where our money is best spent, and it will be MANDATED, that is, LAW!!!! The Federal Government is not here to save us or better manage our lives, that is our responsibility!!!!!!!!!!!!

My recommendations for connecting us with the great outdoors: It's got to be a comprehensive. Remember what John Muir said about connections... Schools: 1.recess: kids benefit from more unstructured outdoor activity. the more time they get in the out, the better they'll think on the in. 2.placed-based education, i.e. incorporate nature nearby into every subject of the curriculum 3.minimize standardized testing and encourage whole child development teaching Young Adults: Replace military recruitment and training with a conservation corp program where youth are given job training and jobs in their communities and in parks Funding/Tax Shift: 1. stand up to corporations and end perverse pollution subsidies 2.tax waste and pollution, i.e. so producers pay/internalize their full costs. 3.lower labor taxes for earners of less than \$250,000, e.g.payroll tax 4.reduce spending on defense \$100B/year for six straight years.

I am writing to you today to talk about our protected lands (National and State Parks and Forests). There was a letter pre-written for me to send to you, but I don't believe in that. Instead I'm going to tell you a little about myself. I am 25. My mother is from the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and my father is a field biologist. So I grew up half in the city and half in the wilderness. I am now a river guide in California and in the off seasons I try to spend as much of my time back-packing as often as I can. It is really a shame that you can't go anywhere in this beautiful country without being on somebody else's land, be it private or owned by the government. However, at least I am allowed to go and explore on the state and federal lands set aside for the people. I am a poor, working man and can not afford land, nor can I see myself owning land in the next ten years, especially in the state our economy is in. I know that I am not the only poor man who loves the outdoors, in fact there are probably millions of us. Please do not allow our protected lands to be sold to the private sector, and PLEASE do not allow our protected lands to be developed on! As the saying goes, "only when the last tree has been cut and the last fish has been caught, will we realize that we can not eat money!" The point is, that in the end our wilderness is more important than our economy. It is more important than Wall Street. It is more important than the most powerful people and the most powerful groups of people on the entire planet! It is infinitely more important than me, and it is infinitely more important than you. We are from the Earth and in our demise we go back to the Earth. Therefore, the Earth can never belong to us because, ultimately, we belong to the Earth. Thank you for your time.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For years American have participated in vehicular enjoyment and its ability to access places where humans cannot travel, especially ones with disabilities. The goal to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking. The Initiative must preserve Multiple Use lands as Multiple Use for current and future generations to enjoy these and all other forms of recreation. The situation at Cape Hatteras National Seashore where the National Park Service is destroying a community, a way of life for generations to save 6 pairs of NON-ENDANGERED birds is moronic at best, tyranny at its obvious worst. Multiple Use lands are where the majority of people recreate, as well as where much of our timber and beef products come from, but these lands have been closed at an alarming rate. The President must protect these precious lands by designating them permanently as Multiple Use. The initial Wilderness Act envisioned about 20 million acres as suitable. Today we have over 120 million acres of Wilderness where public access is restricted. The majority of the public have been forced onto smaller and smaller areas outside of Wilderness. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors we do not need more Wilderness areas, we need less.

Folks, I enjoyed your meeting in Bangor, Maine. I'm glad you place so much importance on the outdoors, as its crucial to our future for so many reasons. I put in my 2 cents worth at the meeting, but I'll repeat it here. 1. Get the kids outdoors. I suggested "No child left indoors" as a campaign slogan, and found it was being used. Great! Don't just say it, do it! We have had an education program in the past at DSF, but we have been short of funding it at the level we have in the past. This program has paid dividends and helped get many people involved. We could use the funds to renew its role in helping keep and get our youth in the outdoors. 2. Use local resources. By spending the available funds in small communities, groups, NGO's you get better results and the people take ownership of the projects. Volunteering is amplified, and interest multiplied. Each little group does a lot and it amounts to great things when looking at it accumulatively. 3. Use science and not politics to work restoring Mother Nature's Charm. A good example is in the salmon recovery. Politics plays a bigger role than good science, and as a result we have not recovered them! That has to change for any real improvements to evolve. 4. Promote the outdoors in all schools, public, private, or other. This is somewhat of a repeat of number 1, but it is that important. If we don't reach our younger generations, we can't much succeed with any of the programs, whatever their intention. We need to reconnect them with Mother Nature. They need this, and it will lead to healthier lives for all, and everything involved with the great outdoors. Thanks for listening,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I hereby submit the following comments for the Administration's consideration, as it develops the report for submission to President Obama. These comments cover both successes or programs in North Carolina that could be exported to other parts of the country, and recommendations that the Initiative should embrace to increase the pace of land conservation and reconnect American families to the outdoors.

North Carolina has four conservation trust funds (Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Natural Heritage Trust Fund, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund) that over the years have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to purchase land and easements for conservation purposes. They have been used as match for a variety of DOI, USDA, DOT and NOAA programs. Two of them are funded from general appropriations provided by the legislature, but the real innovation is that NHTF and PRTF receive their funding from a dedicated funding source - a percentage of the deed stamp tax - so we don't have to fight for their budgets each year at the legislature. To encourage other states to create and expand such trust funds, the Administration could place a higher priority on funding projects with greater non-federal match.

North Carolina was the first state to create a conservation tax credit for donated conservation easements. Two years ago, the state passed a law and is implementing a "Wildlife Use Value" property tax category so that farmers or forest owners who want to preserve their land as wildlife habitat rather than as a working farm or forest can continue to have the same low property tax rate as before.

Last year the General Assembly passed a law making it harder for local governments to condemn properties that have conservation easements on them. Similar bills could be introduced in other states.

North Carolina is a leader in targeting high priority lands for conservation purposes. Through a state contract for preservation mitigation six years ago (more details below), many of the state's land trusts were provided with GIS mapping software. Concurrently, the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources was putting together its "One North Carolina Naturally" plan, which targets areas of the state that DENR agencies are interested in. Today, between 15 and 20 land trusts have the staff and technology to create their own digitized conservation plans, by parcel, based on their organization's conservation priorities.

Six years ago, the state was way behind in producing wetlands and stream mitigation credits for roads and other projects to move forward. The state DOT, DENR and the Army Corps, with EPA's blessing, created the Ecosystem Enhancement Program to accelerate the process of securing mitigation credits. The creative stroke was developing a contract with the Conservation Trust for North Carolina to provide preservation properties as mitigation, on a 10:1 ratio as compared to restoration. CTNC then subcontracted with land trusts in the parts of the state that needed mitigation. The land trusts in turn worked with landowners to place conservation easements on nearly 100 properties, which had both important water quality attributes and imminent threat of development. The state was able to catch up on its credit needs quickly. The money came from DOT, which paid for acquisition and transaction costs, and for staffing and other administrative costs at the land trusts. This contract proved hugely important to land trusts' ability to increase their capacity. EPA's wetlands guidelines still allow preservation as mitigation, so the Administration could encourage other states to use preservation as a mitigation strategy.

North Carolina land trusts are pursuing a number of avenues to diversify who we are and who we work with, so that we better represent and serve all North Carolinians. Initiatives include: land trusts working with community development

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

corporations to create site plans for conservation-based affordable housing (clustering housing units and preserving open space and stream banks); a summer internship program at land trusts for students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (stipends provided by foundation grant funds we raised); increased outreach to minority farmers regarding their conservation options; passage of a law on heirs property issues that makes it easier for families to hold on to their land; and creation of a community garden in the middle of a Hope 6 housing development.

The military has been a great partner to land trusts and national conservation groups in preserving thousands of acres near military bases in North Carolina. The original impetus was to protect endangered species habitat, but it has expanded to include preservation of buffers around bases to ward off encroachment and ensure the safety of training exercises. The Administration could encourage DoD to pursue similar conservation projects at many of its facilities.

The following is a list of recommendations that the Conservation Trust hopes the Administration will champion as part of the AGO initiative. Briefly:

- Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Make permanent the expanded (but lapsed) federal tax incentives for donated conservation easements
- Devote significantly more funding to land acquisition along the Blue Ridge Parkway
- Work to make USDA conservation programs more user-friendly, particularly the appraisal process, and make them more available for land trust involvement
- Ask Department of Education to provide incentives and materials to schools to include in their curricula outdoor experiential environmental learning
- Provide more funding and incentives for local greenways, trails, and parks
- Provide more funding and incentives to encourage greater farmland preservation and production of fresh, local and healthy foods.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our ecosystem is in danger and its up to all of us to make the crucial changes needed to start healing our planets wounds. these changes must be extreme, they will challenge us, as a nation, to step up and endure the radical process of awareness or be forced to face the consequences of ruining our most precious resource and our home. although change is hard for some, the rewards of sacrificing convenience and vanity for an enlightened world of sustainability and balance are worth it. we need to make investments of our time and creativity to find solutions to our nations and worlds problems. i believe this will take an effort bigger than health care reform. it is going to take all levels of government to enforce change. it will also take the effort of each individual to be the generation that WOKE UP and realized that we are like disrespectful fools. would you let your kids destroy a home you worked so hard to create for them? NOOO!! you would set them straight, punish, explain, maybe even make them move, but you would not let them destroy it. so lets stop destroying our home planet ok? we cant just fine companies for destroying our planet. they shouldnt be given that opportunity if such a catastrophe of global significance is within their abilities. lets all eat some humble pie and think about what we are investing our lives in. i know its fun to drive nice(pollution producing) cars and its fun to eat chemically preserved fast frozen quick fried foods, but the impact our greedy lazy bad habits have on us, our kids and our earth is sadenning, frightening, unexusable, ignorant and pathetic. we can either get excited about being intelligent and inventive and acclamate to change or just sit on our behinds and watch the world be destroyed by our own selves, by our own denial. how do we go to war to teach another country how to thrive when the example we set in reality could end in destruction of all? that is extreme to say but we have to be the example of how to live well and hurting our planet to live well is not acceptable for most people. when we stand to fight for good let us fight for all that is good, not just what we decide for ourselves. we fight for freedom...let us use that freedom for what we know is right. let us be known for a nation that not only is free but a nation that protects for the good of all humanity. we have fought so hard for individual rights and freedoms. now let us fight for the freedom of humanity to be cut loose from the harm that we cause our earth. let us find new ways to still live happily but without impacting our planet in such harmful ways. WE CAN DO IT!!!! we need for companies, individuals and schools to be encouraged, aided and rewarded for any and all contributions, inventions, ideas and plans that will slowly begin the change of going from a grey polluted society to a green healthy one, as it should be. the recent oil well catastrophe made me ashamed of so many people. even myself. how did we let this happen and more importantly what other disasters are just waiting to happen if people dont speak up and let the right people know of any impending doom. yes jobs could be lost but MAYBE we could give assistance to whistle blowers in order to enable them to speak up and save us all. as i watched that oil gush and gush and it just didnt stop i thought WHAT THE F***? ARE YOU KIDDING ME? WE ARE SMARTER THAN THIS. but it kept gushing and gushing and it became clear to me. idiots. greedy, fearful, self centered, ignorant, unrealistic, UNACCOUNTABLE PASS THE BUCK kind of people. i know they dont care about our natural world so this is just an inconvenience to them, and a few bucks. what confounds me is that most people i know are really good people. why isnt our government representing us like we truly are? we want our government to run our country like we run our lives, efficiently, with care and with respect for its environment. americans have to budget their income so does our government. with COMPROMISE AND INGENUITY, PRIORITIES AND NEEDS ESTABLISHED, WE CAN REACH OUR

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

GOALS AS A NATION AND A PEOPLE!

Mr. President. I am a 20 year old pre-Environmental Studies Major at Southern Oregon University. I recently started taking backpacking trips into remote areas of Oregon's beautiful backcountry, and although i've seen Discovery's 'Planet Earth', i was utterly astounded at the literal wonderlands. These trips have inspired me to learn and participate in the environmental revolution, and have also given me a greater sense of empowerment. I know that i am capable of single handedly existing in the wilderness for at least four days (my longest trip so far) with minimal impact, and relative comfort. This feeling of capability extends to all areas of my life and makes it easier to support what I believe in. Action on the individual level, as much as in the government, has been one of the more prominent themes of your administration, and we both know that the inability to inspire action is the most frustrating part of change. I want to see the expansion of shared and protected parks, trails, forests, and other gems of wilderness so that future generations may experience the same inspiration i have, and will feel capable of impacting their world in more ways than just the size of their carbon footprint.

Please stop trying to shut the door on Americans enjoying the outdoors. The Initiative must preserve Multiple Use lands as Multiple Use for current and future generations to enjoy these and all other forms of recreation.

Solutions must be for ALL users, not just hikers and the Wilderness Act of 1964 needs to be revised to include mechanized travel. Wilderness should not be open to just hikers, horses and pack animals. NO MORE WILDERNESS! We want to enjoy the land and experiences that a well managed forest provides to ALL USERS, not just the Sierra Club. Let me be clear: NO MORE WILDERNESS!!!

Now is the time to stand by your promises, honor your words, and possibly save the human race from extinction by protecting as much original genetic material as possible through conservation across our nation & world. We need to help the human race off the planet as fast as possible before our current breeding trends/consumerism cause global ruin. Please reconsider ALL lobbyists and follow your best interests in your great grandchildren children's future. The only hope is conservation until we can devote more resources towards space colonization. I would welcome any contact for help from your administration toward this purpose.

Remember the inherent financial wealth contained in natural spaces and the income from tourism and educational visits.

Please protect our wild lands and open spaces. Once they are gone, we can't get them back. Wild lands are vitally important to the well-being of our population. Wild lands can be many thousands of acres or even just a small lot in a town. Please protect undeveloped areas EVERY WHERE. Thank you

I reall mean it I want my kids kids kids to be ale to use and drive on public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment.. I represent the California Enduro Rider Association and a number of families and individuals in the greater San Francisco bay area and northern California which are interested in public lands issues and the preservation of public access and multi-purpose recreation opportunities on public lands. Our concerns and comments are submitted to help shape future management and to develop safe guards for the conservation and maintenance of cultural well-being provided in recreation opportunities on public lands.

Keep the fumers out of Yellowstone in the winter.

I have believed in you and your team since the start, and I know you realize and understand that we as a species need our planet to be healthy in order to survive. Being in the Military I have seen how destructive the human race can be, and I hope that 2011 will actually feel like 2011 and not like the 80's.

Our national parks, forests and wilderness areas are under stress due to lack of funding for maintenance, preservation and law enforcement protection. I am hoping you will work to resolve the deteriorating state of these national treasures. Thank you for your consideration.

I have always enjoyed visiting national and state funded parks and hiking trails. I have never been when I have not seen an animal, plant or sunset that I was not awestruck by its design, complexity or beauty. Some of my greatest memories are of going camping and hiking with my dad. I think kids who get to see natures balance of beauty and respectable ferocity appreciate life in a different way. Cities protect us from dangerous encounters yet shield our eyes from its beauty. I want my children and grandchildren, and any other man, woman or child to experience the vast expanse of untamed and untouched wilderness this great nation holds.

I am all for conservation and sustaining a healthy ecosystem, but more so I am concerned about the various trail user groups being shut out from thousands of acres of trail accessed land all over the country. Many mountain bike advocates have been working with other environmental groups to designate and share trails while preserving the land around those trails. I hope ALL trail users are considered before any legislation is passed designating wilderness. If equestrians can have land access then so should mechanized bicycles. Hikers must also learn to share trails.....this land is your land and this land is my land.

Please consider OTHER OPTIONS BESIDES WILDERNESS - like "roadless areas", "protected areas", "open unless posted closed".

I would like the nature will save for the next generations in all over the world. It's a pity biodiversity is going down from year to year. So many beautiful species of plants and animals have already irretrievably lost.((If it is possible, I would like to participate at any nature-conservative measures, what you can offer.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are using up way too much land for housing and business developments. We seriously need to rethink our own infrastructure, recognize its flaws, and construct a more resourceful and environmentally protective way of maintaining our country and the people in it. The wilderness is a delicate place and humanity is only now beginning to recognize its importance. Act before it's too late and we end up screwing ourselves and the rest of the world over! PLEASE!

The federal government should be in the business of SELLING its massive land holdings to private citizens and NOT BUYING more land moving it from the private to the government sectors. The Great Outdoors Initiative should be immediately terminated as a grotesque waste of money and asset grab by the federal government.

We need the Federal government to get out of the public land business. They have messed up almost everything dealing with the forest and public lands. When Clinton was leaving office he signed into law things we here in Montana are still suffering over. That was the stupidest thing I have ever seen. Federal Government just does not understand how to manage and supervise for individuals. It is much better to have States regulate and manage as the people are affected have a better voice rather than having to sue the Federal Government to fix stupid acts. No government intervention, you don't know what is best.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When a site marries environmental, historic, and cultural resources you'll find the most successful formula for bringing people outdoors to enjoy the places that tell America's stories. Take Saugatuck, Michigan for example. It's a sparsely-developed landscape of spectacular beach, rare freshwater dunes, water, woods and wetlands; habitat to several endangered species; and home to a large number of significant historic and archeological sites. Saugatuck has been a very successful draw for Chicago residents and others for more than 120 years because all of these resources work together for one of the best visitor experiences.

What works: What are the most effective strategies for conservation, recreation, or reconnecting people to the outdoors? One of the most effective strategies for reconnecting people to the outdoors is providing federal dollars for local projects. Modeled after its sister program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) provides dedicated funding to support the programs and activities for historic and cultural sites. Programs like Save America's Treasures and Preserve America along with National Heritage Areas play important roles in promoting heritage tourism which brings people with their dollars out to experience those sites. The programs also attract private dollars to restoration projects and work in partnership with the federal government to promote economic development and create jobs.

o According to one analysis, between 1999 and 2009 the Save America's Treasures program allocated around \$220 million dollars for the restoration of nearly 900 historic structures. This investment by the SAT program generated in excess of \$330 million from other sources and created 16,000 jobs (a job being one full time equivalent job for one year) at a cost of \$13,780 per job created. (D Rypkema)

o We are fortunate to have in our midst the I&M Heritage Corridor, which was the first explicit bringing together of preservation, conservation, recreation, and economic development in the country. There are now almost 50 national heritage areas in the U.S. that owe their existence to the pioneer I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor.

Challenges: What obstacles exist to achieve your goals? (for conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors) The obstacles to achieving our goals of reconnecting people to historic sites outdoors are The lack of full, permanent and dedicated funding for the Historic Preservation Fund limit the matching grants for State Historic Preservation Offices; Tribal Historic Preservation Offices; and limit funded preservation activities like planning, survey, and public education for historic preservation. Eliminating funding for SAT that leaves no preservation \$\$ for "bricks and mortar" projects and ends the most successful preservation effort in the country's history.

o If the I & M Corridor, with its many natural, historic, and cultural resources were given more funding, it could continue to rehab historic resources, and develop more programming to draw even more people to the to this beautiful 96 mile-long historic site.

Federal Government Role: How can the federal government be a more effective partner? (in helping achieve conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors) The Federal Government can be a more effective partner by:

- Reinstating FY 2012 federal funding for historic preservation for Save America's Treasures, and Preserve America at FY 2010 levels.
- Increase to at least FY2010 levels National Heritage Areas' funding.
- Provide full, permanent and dedicated funding for the Historic Preservation Fund at \$150 million and the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million.

Tools: What additional tools and resources would help your efforts be even more successful? We believe that increasing the capacity of federal, state and local agencies

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

to care for and interpret historic and cultural places would go a long way to helping our efforts be more successful.

Why are we closing these lands and saving them for the future. What is wrong with me enjoying them while I am here on this earth. Don't I count. Dig deeper and see how much profit those "best for all conservancy groups" stand to make from closures and wilderness areas. No one will talk the actual truth of the matter. Seems like it is always some "best interest for all" group that cry's the loudest. Save the world for the future generations. I think it's time we let the present generations enjoy what we have on this earth. Time to take stand. It is a world for all, not a few.

Please restrict the lock-up of public lands! If off road vehicles are causing a problem arrest the problem makers and leave the rest of us alone!

I know you are getting mostly form letters from here. So I'll type my own as it's very short. The takeover of public lands by special interest NGOs posing as good environmental stewards needs to cease. I am extremely displeased at how these organization can run amok as they have in Cape Hatteras National Seashore. NEPA and other federal laws have been broken while instituting new wildlife protection measures and limiting public access at the nations first national seashore and recreation area. Yet nobody seems to care, and the appearance of collusion between federal agencies and these NGOs is hard to deny. Please fix these problems and encourage responsible access to OUR public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here we are, in 21st century America. Nearly 250 years after the beginning of the global industrial revolution. One hundred twenty years after the debut of the automobile. One hundred and ten years after the anthracite coal strikes sparked discussion of the need for renewable energy, especially solar, to replace dirty, dangerous coal sources. More than 90 years after America's wartime economy surrendered to one that focused on disposable goods (when we beat our swords into trinkets). Eighty-eight years after the coolant dielene replaced ammonia in air conditioners, which locked in their commercial success. The dawn of the 20th century wasn't just famous for anthracite strikes: turn-of-the-century Americans were treated to two landmark - forgive the pun - actions. One by a strong president, and one by an uncompromising environmental campaigner: 1901 was the year that John Muir published *Our National Parks* and President Theodore Roosevelt gave his first conservation speech to Congress, waxing lyrical about America's abundance. And yet, in spite of bold pronouncements and a century of conservation action, America's fabled abundance is in danger of being exactly that: a fable. A memory. Let's zoom in closer. Once upon a few decades ago, there was a fast-running stream near my family's favorite camping spot. I could swim in its lazier hollows. I could drink the water from the springs that fed the stream. During any old spring day, I could take walks in the bracken around my house, and play with my neighborhood friends in the shade of pecan trees. The same pecan trees that gave us winter pies that to this day are the source of many family food stories. Amongst those pecan trees, I'd listen to a hundred birds - calling for love, singing for the future. Weekends were for hiking or beachcombing - our favorite campsites always saw deer passing through and we'd hear owls and wolves and coyotes and rattlers and crickets and the unmistakable, slow amble of satiated bears. The nights were full of cookfire sparks and lightning bugs - though the lightning bugs visited us in the city, too. Only 40 years later, highways crowd our forests; sprawl gnaws on our open spaces; industry edges out marshlands; rivers dry up on their way to the sea; and natural areas look more like theme parks than wilderness. We can't live without Nature. We can't eat, we can't build houses, we can't recreate. The vast empire that Madison Avenue built says that we need disposable goods to be happy, to be patriotic. But what we **need** - for our souls, for our country - is connection - with Nature, with each other. How do we build that connection, we're asked. Well, how do we build muscle? Goal-setting. Practice. Humans have taken more than our fair share of the land's bounty. Therefore, agenda item number one to help us achieve conservation goals must be to mandate the recycling of all disposable products. This would not only reduce pressure on public lands that are denuded from extractive industries and protect natural resources, it would also expand or create municipal infrastructure jobs. Agenda item number two: no more extractive permits approved. Period. Agenda item number three: to protect the recreation experience for everyone, reduce development in national parks. By caving to the pressure to "give the people what they want," our parks are less like Muir's grand cathedrals and more like cheap tourist traps. Scale it back, lower the volume. Achieving connection is more of a cultural practice. No one who's at least 30 years old **doesn't** know about the crying Native American in the "Keep America Beautiful" campaign. Internet and television PSAs should be a cheap and easy way to get the conversation going and entice kids and families to outdoor adventure (and of course, to pursue adventure responsibly via Leave No Trace principles). Mr President, the truth is, we need even bolder action now than we did during President Roosevelt's

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

administration. Our status quo isn't working. We've shared too much with industry, allowed too many uses on public lands, signed off on too many permits; the federal government has betrayed the public's legacy, the public trust, and Nature, Mr President. In other words, the time for compromise on environmental issues has long passed us by. The staggering number of species on the brink of extinction is hard to ponder, and heartbreaking. The last 5% of our old growth forests can't take much compromise. The last 10% of America's wild, free-flowing rivers need staunch advocacy, not compromise. There's so much to grieve for. (Still, there's so much to fight for, too.) We'll stand with you, Mr President. Be bold. be uncompromising. It's the only way to protect America's grandest legacies.

I just moved to Northern California from Chicago and I am amazed at the difference in scenery. It is beautiful everywhere you look out here. I ask that you do something to protect the few spaces we have left that are under-affected by industry and development. thank you for listening.

Preserve what is preserved. We need natural areas to reconnect with the natural environment. We should focus on America being the most beautiful land. Take more pride in what we have. Where I live there are barely any places where there is no intrusion of man made objects. this saddens me. I think we are better than this.

This is a message pertaining to the environment in Utah. When do you think secretary of the interior Ken Salazar will do something about the unmanaged ATV free for all on our public lands? 800,000 of these beasts are registered in this state, and it's nearly impossible to find a quiet place anymore. Everyone from the department of motor vehicles, county commissioners, beers harley davidson, the LDS church, to the BLM seems to encourage more of the same. I'm sure someday soon we will get tired of riding rough shod over every square foot of the state, but what is worrisome is what it will look like until when we do. Until that time we need to protect that which we have left. Scars take a long time to heal in canyon country. People need to be told in clear terms we can't behave like this everywhere and to have a little respect.

this message is for our liders in the goverment to allow americans to go out and enjoy the outdoors,im part of various mtb clubs in AZ,and our goal is to take people to enjoy our trails and be out excersice and promote health and teach them to care and protect the outdoors,keep and maintenance the trails and built new ones,we need your help by not closing or restrict areas to mtbikers because if we help conserving and building trails we should have the right to enjoy them to,thanks

Please salvage and expand the beauty of nature in this country we live in.

I want more shared and better protected outdoor spaces. Protected outdoor spaces are important for our public health, management of natural resources not to mention a moral imperative.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The legacy of our natural national heritage, passed on to the next generation as it was passed to us from prior generations, is priceless and vulnerable. We cannot take for granted that it will exist as it is today without action now, to ensure that it is all it can be. What is a nation without its treasures? Very poor indeed. Please act now.

Without our precious natural world, the foundation on which our entire species rests will not be able to sustain us. From the air we breathe to the food we eat, our economy and the exchange of good and services, the materials we use to build every object that exists, as well as the awe inspiring divinity of forests, oceans, rivers, wetlands, and deserts, all of this is given to us from our natural world. Everything in our power must be done to preserve and protect what is so near and dear to us. Without mother nature we simply cannot survive. As we love our own human mother with such deep conviction, let us turn our love and attention toward the rest of creation and preserve and protect the sacred lands from which we all have come.

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Again, I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

I personally am one of many.... I enjoy fishing, hunting, site seeing off roading and just about anything the good old USA offers to the tax paying and non tax paying citizens. For your information, I happen to be one of the tax paying citizens. I dream about a world that would just stay at the status quo for just one year. No more Political Bills or changes in our legislation (state, federal or local). I know, you are going to say that this is an unreasonable request. If it is, I would ask for a minute to embrace the reason for the suggestion. And after contemplating the reason consider that most of what we have changed in the world is what people are arguing about. Lets try to slow down the changes! Not continuing to accelerate them causing continual anger and frustration.... If you insist on more Bills and Acts of Legislation my recommendation would be to create a Bill that preserves what we have today!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This email is a submission to America's Great Outdoors Initiative, and a copy has been sent to my legislators and leaders who could have an influence in resuscitating the Maine Forest Service WoodsWISE program. First, let me say that I've reviewed comments and ideas that have been submitted under President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. While it's great that we live in a democracy where everyone has a right to express their opinion, I urge our leaders to use caution in acting upon ideas that sound great, but could have serious social, economic and environmental repercussions. It's no secret that while many people consider themselves to be environmentalists, most are generally uninformed when it comes to the outdoors, particularly in managing the balance between social, economic and environmental demands. Like turning to doctors for medical advice, you may want to turn toward professional foresters for forest management advice, as we are the only people trained to balance the demands listed above. That said, there is one highly efficient and effective conservation program that has fallen through the cracks this past year, due to significantly reduced funding (see <http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/fpm/wwi/wwi.htm> for details), and given that independent professional foresters traditionally have a weak lobby, this program hasn't been given the attention it deserves. The Maine Forest Service WoodsWISE program is Maine's forest Stewardship Incentive Program. This program offers a small financial incentive to Maine's forest landowners who work with professionals to achieve a much higher level of management than they would have utilized otherwise, which has huge and diverse benefits to the public. Public benefits include identifying and protecting significant features, including deer yards, unique or significant wildlife habitats, threatened and endangered species, and areas of historical significance, not to mention hundreds, if not thousands of rare features that would not have been inventoried, if not for the high level of inventory specifications required under WoodsWISE. WoodsWISE has the added benefits of creating long-lasting working relationships between professional foresters and landowners. We all know the stories of poorly planned logging sites where a professional forester was not utilized. Unfortunately, poorly planned logging is far too common over many non-traditional private ownerships, which the WoodsWISE opportunity would help combat if made available to landowners again. It should be noted that WoodsWISE planning standards meet or exceed American Tree Farm Standards, for those who promote "Green Certification". WoodsWISE has a couple added benefits that aren't usually advertised. First, it creates jobs. Simply planting the forester/landowner relationship seed leads to hundreds of new job opportunities...foresters, forest techs, loggers, truckers, surveyors, road construction crews, pulp and saw mills, chipping and biomass operations, wildlife biologists, invasive control experts, accountants and every service industry you can imagine benefit from WoodsWISE economic ripple effect. Several land trusts have also utilized the WoodsWISE program, with great results. The second non-advertised benefit of WoodsWISE is that it's a low-cost forest conservation program. It creates an incentive to keep forests forested, healthy and undeveloped for at least 10 years, at an average cost of less than \$10/acre, after taxes. A well-managed, undeveloped forest in the tax base, at less than \$10/acre, is a much better public investment than purchasing land, with either public or non-profit entities, at the tune of hundreds or thousands of dollars per acre, with more taxpayer money inevitably needed for future management. Please take into consideration that you are hearing this from a leader in the land trust community! It's great to have a diverse set of forest conservation tools, but programs such

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

as WoodsWISE should meet full landowner demand before even considering purchasing conservation forestland with public money! I'm asking you to resuscitate the WoodsWISE program, at the cost of between \$100,000 to \$200,000, to benefit Maine's woods, wildlife, society and economy. This is not a matter of funds lacking. This is a matter of priorities. This past year, in my region alone, over \$30,000,000 of taxpayer money was paid out through the federal BCAP biomass program (interestingly, WoodsWISE also contributes to the biomass industry). Over \$600,000 of federal conservation money was paid out in Penobscot County through NAWCA. Several million dollars are dedicated to removing a dam in my town, for conservation purposes. I could go on and on, but you get the point. WoodsWISE is a very small piece of the financial pie, with the greatest return over the greatest area. I'm asking you to fund the Maine Forest Service WoodsWISE program as soon as possible, at \$100,000 to \$200,000, to reopen Maine's best forest conservation program, measured by public cost vs. public benefit. Stimulus funds and/or fair trade funds, if made available, should not be ruled out as potential funding sources, along with the traditional USFS State & Private Forestry funds (who took the primary hit). Credibility diminishes when forest managers hear legislators promote forest conservation programs and green certification, but let Maine's premier Stewardship Incentive Program fall apart under their leadership. Simply put, if taxpayers want highly productive sustainable forests, or more specifically, sustainable public benefits from private forests, then sustaining the Stewardship Incentive Programs is paramount. I hope to see action on your part in resuscitating the WoodsWISE program. Please feel free to contact me anytime with your thoughts and follow up. Warm regards, , LPF Golden Forestry Services, Inc. consulting forester, serves hundreds of forest landowners throughout Maine, including private, corporate, municipal and non-profit entities, with acreage exceeding 100,000 acres. He is a forest landowner, a board member of the Orono Land Trust, founder and chair of the Veazie Land Association, and a member of several forestry and conservation organizations.

Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

The greatest single thing the Obama administration could do for America's Great Outdoors is to get the magnificent wilderness of southern Utah canyon country protected through legislation to designate wilderness areas. I worked for BLM during the original wilderness inventory in 1978-80. That inventory has been corrected by later BLM work, but very little of those lands have been designated as wilderness, because of opposition by county commissioners. Please help the Utah conservation groups get wilderness legislation through Congress for these beautiful lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The most important selling point of the 1964 legislation on the continental oil lease rights was the fact that lease payment money would be deposited back into saving natural resources through the land and water conservation fund . As has been said I too believe we have a responsibility to protect this nation's treasured places for future generations of Americans. That is why I would like to see the promise of full, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) fulfilled in order to achieve the Obama Administration's conservation vision for the 21st century. LWCF is a simple idea that remains as important today as it was 45 years ago when President John F. Kennedy enacted it into law. Please support full, dedicated funding of LWCF to protect clean drinking water, support jobs in local economies, and conserve our common heritage and natural areas for wildlife, recreation, and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Please add my comments to those you will deliver to President Obama and the Department of the Interior. My family and I greatly appreciate the AGO initiative and the opportunity to comment. We urge that the Administration and the Interior Department begin its implementation by engaging individuals and the private sector in soil and water conservation, carbon sequestration, renewable energy development in appropriate locations, and protection of wildlife and natural areas. The AGO initiative is a great beginning of connecting people to the land. When we are connected to the land, we take better care of it. We all need to remember that our daily survival depends upon clean air, clean water and healthy land. Our environment is our home, and it seems that many of us humans need more education about the monetary value of ecosystem benefits - for example, the role that forests and wetlands play in keeping our water clean, the role properly managed forests and agricultural lands can play in sequestering carbon and how open space and outdoor recreation provide huge health benefits as well as ecotourism opportunities. Full funding of the Farm Bill conservation programs is critical in order to protect our farmland and precious agricultural soils. Appropriate siting of renewable energy on rooftops, existing structures including parking garages, mall rooftops, abandoned shopping centers and parking lots, brownfields, is preferable as opposed to targeting preserved lands first. Thank you very much for preserving America's heritage and lifeblood-our lands and the natural world.

I believe we have a responsibility to protect this nation's treasured places for future generations of Americans. That is why I would like to see the promise of full, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) fulfilled in order to achieve the Obama Administration's conservation vision for the 21st century. LWCF is a simple idea that remains as important today as it was 45 years ago when President John F. Kennedy enacted it into law. Please support full, dedicated funding of LWCF to protect clean drinking water, support jobs in local economies, and conserve our common heritage and natural areas for wildlife, recreation, and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family pays taxes and enjoy OHV trail riding. do not allow special interest groups that live in a unrealistic world sue the government. The goal to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking. The Initiative must preserve Multiple Use lands as Multiple Use for current and future generations to enjoy these and all other forms of recreation. Wilderness and Monument are the most restrictive forms of land designation and reduce access. We need to revert some of these lands back to Multiple Use in order to promote access for urban youth and all Americans.

I hope you will consider protecting Bristol Bay from mining by mega-corporations. It will destroy the clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life that exist there. I believe that public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. Thank you.

It is so important to respect the Earth we live on, and without these kinds of areas, I fear that people will soon loose touch with it altogether.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

What Works: Involvement/participation- WE need to get people involved. WE have too many public employees who try to take over and be gate-keepers which make many stay away from public places. I was able to get 100 acres on a Scenic River for a Public Park and kept it for 10 years with a single Ranger. One day Ranger Jane showed up with 2 other ladies and told me that I had NO RIGHT to tell people they could come to the place even though I had signed waivers and had an agreement. They also made up some story about my being a "gay basher." They got rid of the hard-working Ranger and replaced him with 4 others... I do not lead hikes there anymore, I do not do "kids in creeks" there anymore and I seldom visit and pick up the site. I saw the same public employees who try to limit public participation at the AGO meeting along others who think parks belong to Park employees and not the citizens. In trying to deal with our Natchez Trace Park people, there is no concern for the public nor genuine safety issues. As a full time volunteer for public parks, spaces and Green-ways, I tend to feel less than welcome..... My suggestion is to replace most of the paid bureaucrats with motivated volunteer groups and neighborhood coalitions. Challenges? Absolute indifference of Government to dumping and filling and ruining of watersheds by a few connected developers.... When you complain or report incidents - you become the enemy. There is something wrong! It is not that we have too much government, it is that we employ too many who do not care, work as little as possible and work against and not for PUBLIC interests. I say motivate or terminate. Most Public employees work fewer hours for more money and benefits that most other workers..... We have a volunteer network in Nashville Parks and Greenways which should be a model for others. Federal Role? Funding, incentives and motivation... Get friendlier, more committed and dedicated workers who care..... Think about those who have worked to conserve great parks, forests and places- not many were Government Employees. Continue to get more public input outside of the paid to work group.... Tools? SCHOOLS! Conservation incentives- Identify the treasures and publicize more about what WE should and can do... Work with existing conservation organizations and help locals to help themselves... A 20,000 acre tract near me that was bought with Federal money is now like a War zone with insensitive shooters and 4 wheelers. There is something wrong in our society with militant groups intent on violence which tool should be training and behavior modification. We need more public education about Good and Bad practices and more public information about what is sane and rational and to do more about those who abuse the environment and to make it news.

For the Outdoors Project: National Park Service Heritage Areas have been an effective alternative to the proliferation of small NPS units, and they have mobilized public sentiment, volunteerism, and charity to support these regionally and nationally important areas. However, my understanding is that funding for these Areas cannot be directed to acquisition of land or interests in land, even by non-profit organizations or state agencies partnering with the Heritage Area. I submit that the restriction against acquisition is unfortunate. The ability of Heritage Areas to assist in funding acquisitions that are a priority for protection within a Heritage Area could be quite important in leveraging other funding. I know that Heritage Areas can provide grants for planning and for restoration of historic sites and structures; it is a shame that they cannot provide similar grants for acquisition of preservation easements, conservation easements, trail easements, or even fee ownership of high priority properties. Thank you for considering this suggestion,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hunting and fishing are ways of life. They are our passions. We share it with family and friends and it trully makes us whole and makes us who we are. We MUST protect our land and waters. We MUST ensure that they will be around for generations to come. President Obama, this is not a choice, this is an obligation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Friends: I live in Wallace Stegner's Geography of Hope--but as I grow older, my beloved American West seems to be evolving into a Geography of Hostility. Here in my home state of Utah, when we speak of the proper use of our great outdoors we often descend so far into polarized screaming that we essentially disqualify ourselves from productive dialogue and allow the debate to move elsewhere. It's clear that we must take back control of the conversation if we are ever to have a sense of real community. We must get everyone to the table. And once we are there, we can't walk away. Stegner decried "our headlong drive into our technological termite-life, the Brave New World of a completely man-controlled environment." If we turn over the last remaining wilderness to unlimited energy development and a million off-road vehicles with free access to tens of millions of acres of wild country, we'll get that world that Stegner feared, plagued by "the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste," ruled by the principles of exploitation. So I ask for the same strength from federal agencies that Stegner asked for fifty years ago in the "Wilderness Letter." I ask for all of us to quit hollering at each other from spittle-flecked mouths and calm down and look for common ground. My love of the land goes back to my earliest memories. My love of the land goes right back to my father.

My father is a 94-year-old geologist who worked for his entire career with the U.S. Geological Survey. Every summer, we left our home in Denver and headed west, renting a house near his mapping area. Every vacation, we visited national parks and monuments, where we walked the nature trails, read the interpretive booklets, and listened to naturalists tell stories. We didn't camp. These weren't wilderness experiences. We really were just tourists. But I grew up with the firm belief that park rangers were rock stars, my guides to the coolest places in the universe. I grew up believing that Dad and his fellow geologists working away in their Department of Interior offices were the adults that a boy should choose to emulate. Though comfortable with the millions and billions in geologic time, these scientists spent their days in contact with the earth, collecting knife-sharp chunks of obsidian warmed by the sun. I grew up assuming that civil servants did visionary work. In my twenties, I worked seasonally for the National Park Service, for the Forest Service, and for the Bureau of Land Management, and I was proud to do so.

I believe in public lands as our permanent common ground. The American people own these public lands. The federal agencies manage these lands for us, and only the agencies can truly lead us to the reconnection, restoration, and protection asked for by the president in his memorandum. Land management agency visionaries must feel free to act courageously, backed by good science and by the force of law. This will be difficult, but no one else can take the long view--past political expediency and the relentless pressures from those interested only in making a quick buck. You--the federal land managers--are the grown-ups, and you have the ultimate responsibility to preserve biodiversity, protect wilderness, reverse global warming pollution, conserve working landscapes, facilitate the work of land trusts, and prohibit destructive development in our last open spaces. It's a dauntingly huge job, but you must fight all of these battles. You must pressure Congress to pass strong legislation. No one else has your authority and powers of advocacy. But never forget that you have allies out here. Like so many of my generation I have carried the catchphrases of the first Earth Day in 1970 in my catalogue of truths: Thoreau: "In wildness is the preservation of the world." Aldo Leopold: "I'm glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in. Of what avail are forty freedoms without a blank spot on the map?" I grew up in Colorado and Idaho and

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Washington—always with mountains rimming my views, always with the sense that there were plenty of blank spots still on the map. I came of age in Utah and Colorado and Arizona—especially in the sensual redrock maze of the Canyonlands, and the deep stark wildness of the Sonoran Desert. I matured as a writer in New Mexico and Nevada—below the sacred mountains of Pueblo people and in the space and silence of the Great Basin Desert. Today, I’m astonished and thrilled to own land that borders proposed wilderness on BLM land in southern Utah’s Wayne County, just outside Capitol Reef National Park. The West made me who I am. I define my home by landscape as much as I do by family and friends. This is a gift, and I know it’s becoming more rare as the nation grows overwhelmingly urban. How do we pass this on? How can we, as parents, play effective matchmakers between our children and the earth? In my 1994 book, *The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places*, I did my best to answer this crucial question: None of us can predict or control the career or avocational choices of our children. All we can do is introduce, try to prevent prejudice, battle gender stereotypes, teach by the example of our own attention and wonder. All we can do is recite from the Scripture of maps and field guides. Give names to the mountains and rivers, give names to the trees. Give voice to the emotions that storms and tundra flowers, young bison and soaring ravens can pull from us. As parents, we can take our children with us to the land. We can be there with them as they climb on rocks, play in streams and waves, dig in the rich soil of woods and gardens, putter and learn. Here, on the land, we learn from each other. Here, our children’s journey begins. Fifty years ago, Wallace Stegner wrote his “Wilderness Letter” in response to a prompt much like this one. In 1960, Stegner sent his small masterpiece to _____ of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission to address “the wilderness idea, which is a resource in itself.” Seated at his desk in the hills above Palo Alto, Stegner imagined the view across his boyhood haunts in southern Utah’s Wayne County, ranging out from the family cabin at Fish Lake, from the Robbers Roost, from the Aquarius Plateau. He called these lands “the geography of hope.” My own home in Wayne County looks out on the same view, the same geography, the same “lovely and terrible wilderness” (in Stegner’s words) that I have visited yearly since working as a seasonal ranger at Capitol Reef National Park 35 years ago. I described that view in my recent book, *Bargaining for Eden: The Fight for the Last Open Spaces in America*: Sunrise hits the top of the Cockscomb, a brilliant white-gold flare on the Navajo Sandstone cliff. I’m partial to the monumental, transcendent stripes before me: red Moenkopi ledges in the foreground, piñon-green hills and mesas midground, then the sea-monster ridge of the Cockscomb spotlighted by shafts of sunlight from the Fresnel lens of moving clouds. The green-black mountain rises beyond these as backdrop and finally gives way to blue sky, with strokes of cloud swashed across the firmament. And that’s just the view to the south. Maybe it’s this predilection for stripes that has always made me so sympathetic to the landscape of Capitol Reef. The long, rolling cliff face of the reef, its monoclinical tilt eroded in hogbacks and ridges, color by color, formation by rock formation, runs across the horizon in what the Paiutes call a “sleeping rainbow” for a hundred-plus miles. In the still cool air I write these thoughts in my journal as I listen to the ravens and Red-tailed Hawks that nest on the cliffs within a couple of hundred yards. I hear the croaks and cries when the adults flap off their nests to hunt and return to eggs and fledglings—generation to generation, here, sharing our ledges. If, as Stegner wrote, wilderness defines the American character, what will it mean to be an American when we have destroyed the last wilderness?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Living in the greater Albuquerque area and being a non-motorized outdoor enthusiast, I would ask you to consider preserving other areas within an hour's drive of Albuquerque for protection and public recreation.

Aldo Leopold said, "Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land." I want the next generation to experience America's great open lands, as I have. But open space that is 'useful' to loggers, utilities, building groups has been diminishing, and lost out because of financial reasons. I am asking you to be a meaningful voice now that has not been present in many years. ACT NOW. Tomorrow will be too late

I have heard that you are not (a gun/outdoor/hunting/fishing guy but i would appreciate it if you let hunters and fisherman be able to do what they like best i am not allowed to go hunting now but i hope that i will in the future and you please protects my rights.

As President of the Board of Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy I see opportunities on a regular basis to acquire in holdings, and round out boundaries of National Parks, US Forest Service properties and the Blue Ridge Parkway holdings. We cannot have a large enough war chest to jump when opportunity arises. The financial climate is not good for these opportunities. What is needed is a pot of cash for critical properties. The moment of opportunity is often short. Consider empowering several land trusts with review authority to prioritize key acquisitions. Create a nation land bank to fund short term critical properties, while long term ownership is sorted out. We in the land trust business know what is important and we can be quite creative in locking the land down. What we lack is a dependable funding stream. We will have saved over 29,000 acres in Western North Carolina in our 16 year history at the close of 2010. Visit our site at <http://www.carolinamountain.org/>

.This shouldn't even be needed to get the attention on the subject. the earth is all we have and there is only 1. It saddens me that this is needed

I was raised and born in a beautiful country town in Michigan, but have recently moved to Long Beach, California. Seeing the difference here, the amount of constant litter and pollution, I realize how absolutely precious mother nature is. Please help to conserve the few areas we have left to ride off-road in the sand, hike in the mountains, surf in the ocean, and so on. Thank you very much for your consideration.

it can always be developed later - save lands as is - be a hero to the future.

The National Parks are the most wonderful places to vacation. We have gone to many each summer and we consider them as our best vacations. We have done many hikes in them and have stayed in many of their lodges. I hope that they will be around for many more generations to enjoy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want a change in pesticide, fertilizer and production ag. The soil can not sustain our future generations farming field corn #2. Our municipal wells are contaminated all across America. How can we let our freshwater be polluted. Its insane. Put the chemical companies out of D.C. For instance, the crop pollinators are being devastated by pesticides and loss of suitable habitate. This costs our econoly over 200 million is losses.

I really wanted to comment on your site, but I simply could not figure out how to use it. I went to the "post an idea", clicked on it, but never did see "post my idea". I was very frustrated with the experience on how to use that site and did spend several hours working on different approaches to using it. My comments are as follows: I am totally against the overturning of the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act, repealing the Taylor Grazing Act, repealing the 1872 Mining Act, banning guns on federal lands, creating massive new spending programs to promote nature appreciation/worship, taking time out of the school day for hiking field trips (schools are for teaching the basics, like reading and math), creating new government agencies, spending massive pork dollars on projects that benefit only local community, or bringing back the CCC which cost entirely too much money; money that we don't have to spend. My biggest concern for the American Great Outdoors Act is to make the US/Mexican border secure. Our great outdoors don't mean a thing unless one can feel save. If money must be spent, then let's create an "America's Great Secure the Borders Act" which will benefit the outdoors, but also benefit the entire country, and especially those border states that are inundated with drug and human trafficking. Let's get our priorities straight!!

I do not support the NRA or the expansion of hunting or fishing beyond the permitted limits. We do not need more campgrounds in endangered areas. We do need to preserve old growth forests. Thank you, President Obama, for being MY President and representing the interests of individuals who care about Planet Earth. God bless you and your family!

We need to keep open spaces for NON-motorized outdoor activities.

I took my children out to state & national parks as they grew up and although grown up now, they still look forward to "going camping".

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Today life is filled with noise, distractions and stress; all leading to reoccurring health problems. People have forgotten how to "detoxify" their life by living within their means, conserving and most importantly reconnecting to nature and outdoor recreation. As life gets more complicated, it becomes absolutely important to protect our remaining wilderness through an Omnibus Land package for generations today and in the future. If lasting effects is what President Obama is seeking, then passage of the Omnibus bill is the way to go first; this is what would work!!! It's the concrete foundation needed to administer the President's declaration of creating strategies and programs to reconnect people to our earth! As a representative and future educator (currently an education student at New Mexico State University) of the newly organizing "Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness," I am in support of proposed bill S.1689 which would protect our sacred Organ Mountains and surrounding desert wilderness areas. Our group's goals and mission are to reach our community about the importance of protecting our wilderness through education, awareness, advocacy and youth wilderness or nature programs. Our biggest challenges are creating knowledge, understanding, and support in the community. But it's the Understanding that's important to get across; that the effect of protection is great!!! Continued Life!!! As you can tell, My love is Nature, the Great Outdoors; the master works of God. I enjoy taking my family hiking and exploring into the Organ Mountains and surrounding areas every Spring and Fall and times in between for tranquility and harmony with the lands of my ancestors. My Apache (and Special Forces) father gave me a love of the wild-lands and what the lands can teach us by studying it. Exploring the lands of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness and seeing its beauty gives me a longing to deepen the roots of my Apache heritage and needing to share it with my children and future students. I'm a new grandmother and I want the opportunity to be able to share with my grandson the legacy of beauty, wildlife and history of our lands & wilderness; the same that my father shared with me. Many people come to our southwestern lands (Las Cruces & Dona Ana) because of the beauty and tranquil air it brings. If our remaining wilderness is left open for developments, etc.; Where shall our future generation go? Will they walk the sands of a beauty forgotten as the Sahara? Our natural beauty will no longer be, and we will no longer have the attraction and breath-taking valley of green. When the air is no more, our Mountains and indigenous wildlife will die. We need to protect as much of the wild as possible for future generations. If our remaining Wilderness is left unprotected, what are affected are our ecological systems that sustain us and give us life. Our wilderness carries many values. There is a high diversity of plant and animal life as well as a diversity of geographical lands and rock formations. It carries historic values of prehistoric tracks, markings and cave dwellings; footprints of our past. So Not only does our wilderness preserve our very Life, Protection of our remaining wilderness aides in physical, emotional and mental well-being as well as aiding in our children's educational studies; giving us our future generation geologists, doctors, environmentalist or physicists and allows them to dream of possibilities for a better future. It is imperative that we protect our remaining wilderness, such as our Organ Mountains and surrounding desert areas (Bill S.1689) through the passage of an Omnibus Land package so that our future generations may have continued life and continue to enjoy the Great Outdoors!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a child my family took us on month long, cross country, camping trips to see the wonders of the state parks and other natural beauties. I like to think my daughter will be able to see these beautiful landscapes.

Please save, conserve and preserve what remains of our natural world. One idea, out of thousands of possibilities, would be to create a SUBSTANTIAL national park in Maine - MOST of the top half of the state of Maine is stunningly beautiful and relatively undeveloped - AND under threat of development. There is an opportunity to do the RIGHT thing and save a significant amount of what little remains of our natural world. It would ALSO be great if funds were given to each state for saving open spaces. The Nature Conservancy has bought 161,000 acres of STUNNING wild lands in the Adirondack Park, for the purpose of selling it to the state to be added to the forever wild forest preserve. But the state is in such bad shape financially they are delaying the purchase of this land. I fear that puts the land in jeopardy of being put back on the market and developed. Please do the right thing.

It is a spiritual and moral need as human beings to cherish and enjoy natural areas. THANKS!!

Our natural Parks and other protected Federal lands are so beautiful and inspiring. They should be protected to the full extent of the law so that future generations can enjoy them for recreation and spiritual reflection. Logging and mining interests should not be allowed to control the fate of these few remaining great wild places. Thank you.

i would like to see more support for trappers as well .

The importance of having outdoor spaces available for America's children to experience is beyond comprehension. Experiences with nature affect the very essence of our society.

Hello - I am the Executive Director of the National Forest Recreation Association. Our Association was formed in 1948 and our membership is comprised of recreation businesses located on or near public lands. Many of our members are Forest Service and Park Service authorized permittees and concessionaires, and as such are fully invested and committed to the importance of recreation on public lands. I would appreciate being on your e-mail list for any and all notices pertaining to the AGO Initiative. We were sorry to not have been invited to the initial session at the White House, but many of our peers were there and we have heard encouraging reports. We are trying to keep our members informed of updates - but they are delayed when we have to get them through another group. Being added to your list would be a great help in getting the word out. Also - we just heard there is another 'listening session' in Davis. If you could send me the pertinent information, I would appreciate it. Thank you very much. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I strongly recommend designation of the Prairie Pothole Region of North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana as a "Treasured Landscape" in the administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The Prairie Pothole Region supports outdoor recreational activities for millions of Americans, providing opportunities for both adults and youth to connect to our natural heritage. Migratory birds produced in the region support or enhance the outdoor experiences of waterfowl hunters, bird watchers, boaters and many other outdoor enthusiasts in nearly every state. My father was an employess of the Dept of Interior and used to purchase these pot holes in ND for wildlife reproduction in the 60's. We lived in Minot, ND and I have many fond memories of traveling the beautiful countryside and learning about migratory and reproductive habits of ducks and geese. He instilled in me the importance of prairie potholes. I urge the administration to recognize the Prairie Pothole Region as a Treasured Landscape.

I am very happy to hear about this program. As you take input, please consider the following: - We need not only to protect existing wilderness areas, but increase them, if possible. - It is essential to consider the effects of habitat fragmentation on plant and animal species; ten separate 1000 acre areas are not as biologically productive as one 10,000 acre area. - The agencies which oversee natural resources must be given stable and adequate funding, and the authority to enforce. - Park and recreation areas should be designed to get people out of their cars. (Let them borrow bug nets if they want!)

Dear Great Outdoors Representative: The present government is doing a great job with such things as the Everglades Comprehensive Invasive Species Management Area (ECISMA) and Army Corps of Engineers Efforts (GEER) BUT what I've noticed is the public hasn't been brought along. (Such as the NWF is doing with their Yard Habitat Program.) If we're (The U.S.) going to spend \$1,000.00 an HOUR sending helicopters to the Big Cypress to spray for invasives on two trips, shouldn't we get the public to STOP reseeding those areas with their own backyard invasives? Further, DOT gives Highway Enhancement Funds to my city of Parkland and the powers managing those funds NEVER made them remove the invasives on the properties in question. Want to have a GREAT OUTDOORS? Don't give out FEDERAL MONEY unless INVASIVE REMOVAL on the affected property is COMPLETELY REDONE. This includes National Register for Historic Places such as the Bonnet House in Fort Lauderdale, who say: If we remove the INVASIVES, we affect the history. Balderdash! The Invasives were planted by humans and they should be removed. Make it a 10 (ten) year requirement that ANY HISTORIC AREA that doesn't remove their invasives will lose their designation. Furthermore, require that FUTURE HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS MUST BE INVASIVE FREE. Give me a chance and I'll tell the president. Thank you. Sincerely yours in Wildlife Preservation,

Greetings. I love the freedom in our National Forests. The Angeles Forest provides a wonderful place for urbanites to find respite. However, litter is a HUGE problem there. We need 'No Littering' signs posted with their relative penal codes in English and Spanish, and 'No Dumping' signs in the obvious places (just follow the trash!). Enforcement people are a must, especially in crowded spots, and particularly near the water. Big Tujunga Narrows and Stonyvale Picnic Ground are wonderful, but not when filled with empty beer cans and full diapers. Please add resources to fix this problem and keep the Angeles beautiful. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, My name is (name deleted) I live in Grand Junction, CO. I'm a retired wildlife biologist, having worked for the Colorado Division of Wildlife for 33 years. I'm also a hunter, fisherman, hiker, back packer, mountain biker, down hill and back country skier, outdoor photographer and camper. I take every opportunity possible to make use of public lands in the vicinity of my home town as well as other areas throughout the west. I support the basic idea of Americas Great Outdoor Initiative. I also support the following ideas or concepts; * Protection of key landscapes on a large scale * Creation of a comprehensive quiet recreation strategy for federal lands. While motorized recreation on public lands has its place, I think it will be very difficult to substantially expand OHV trails without negatively impacting important wildlife habitats. * Science based management of natural resources on public lands * Sustaining opportunities for sportsmen to continue to enjoy hunting and fishing on federal public lands and waters. I also support the following policies or ideas: * New reforms of BLM onshore oil and gas leasing procedures * Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission rules that provide additional protection for wildlife and wildlife habitat in the oil and gas drilling permit process * Protection of Colorado's non-wilderness roadless areas either by the Clinton Administration Rule or by the recommendations of the Colorado Roadless Area Taskforce Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on this important initiative. Cheers.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I attended yesterday's Listening Session in Chicago and wanted to briefly share my comments and ideas:

1. Thank you for attempting to further strengthen one of America's greatest assets its outdoors and to reconnect Americans with their outdoors. It's great to see our White House doing that.
2. We very much hope that ways will be found to build on the work of local organizations and local coalitions that are saving and restoring natural areas and parks all across the country. From experience, we know that local groups (especially nonprofit land trusts and similar organizations) can be creative and build alliances of municipalities and other non-profits that are really effective.
3. We urge you to be sure to do all that can be done to fund land preservation and land restoration on public and private lands. We have a good backbone of protected land but much more needs to be done. Moreover, natural lands that are not stewarded with natural processes will tend to degrade over time.
4. We would urge you to be aware of the importance of ecologically minded stewardship of lands close to home. Backyards, woodlots, school and corporate campuses are all places where nature can be treated well with natural landscaping, organic gardens, rain barrels, and other good practices. The process of doing this builds ecological literacy so that camping and excursions elsewhere are more enjoyable as nature is already understood. Create living spaces around us also awakens the hearts of adults and kids by making possible encounters with wildlife. Community gardens are also extremely useful in getting people outside and creating community across all races and backgrounds. People in cities and suburbs should have nature around them so they don't have to travel hours away to see birds and butterflies. If this is done on a larger scale, it will also lead to cleaner streams and lakes, less erosion, and richer soil. Healthier land and water contributes to community health in an important way. We'd urge the White House to implement a bird garden and some natural landscaping at the White House itself to show that we can bring nature home in ways that benefit people and wildlife.
5. We urge you to support conservation easements by extending the more extensive tax incentives for private landowners that donate them. Easements are an important and cost-effective tool for land conservation across the nation.
6. Trails and trail systems are critical and need to be substantially expanded and improved. For truly healthy living, people and children should be able to get outside and do normal tasks and errands without using a car. We have a soccer field complex that is less than 2 miles away but has absolutely no bike trail access so we must get in car to drive there. On the other hand, our city of Grayslake has a generally excellent bike trail system that allows us to go grocery shopping, visit friends, and get to the gym on bike. A precondition for really offering healthy outdoor living is when people in urban and suburban America can do most of their normal daily activities by bike or by walking. This is good for health and will also contribute to our long-term energy independence.
7. The federal government can play an important role in strengthening America's Great Outdoors and our connection with the outdoors by creating a useful set of indicators that, like GDP and the Dow Jones Industrial Average, tell us how our Outdoors are doing in terms of water quality, preserved lands, accessibility to open space, etc.

Good luck in this initiative!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In both looking at how much outdoors there is to enjoy and how many people are able to enjoy it, we need to look at big enough picture. With the global climate crisis, we need to look at the health of entire ecosystems and allow plenty of space for wildlife to adapt. And with kids, we need to look at adapting what is already in their environment to getting them out to find that the woods are not, as one of my urban friends fretted when I took to the woods in rural Ohio, full of bears, snakes and rapists.

While the idea was good, the implementation is faulty... Radical ideas that promote destructive practices are overtaking everything else because they have the connections to mobilize their proponents to keep voting again and again and you can see how things have become very skewed by analyzing the results. Please reconsider the methods and allow each person one vote. ~

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

20 August 2010 The Honorable Kenneth Salazar United States Secretary of the Interior
c/o America's Great Outdoors U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife and Parks
1849 C Street NW Washington, DC 20240 Dear Sir, Thank you for your vision and
your leadership in helping to make President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative a
personal and national priority. As millions of Americans spend their summer days enjoying the
great outdoors, including our 392 national park sites across the country, we are reminded of the
important role they play in preserving our public lands and national heritage. From the great
southern wildlands like Great Smoky Mountains National Park to places like the Ocmulgee
National Monument, which memorializes our continent's Native American history, the national
parks provide some of the best means of connecting Americans, young and old, to America's
Great Outdoors, and preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation. As the AGO
initiative winds down, with the ending of the summer, and you begin to ponder the incredible
outpouring of the ideas and hopes of the American people in order to assist the President in
crafting a 21st century conservation agenda, I would like to offer several thoughts. The ideas
below emerge from the work of the National Parks Conservation Association's southeastern
regional program. They are framed within the context of the AGO's four questions. I)
Challenges: What obstacles exist to achieve your goals for conservation, recreation, or
reconnecting people to the outdoors? Major obstacles to advancing a 21st century approach
to conservation include the following. A) The Need for Full Operational Funding for the
National Park Service. Compared to the overall federal budget, the Park Service is very
small—only one tenth of 1 percent. Providing Parks the funds needed to serve visitors and
protect resources is a tiny investment in our national heritage, and provides economic benefits
and jobs in struggling communities nationwide. A recent NPCA-commissioned report, *The U.S.
National Park System: An Economic Asset at Risk*
<http://www.npca.org/park_assets/NPCA_Economic_Significance_Report.pdf> , found that the
National Parks generate over four dollars in value to the public for every tax dollar invested by
the Federal Government. The President's 2011 budget request for the National Park Service
is approximately \$2.7 billion—a decrease of \$21.6 million over the current fiscal year 2010
budget. Within the total budget, nearly \$100 million in park programs are reduced or
eliminated—including Save America's Treasures and Preserve America grants—and parks are left
without funding to pay for cost of living adjustments for staff. The operations budget proposal
does not come close to meeting the \$100 million request by the National Parks Second Century
Commission, and is insufficient to maintain current park operations and visitor services. As
recommended by the National Parks Second Century Commission in their final report to Congress
and the Administration, NPCA is advocating for a multi-year commitment that reduces the
operations shortfall by at least \$100 million per year, as well as an additional \$500 million to
meet the construction and maintenance needs of our National Parks. First and foremost, the
President and Congress must support operations funding for the National Park Service, sufficient
to meet its' needs. B) Lack of a Secure and Fully Funded, Mandatory Land and Water
Conservation Fund. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established in 1965
by Congress as a bipartisan commitment to invest in our natural areas, working lands and historic
and cultural heritage, and to increase access to recreational opportunities for all Americans. The
LWCF has protected land for our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

national historic and scenic trails, and wild and scenic river corridors. In addition, the LWCF state assistance program has helped develop new state parks, trails, and recreation lands in every state in the nation. The LWCF has also helped farmers and ranchers protect working lands with conservation easements and saved some of America's richest wildlife areas for hunting and fishing. In spite of these successes, the LWCF program has been dramatically underfunded. Every year, \$900 million from federal Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) drilling lease proceeds are supposed to be dedicated to the LWCF. But the full funding of \$900 million promised by Congress has been reached only once since 1965. Congress has diverted as much as \$17 billion -- 85 percent -- of the Fund's dedicated revenue for projects unrelated to conservation or recreation. Over the last eight years LWCF funding for federal land protection has dropped over 70 percent, hitting a low of \$130 million in Fiscal Year 2008. In order to preserve America's treasured landscapes and places of national significance, it is essential that the President and Congress fully fund a mandatory LWCF program. Current events in the Gulf of Mexico make keeping this promise more important than ever.

II) What works: What are the most effective strategies for conservation, recreation and connecting people to the outdoors that you have used?

A) National Parks Work! The National Parks embody America's natural and cultural heritage. They preserve the exemplary places and tell the defining stories of the American character and experience. National parks provide some of the best means of connecting citizens, young and old, to America's Great Outdoors, and preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation. They are, in essence, the world's greatest outdoor classrooms and provide opportunities for life-long, place-based and service learning. Consequently, National Parks are the heart of America's Great Outdoors and should have a prominent place in the President's initiative.

B) The National Park Service Works! The National Park Service has become legendary for doing amazing things with few resources. To give one example, the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), which receives less than one percent of the National Park Service budget, is making outstanding contributions to community-based conservation efforts around the southeast. The program offers NPS staff assistance to community partners for planning, organizational development, project coordination, facilitation, and public involvement in achieving locally-defined goals for natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation. To highlight one project in Georgia, much of the floodplain along a 50 mile stretch of the Ocmulgee River between the cities of Macon and Hawkinsville is already in public ownership, but is managed under a patchwork of federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Because of this fragmented management, recreational access to the river has traditionally been very limited. RTCA is helping to change that by working with the city of Hawkinsville and Bleckley, Houston, Twiggs, and Pulaski Counties to develop and improve public access points along the river, thereby creating a canoe trail, or Ocmulgee Blueway. When the Blueway project is finished, RTCA's partners will be able to promote river events such as festivals, river races, and run/bike/paddle races that can be combined with other eco-tourism promotions in each county. These developments will support local businesses, such as outfitters, restaurants, hotels, and shops, as well as create new constituencies for environmental stewardship. Ultimately, this project has the potential to link the city of Macon and the Ocmulgee National Monument downstream to the Altamaha River Canoe Trail and the city of Darien on the Georgia coast, over 200 miles away. From Darien it will connect to

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

the SE Coast Saltwater Paddling Trail, running al

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our community remains supportive of the National Park Service and the Forest Service with the realization that both are very large landowners in Washington's Western Clallam and Jefferson Counties. Both of these agencies have played, and could play into the future, a significant role with regard to "getting people into America's Great Outdoors." While the goals of this initiative are laudable, the idea that America's Great Outdoors should be an independent tourist/recreation draw is contingent upon people feeling welcome and invited to visit, explore, recreate and enjoy those lands. At the present, our "Great Outdoor" recreation centers are seriously lacking the financial commitment necessary to meet the new level of hype being used to promote them. For years, our community and others have argued for fully staffed facilities where there are no more "rare ranger sightings" associated with educational and recreational offerings by overwhelmed, multi-tasking and multi-hat-wearing front country recreation, interpretative, enforcement, and educational staff. In addition, while the recent investment by Congress into both the NPS and USFS through ARRA addressed some of the maintenance backlog for both agencies, it only took on the projects that were "shovel ready." There continues to be a significant maintenance backlog that is limiting access to and enjoyment of "America's Great Outdoors." It would be worth a note of caution to the Executive Branch that it may be problematic to highlight the need for America to rediscover itself, and its historic connection to its lands, only to have the visiting public find dilapidated buildings, unmanaged trails, outdated visitor centers (such as the one at NPS Hoh Rain Forest). Further, the expecting public may encounter facilities and parks that are understaffed or so heavily relying on volunteers that staffing seems to be a second thought. Also, there are great needs for both the USFS and NPS to engage in recreational planning if we are to see a true realization of the vision associated with this initiative. Over the past decade or longer in our region, we have continually been promised "plan revisions" or "new planning opportunities" to address the concerns and issues being raised about our public lands. Yet, in nearly all such cases, those required recreation plans, day use plans, capital investment plans, forest plans, etc., all get continued out to some tenuous, unattainable date in the future. America has a remarkable heritage that is integrally tied to the utilization of its natural resources and outdoors. This initiative has the potential of rekindling that flame of discovery in the hearts of many of our fellow citizens. The challenge that lies ahead is ensuring that those outdoor resources are prepared for the expected and/or hoped-for visitors. What Works? First and foremost, local collaborative, constructive efforts are probably the best example of what in fact works. In our community, there are conservation efforts focused on salmonid recovery that involve tribal and local governments working in partnership with citizen, state, and federal land owners on specific project enhancement efforts. However, these efforts, unless it is the application period for a specific project grant round, rarely see the continual participation and engagement of all of the federal land managers, particularly the NPS. If the meeting is to regulate, or to explain how the federal agencies could apply for state salmon recovery funding board funds, then we see tend to see the federal agency at the table. If it is to develop a coordinated planning effort, their attendance is less than certain. The USFS in our area, however, has been an active technical supporter of the local collaborative salmonid efforts and deserves recognition for its involvement in these efforts. Unfortunately, some of the agencies own policies and procedures require the agency to create its own local citizen advisory group. Recently, the USFS ONF found itself having to do just that, in spite of two

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

well established salmonid recovery/watershed planning groups, effort to undertake a focused watershed initiative in the Calawah Basin, when many locally felt it would have made better sense to utilize the existing salmonid recovery organizations that have been working, planning and promoting local driven conservation for the past decade. Unfortunately, the USFS administrative process did not allow for the local ranger district to utilize what was in place. Second, citizen buy-in to the idea that the Great Outdoors applies to them - all of them. People need to feel that they are a welcomed group that can partake in activities without worry about being shut out or closed down. This may require land owners like NPS and the USFS to put as much attention on the front end visitors as there seems to be on the wilderness and backcountry users. If all feel welcome and have a positive experience, that will then result in returning, engaged users. Challenges. First, there needs to be a clear realization that adding more land, wilderness or otherwise, to existing USFS and NPS holdings will not result in more people visiting and using that specific park, forest service site, etc. Second, there needs to be a realization that over the past two decades, or so, the discussion of recreation on federal lands has developed some very restrictive "socio-economic classist" views. If we are going to be asking Americans to enjoy their outdoors, we need to realize that this is going to include a large collection of various user groups, enthusiastic, and types. At the present time, there seems to be an agency bias against outdoor recreation that does not fall in the "day hike/outdoor wilderness walk" style of recreation. However, there are a larger number of outdoor enthusiasts that believe their interests in exploring the great outdoors as off road vehicle drivers, hunters, horse riders, etc., should also be incorporated in such new policy efforts. At the present there continues to be clashes between interested user groups and enthusiasts that usually leave a level animosity hanging about the recreation lands. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the hope that some forms of tourism aimed at understanding the underlying ecosystems, species and climate of the region could be developed to attract other users. However, the true investment in such new tourism markets has not been made a priority. In fact, some of the hype assigned to such objectives have been seized upon as a means of dissuading other users that may not meet the "perceived ideal visitor." A balanced, multi-use and user approach needs to be developed as part of this new initiative. Third, the process of engaging in the permits, or being involved in the planning is not an easy one. In many cases, the interested participant has to spend numerous hours attending briefings, meetings, reading through high technical documents, and then have a narrow window to submit formal comments. Such a process can be a significant negative persuader for the general public wanting to be engaged in the future of our Nation's "Great Outdoors." Fourth, the process itself seems to be a hurdle. Many times the lament from the USFS/NPS is that "the NEPA we have on recreation is outdated," "need to revise the existing plan," or, "no plan exists, so we have to wait until we can undertake that plan to address your access issue." Then when efforts are made to determine when a recreation plan, or plan amendment is to be considered, it is usually many, many years off in the future. Federal Government Role Focus. If the goal is to encourage the use of the outdoors and the properties managed by the federal government for recreation purposes, the agencies need to: 1. Make the lands and facilities usable. Limited use and/or closed doors, trails, and campgrounds due to a lack of maintenance funding, or lack of funding for operations, is a significant barrier that has to be addressed. The field staff are doing remarkable things, but they cannot be exp

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As someone who grew up with nature, drifted away during my teens and early twenties, and has recently redeveloped a connection to our nation's amazing natural heritage, I fully support your effort to "leave no child inside." I have worked as a seasonal park ranger, and after being laid off from my full time job as an arts educator, I have decided to go back to school to pursue degrees in environmental management and forestry. Never has the need to protect our wildlands been so fundamental to the future of our nation, and never has there been a greater need to provide access to these lands to people of all ages and backgrounds. I offer below a few suggestions: - Continue your support of the NPS and all of the work it does. The ARRA has provided many parks with much-needed funds to repair their visitor services and facilities. There is still a backlog of needed maintenance, and many parks are in desperate need of long-range plans to adjust to increased visitation and climatic changes. - Provide incentives and opportunities for inner-city families to get into the outdoors, whether this be in the form of youth leadership retreats, natural history programs held in green spaces, community-sponsored bus trips to our national parks and forests, or something else entirely. **ACCESS TO NATURE MUST NOT BE RESERVED FOR THE ELITE.** - Work with local landowners, nonprofits, and NGOs to develop a nation-wide network of protected areas and wildlife corridors. Landscape-level ecosystem conservation will be an essential component for the future integrity of our larger protected areas. - Continue the country's tradition of providing a wide range of access to our wildlands. Different types of people will seek different outdoor experiences. It's important to make sure that Americans have the ability to camp in a developed campground using an RV or tent while also protecting vast roadless wilderness areas where visitor use is minimal and natural systems are able to function unimpaired by human development. - Continue to set an example for minority families everywhere. The U.S. will soon be primarily a non-white population. It's important that folks don't feel that National Parks and the outdoors are places reserved for retired white couples. Our protected lands should be places where people of all backgrounds can go to explore nature and push the boundaries of their own comfort zones. Seeing our mixed-heritage First Family on TV enjoying the National Parks may help break down some of the racial stereotypes associated with the National Park Service. Best wishes as your administration continues to tackle this daunting challenge.

Send more resources to the state level to fund Nature Centers and other environmental entities that conserve our wildlife and natural resources.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, I attended the Initiative meeting in the Twin Cities (Minnesota) on August 4, and want to submit my comments: One of the most effective strategies is to preserve the wilderness resources we currently have, and not allow them to deteriorate. As we talk about how to connect people to the outdoors, we must make sure we make sure the "outdoors" are still there. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is one of the premier outdoors resources we have, and it is in imminent danger of being destroyed. Preserving the BWCAW should be among the top priorities of the Interior Department and the National Forest Service. It is a national--international--treasure that all should be concerned about. The current threat is from sulfide mining drilling and the potential sulfide mining that has never been accomplished anywhere in the world without environmental damage. The drilling has been going on for some time as I write this, and international mining companies are pouring money into the drilling and exploration, at a rate that no local counter-investment can match. The sulfide mining drilling/exploration is occurring in and under the watershed leading directly into the BWCAW. The waters in this area are interconnected marshes, wetlands, creeks, rivers, and lakes, eventually leading through the BWCAW into Quetico and ultimately to Hudson Bay. Acid mine drainage into this watershed will be unstoppable, and will alter the environment for centuries. Much has been written by experts concerned about sulfide mining near the BWCAW, which I won't repeat here. But, for a government concerned about the Great Outdoors, a major part of the plan MUST be preserving the Great Outdoors that currently exist. The federal government has a regulatory role on what mining and drilling permits are allowed. I greatly appreciate the EPA's decision on the Polymet mine Draft EIS earlier this year. However, much more vigilance is needed to protect the Great Outdoors that is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Thank you,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Department of the Interior, I attended one of the public youth listening sessions held in Albuquerque, NM on the America's Great Outdoors initiative. I was representing Talking Talons Youth Leadership, which is an animal rehabilitation center in Tijeras, NM. We use our non-releasable exotic animals to teach youth about science, the environment, and protecting these animals and their habitats. We have a summer camp where we take the kids on hikes in the East Mountains, fieldtrips to other rehab centers and nature centers, and really spend most of our time outside. We are trying to create a community garden using garden club volunteers in the community because this will teach that a person can be sustainable on their own - we don't always have to get what we need from a grocery store. The land that our center sits on is directly connected to Cibola National Forest area, and we are working with the USFS to create a program that involves the community in Talking Talons as well as the national forest. These are just some things on the horizon... What Works - Our most effective strategies include the use of our non-releasable exotic animals. We use these animals to teach kids about science and the individual animals' stories. The kids get to learn how to hold them, and this is how they build a strong connection to the animals. Because they start to care deeply about the animals, they also start to care about preserving their habitats in the wild once they learn about them. Caring about the conservation of the species and the species' habitats is then a small step from there. Challenges - Since we are a non-profit organization, we rely on state and federal grants to help us serve our community with our programs that connect youth to animals and the outdoors. This is our greatest obstacle; money and getting available grants. Federal Government Role - Really the grand obstacle to all of our programs is available grants to apply for. Maybe if the federal government had more money set aside for this effort, organizations like us could thrive because more grants would be available to us. Thank you for your time, and I hope these comments help you on your way to submitting your report to the President.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Greetings, I recently attended your event in Albuquerque last weekend. I was delighted to see that the administration is doing something like this and is meeting with folks face to face. The crowd was enormous and I was elated to be involved in such a process with my fellow citizens and members of wildlife and conservation organizations. I had some additional thoughts after the listening session that I wanted to share.

Access and Advertising: Some of the discussion during our session focused on the disconnect between youth and the outdoors. National Parks and forests are not accessible or even known about by everyone. I grew up in central Massachusetts and never even hiked till i was 18. I visited my first national park (Arches) when I moved from Vermont to Albuquerque. I think there's a real opportunity given the current economic state that you can use to draw families to less expensive camping and wilderness exploration. Instead of spending \$4 grand to go to Disney world let them take a road trip and camp for 20 bucks a night. I never say this in regard to anything else, but where is the advertising? You guys have to compete with video games and the internet, why not sell ads to websites aimed at children and families or encourage journalists who work for family publications to write stories about their adventures.

In the summer of 2007 i traveled to South Dakota. i was aware, of course, of Mt. Rushmore, but I spent 5 days visiting national parks and monuments that I never even knew existed. I poured hundreds of dollars in the local economies. With more a more serious public relations approach I believe that more advertising would lead to greater accessibility and use of these places.

We also spoke a lot about conservation and a few folks with the organization New Mexico wilderness Alliance offered that the parts of america that are wild all "work" in their opinion, it is we that must find ways to deal with them. Also, folks are also upset about oil, gas and coal companies polluting and ruining the heritage of our landscape. When I read stories about mountain top coal removal and this disaster in the gulf I usually cry. We did not get our wilderness protected in the first place without a fight. Humans have a bill of rights which we all cling to as a defense of our civil liberties, why not create a Bill of Rights or a constitution for our special, preserved places???? Certainly, they deserve it and they, unlike us, cannot defend themselves.

During our session, some folks got very excited when speaking about gmos and corporations like Monsanto controlling the dept of agriculture. I will say from what I have seen that I cannot believe I live in a country that allows a corporation to control the seeds that farmers grow and bullies them and renders them bankrupt if they refuse to use their products. Also they contaminate their environment. If the Department of Agriculture wanted me to believe that they wanted to make a difference they would heed the cries of the people they have met in these listening sessions and implement restrictions on the corporations that are compromising our health and our planet. What is the point of working on ideas for conservation and use of our open and wild spaces if they are in the same jeopardy that our entire planet is in? I appreciate your time and believe this is a great step toward a better future, -- One is left with the horrible feeling now that war settles nothing that to win a war is as disastrous as to lose one.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The following comments are submitted in response to the America's Great Outdoors Listening Sessions and a copy of these comments are also attached America's Great Outdoors Listening Session Comments of _____, Knoxville, Tennessee July 15, 2010

1. Commercial timber harvest in our National Forests should be discontinued. This practice, which is heavily subsidized by the tax funds of the citizens of our country, cannot be justified under any pretense except as noted here. Our timber resources should only be commercially harvested, if needed in the event of a catastrophic event that severely damages private forest lands over a very large area of several million acres. As the US Forest Service (USFS) now practices commercial timber harvest, and growing timber for this purpose, private businesses that own and grow timber for the wood products industry are forced to subsidize their competition.
2. The primary mission of the USFS should be to manage our National Forests for water quality protection and recreation. There are several ways that users can assist in funding the recreational programs, which I will not attempt to enumerate here, that should be considered by the USFS.
3. I appreciate very much the recent introduction in the Senate, of the wilderness bill by Senators Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker that will protect some additional areas of the Cherokee National Forest under the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act. But there are many other roadless areas in the Cherokee, Nantahala, and Pisgah National Forests identified by both the USFS and citizens organizations that should be designated as wilderness study areas. They should be given immediate protection from timber harvest, road building, and any other development until their qualification for protection under the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act has been determined. A number of our National Forests throughout the nation should be officially, by legislation, designated as National Recreation Areas with qualified areas given additional protection under the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act. The Cherokee, Nantahala, and Pisgah National Forests are three of our National Forests in the southeast that should be designated as National Recreation Areas. The use of ATVs and ORVs for recreational purposes, should be prohibited on all federally managed public lands, except on roads maintained for use by ordinary passenger automobiles. The use of bicycles and motor vehicles (wheeled vehicles) in our National Parks and all other units managed by the National Park Service should be restricted to use only on roads maintained for use by ordinary passenger automobiles, except on roads and trails constructed and maintained specifically for use by wheeled vehicles other than ordinary passenger vehicle. The long standing controversy (67 years) concerning the construction of a road in the Great Smoky Mountains National from Bryson City, NC to Fontana Dam will be resolved once and for all, only when Swain County, NC is paid the full amount of \$52 million in lieu of building the road, as agreed to by the new agreement which replaced the earlier "1943 Agreement" that promised the road. The Department of Interior should include in it's budget, starting with FY 2011, sufficient funds to complete full payment of the \$52 million in no more than another 5 years. Current payments (2) add up to \$12.8 million, leaving \$39.4 million due.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

-- Thank you for wanting to get input directly from the stakeholders of our community and work together for solutions. My name is (name deleted) and I have lived in Highland Park, CA for over 30 years. This is the neighborhood I have grown up in and the one I love. I am a Champion Mom with the Network for a Healthy California Los Angeles Region. I am a spokesperson who advocates eating more fruits and vegetables and increasing physical activity among low income California residents. I will try to make it to your Occidental College visit but if I am unable to I wanted to voice my thoughts based on my experiences. Thank you for the opportunity. **WHAT WORKS** Community Outreach in low income neighborhoods. Inner city children are often unaware of hiking trails and there is a lack of access to parks in their neighborhoods. When cities such as Los Angeles are so over populated with buildings, etc. what is needed most is usually a park. In Highland Park a huge housing development is being planned on Ave 57 and Piedmont. Would a small "pocket" park serve the area better? Creating and conserving parks is one of the best ways to promote a healthier lifestyle for residents of neighborhoods. Sycamore park is an excellent example of a park that works. As a child many of my birthdays were celebrated there. The playground equipment was falling apart back then. A big sense of community pride arose when beautiful playground equipment was installed for the children and a set of exercise machines for the parents. The location of the parents machines are right next to the children's so they can safely watch their children as they work out. All parks should have a set of machines strategically placed. With the obesity epidemic in our country and the economy the way they are... this is a solution. Families would have a safe place to exercise and gym memberships would not be a requirement!!! Conservation of our parks and the government helping to create new parks works. They also are community gathering and building places. Government helping to protect historical landmarks like the Southwest Museum in the Highland Park area of Los Angeles. As a child our family would visit this museum on a regular basis. We would walk to the museum. As a teenager my best friend (name deleted) and I would jog at Sycamore Park and end our jog at the top lookout area of the Southwest Museum. Walking through the outdoor gardens and sitting on that bench as we viewed the city was the best. The museum was such a positive place for our community to enjoy. It is sad that my children will not have the wonderful experiences I had at this museum because the exhibits and museum are not functioning as they were. Government should protect and conserve historical landmarks that provide enjoyment of the outdoors, educate and are a sense of community pride in neighborhoods across America. Providing safe, lighted bike pathways, swimming pools (adding splash pads & curvy slides like at Northridge's pool to our area pools), enforcing dog leash laws on hiking trails are a few other things I can think of. The Audobon at Debs park is a great example of partnerships that help bring the great outdoors to inner city children. If you really think about it most of these places are possible because of a park. When the great outdoors is perceived as a safe and fun place to be a lot will be accomplished. Lower obesity and crime rates. I also have to mention protecting & conserving the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. We went there as children and now my children go there. The club on Pasadena Ave is an amazing place which encourages children to play sports, swim etc... The club provides (when funding is available) outdoor experiences for children. The partnership of the Federal Government should be to help build up communities. Work with the stakeholders to find solutions and build a solid foundation. Thank you for your time.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for the invitation to attend your America's Great Outdoors Initiative Listening Session held in Albuquerque, NM on July 17, 2010. This event was well organized and attended by a diversity of stakeholders from throughout our state; a testament to both your successful outreach and the great interest of the conservation community in New Mexico. While I was able to participate in some of the sessions, I was unfortunately unable to provide a comment during the breakouts. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in writing.

Observations at the 7/17 Meeting During the sessions, I observed a strong conservation ethic across a wide spectrum ranging from agriculture, preservation, youth education and empowerment to multiple use. I was also impressed by the agency leadership exhibited by Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture and your interest in developing more effective federal support for local projects and programs worth investing in.

Comments I would like to provide comments focused on programs and opportunities that will cultivate and grow the conservation ethic in our communities for current and future generations of Americans . . . in their own backyard! While implementation of sustainable management strategies in our large blocks of public land is important, I believe that federal agencies have an opportunity for a stronger supporting role in cultivating community appreciation of the natural and built environment within the urban and rural areas where our citizens live. Without an understanding of conservation amongst our citizenry and youth, we will lose the opportunity to get them out of the house and to appreciate, experience and support conservation of our wonderful natural areas outside of their community.

What works The USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program provides funding to support a State Urban and Community Forestry Program (offered through State Forestry Organizations and the National Association of State Foresters) in each of the 50 States and 6 Pacific Islands. State UCF Programs cultivate local community forestry efforts in our cities, towns and villages through technical assistance and funding support for: development of management plans, tree inventories, arborist education, etc. In addition to providing resources and expertise, State UCF Programs are in-tune with the needs of municipalities and are successful at developing extensive partnerships and programs that support local communities. Here are just a few of the partnerships that states throughout the country have successfully developed:

- Environmental: EPA, State, regional, and local organizations (SmartGrowth, Green Infrastructure, Air and Water Quality);
- Community health (partnerships with hospitals, healthcare providers, urban greening and connection to human health and activity);
- Non-profit citizen organizations (at the local, regional, and national level);
- Community planners and housing organizations;
- Utility and energy providers;
- Outdoor education organizations

The impetus of success for State UCF Programs relies on creative program implementation and partnerships that leverage a limited level of base program funding support provided by the Federal Government.

Challenges While the USDA Forest Service and individual State UCF Programs have built an Urban Forestry Program that provides: research, services to communities, and effective partnerships; there are great challenges to building sustainable municipal programs that result in a true impact on the conservation ethic of our citizenry. States face two critical challenges in implementing our programs:

- The current Federal allocation formula for State UCF Programs is based on a state's population. This results in many states throughout the country receiving on average \$200,000 to implement a statewide program. As a result, the ability to effectively serve mid to

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

small size communities is greatly hampered (ironically, these are the communities that our programs have the most potential to impact when services are provided!). State UCF Programs are effective at developing non-traditional partnerships that elevate the importance of urban forestry and often result in additional funding support for individual communities. The challenge lies in sustaining sufficient funds to deliver a sustainable statewide program that can operate and grow to serve the needs of communities. Federal Government Role The Federal Government has an opportunity to recognize benefits provided by the already established Urban and Community Forestry Program and align its extensive resources and programs to support it. For example, nationally we see many separate efforts at expanding implementation of "green initiatives" through Federal Agencies, such as: HUD, DOT, EPA, Department of Commerce, Department of Energy. Locally, there is extensive synergy at aligning these resources on-the-ground, but the state and local urban forestry stakeholders consistently dedicate significant time and resources to compete for a diversity of federal funding sources that serve a common purpose in the local community building healthy forests that result in healthy people. Rather than promoting competition among federal agencies for a "piece of the green", the Federal Government has an opportunity to align a diversity of agendas and overlapping resources into one synergistic "Community Conservation Initiative". This initiative has the potential to: bolster existing programs, further partnership and leverage of resources, and result in sustained and lasting change in the conservation ethic of our communities. Tools "Aligning our resources to create a lasting impact" Across the country, we often talk about the importance of the 3-legged stool in sustaining local urban forestry programs: the state, the municipality, and the grassroots citizen organization. While many state organizations have these pieces in-place, we struggle to maintain sufficient funding to maximize our impact on the citizens of our states. We challenge Federal agencies to recognize the existing infrastructure and expertise in states throughout the country and seize this opportunity to align your diversity of agencies and resources toward a common goal. If Federal leadership accepts this challenge, the states and our partners are poised to provide input and support so we together can ensure successful implementation of an effective and sustainable "Community Conservation Initiative".

Hello, I attended the Annapolis Great Outdoors listening session on Friday, June 25, and didn't get a chance to share my comments in the breakout session with (name deleted) Deputy Assistant Secretary at USFWS. Wetlands and headwater streams are critical to sportsmen and women and to continuing our outdoor heritage. Aquatic animals of all shapes and sizes depend on wetlands at some point during their life cycle. These small streams and wetland have been left vulnerable to destruction and pollution due to two recent Supreme Court decisions that dramatically reduced the scope of Clean Water Act jurisdiction. We need the Administration to work with Congress to pass legislation to restore Clean Water Act protections to these critically important yet vulnerable waters. Thank you,

Nobody was listening at the Grand Junction session so here is what I wanted to say:

1. Eliminate the estate tax permanently so that farms and ranches can remain in the family.
 2. Reduce intraagency conflicts. There should be no reason the BLM and the NPS can't get along.
 3. Reduce interagency conflicts. There should be no reason the BLM is writing the planning document for drilling in the White River National Forest.
- Respectfully submitted,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, I am writing to seek out a contact person to discuss the possibility of hosting an Outreach event to help further the cause of the America's Great Outdoors initiative. The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) is America's oldest conservation and recreation organization who, as part of its overall mission, hopes to educate the public on conservation and reducing their impact on the environment by implementing some of the practices and technologies in use in our facilities. The Highland Center in particular, the AMC's newest facility, has won numerous awards for its environmentally friendly design, use of recycled materials in construction and technologies. Please take the time to review the information found on the pages of the below link for an introduction to the AMC's Highland Center.
<http://www.outdoors.org/lodging/whitemountains/highland/> Thank you in advance for your help, time and consideration.

I attended yesterday's listening session at Occidental College in Los Angeles, which I greatly enjoyed, however, I did not get to voice my concerns and ideas. There were some great thoughts being presented that I considered of importance, so decided to email my comments. I am a long time resident of the Mojave Desert, and I have great concerns on the rush to site renewable energy projects. Our deserts provide extraordinary opportunities for recreation such as camping, hiking, photography, exploring, and much more. While I understand the importance of alternative energy projects, our desert is experiencing a rush to site renewable energy projects somewhat like the gold rush. There are many problems with this rush to put such projects all over our desert. First, I don't believe there have been adequate studies to determine the actual amount of energy we will need in the future. There are other considerations to be made before running forward recklessly. Such sites should be close to the areas of use instead of in far away deserts, eliminating the need for transmission lines and the loss of energy when being transported on these transmission lines. More incentives should be made for rooftop solar, not only on homes but on large buildings and over parking lots in the urban areas of use. This could lead to green jobs in the cities where such jobs are drastically needed. Another place for siting solar and wind projects would be in previously disturbed areas of land and not out in pristine areas of the desert. Conservation of energy used is still an important part of the equation. Another great concern of this rush to site these projects is the technology and integrity of the companies applying for permits to build on public lands. Many of the technologies are not adequately proven and the companies that are rushing to get government money are not necessarily going to be successful, thus destroying our treasured desert resources with no successful outcome. Reading the proposals for these projects you will find much necessary information is not included and all the the negative impacts are not addressed. Also some of these applications do not have accurate figures for the amount of energy they can produce. Rushing to put such projects on our valuable public lands could lead to devastating destruction of these resources. We must slow down and proceed in a very methodical manner. Another concern is funding for our National Parks, monuments, and other public lands. Funding should be adequate for comprehensive management plans and for on the ground implementation. As development eats away at our public lands it becomes more and more urgent that these lands are protected for people, wildlife and the health of our people and the ecosystems. Thank you for this opportunity to express my feelings.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Last Friday I attended the session at the Occidental College in Los Angeles and during our break out group, our facilitator at the Samuelson Pavilion encouraged us to follow up with our challenges and or "what's working" recommendations with an example or story. 1. Challenge Our organization has been providing outdoor education programs over 35 years to youth in the public and private sectors and when trying to reserve "group sites" at some of the National Parks, these sites go very quickly because there are not enough. Group sites are critical when working with large groups of students. An example is Yosemite National Park, we need to solicit assistance from several of our staff on the 15th of each month to arrive in the office by 6:30, set up their computers to recreation.gov (the site that reserves for the National Parks) and at 7:00 a.m. SHARP, everyone needs to select a group site, these sites are taken within five minutes. Please increase the number of group sites available for so we can continue our mission of nurturing and educating these youth groups and providing an environmental stewardship inspiration. 2. Federal Government Role How can we partner with the federal government to make outdoor education programs available to our disadvantaged and at risk youth groups? We have a part-time grant writer and would welcome the opportunity to bridge grants that make these effective programs available to low income schools and organizations. 3. What works We have hundreds of stories and letters acknowledging some of the "life changing" experiences that take place in outdoor education. Here is one of many stories pertinent to environmental stewardship. a. A group of students attended a 5-day backpacking program in Yosemite National Park and at the conclusion of their program they were so inspired by their environmental stewardship calling, they returned to their communities and began a crusade to educate their peers and local residents by providing them with alternative on saving on the cost of electricity, within a short period of time, they reported a total of 200,000 pounds of carbon as a result of a program they have launched called the "pay it forward" project. b. A Salvation Army group of youth based out of Los Angeles and grant funded for a 3-part series of outdoor education combined with leadership, service learning and environmental stewardship taught these "at risk youth" and provided them with the tools necessary from the "Leave No Trace Behind", what they can do to contribute in their communities, reconnect with the outdoors and understand the importance of conservation. This particular group's last program was in the wilderness backpacking in the San Jacinto Mountains. Upon their return, they exchanged all paper and styrofoam eating/drinking utensils and now bring in their own washable eating utensils, maybe a small contribution but monumental to this group of youth. 4. Tools I have attached a list of outdoor education programs we provide and are constantly looking for new areas, Angeles National Forest is another great location. It would be helpful to have detailed trail maps accessible by GPS or downloadable to easily navigate trail groups without getting lost. We welcome any future discussion on how we can help support The America's Great Outdoors Presidential Initiative. Warm regards,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The new America's Great Outdoors program is a great opportunity to encourage the people of America to go out to wilderness quality lands and connect with nature. This can only happen if they actually enter the great outdoors by leaving their motorized vehicles and spend time on foot enjoying these great places. An added benefit of exploring the great outdoors on foot is that others can enjoy wilderness in peace and quiet. I am from Utah where many of the areas that are administered by the Bureau of Land Management are under attack by large numbers of motorized recreational vehicle enthusiasts. Often new illegal trails are carved out into the bush often with disastrous ecological effects. Please put key provisions into the new America's Great Outdoors program that places emphasis on the non-motorized enjoyment of America's wild places. Other possible provisions could create funding sources for education and enforcement to protect America's trail system from illegal incursions by motor vehicles. Thank you for considering my ideas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I attended the listening session in Minneapolis yesterday, and I had a few comments to share:

What works: I believe that important aspects of reconnecting people to the outdoors are to a) improve access, b) reduce fear, c) enhance connections to natural resources and connections between people in outdoor settings, and d) "make it cool." Some thoughts on these components...

Access. I live in Minneapolis, and I love living here. But, I don't think I would be happy to live in many other large US cities. In Minneapolis, there was forethought to design a park system where each residence would be within 6 blocks of a park. Easy access like this, for everyone, will make reconnecting to the outdoors possible for all. Access to the outdoors must be planned for and incorporated on the front end.

Fear. In terms of reducing fear... I believe that there we must clarify the true risks and benefits of unstructured, outdoor activities. When I was a child, my friends roamed freely in the outdoor world. We were encouraged to get outside and play. This unstructured play taught us to be creative and make our own fun. It taught us independence and how to think for ourselves. Today, parents are afraid to allow children to roam around outside unsupervised. Parental fear of stranger abduction of their children is pervasive and greatly unfounded. I think it would be beneficial to clarify the true risks of death or injury from various sources. Although the data varies from year to year... in 1999 there were 49 children killed related to stranger abduction, while this is horrible it is hardly a serious risk for most children considering there were ~50,000,000 children in US in 1999. Just for comparison, over 40,000 people are killed in car accidents in the US each year. Maybe it would be safer to let kids play outside in the neighborhood than put them in the car and take them to a "safe" supervised activity.

Connections. People are much more likely to maintain their involvement in an activity if they feel connected to the resources and connected to other people who are involved. These connections build up over time... I don't believe they are likely to occur after a single "outdoors program." This relates to the two points above... I believe the easy access... and encouragement of regular, unstructured outdoor activities will create ongoing outdoor activities, rather than "special" one-of-a-kind outdoor programs.

Making it cool. People are bombarded with commercial advertising about what clothes, cars, and electronic equipment are cool. Let's get real... it's way cooler to be active, fit, engaged, and focused in an active outdoor activity. And no, it's not just about acquiring the latest piece of outdoor equipment. Just being out there is cool. How can we get that message out??!

Challenges: I think one key challenge is to better understand people perspectives on conservation, recreation, and the outdoors. We need to better understand the barriers to, motivations for, and perceived rewards of outdoor recreation and conservation behavior. We also need better analysis of what IS working. Do people who have better access have greater participation? If we break down the barriers to conservation behavior, do more people engage in the behaviors?

Federal Government Role: There is a huge role for the government in facilitating the suggestions above. Strategic planning, leadership, funding, and coordination/encouragement of partnerships with state and local governments, corporations and nonprofit organizations.

Tools: More support for coordinated research on human interaction with natural systems. --

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello there: Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We are a land trust (a 501 c3 nature conservancy nonprofit corporation) serving Whidbey and Camano Islands in Washington State with a mission of protecting our islands most important natural habitats, working farms and forests and scenic vistas in partnership with willing landowners and our community. Like many of the other 1,600 Land Trusts in the U.S., the Whidbey Camano Land Trust has done incredible work to help advance the land protection missions of our federal, state and local agency partners. We have over 1100 active household members and have protected over 6200 acres of land on these very special northwest islands. Land Trusts are a powerful way to enhance our governments work to protect our nation's most important landscapes and provide outdoor recreation opportunities, particularly hiking, biking, horseback riding, bird-watching and, in appropriate areas, hunting. Land Trusts live and work in the areas they help to protect and we rely on establishing and keeping good relationships with our local and state government officials and with landowners and the public. We can work in places and on projects where federal agencies have no access. We can work more quickly and creatively than the federal government. We can stretch and leverage federal and other public monies to go much farther than federal agencies can with the support of landowners of all different persuasions. We work in close collaboration with our public agency partners to ensure that all of their legal and other requirements are met. We hold the highest ethical standards and have adopted and actively implement the Land Trust Alliance's policies and procedures for land trusts. Just a few examples of our work:

1. Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, a unit of the National Park Service: In just 5 years, our Land Trust has secured over \$16 million dollars (with another \$6.8 million of requests pending) to permanently protect hundreds of acres, including the most important prime, historical working farmlands and nationally significant natural areas. The \$16 million came from a variety of federal, state and local grants as well as private donations of money and land no funding was from LWCF. Our key partners include the NPS, USFWS, NRCS and Navy, as well as State Parks, WA Natural Resources, Island County, Whidbey Conservation District, Town of Coupeville, Ebey's Reserve Trust Board and many private organizations and individuals. We are working with our partners to protect hundreds of additional acres of prime working farmland at risk from residential development.
2. Nationally Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitat: Using a variety of USFWS grants matched with state, local and private dollars, we have protected one of just 12 remaining populations of golden paintbrush, a federally threatened species. We are actively recovering golden paintbrush at this site as well as restoring the prairie landscape to benefit other species. We are working to permanently protect another golden paintbrush population at risk of elimination as well as a remarkable and rare old-growth forest along a marine feeder bluff benefitting threatened salmon stocks. We have protected critical wetland and upland habitat at Crockett Lake, a critical stopover for tens of thousands of migratory birds. We have protected thousands of acres of salmon habitat, including protecting and restoring important former estuaries, located just one ebb tide from the huge Chinook and other salmon runs in the Skagit Delta, so that juvenile salmon can find refuge. The above is just a few examples of the work we have accomplished in just a few short years because of our dedication to collaboration and healthy partnerships with federal, state and local agencies. Please enhance the excellent, low-cost work of our nation's 1,600 land trusts by:

1. Making the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations permanent. This tax incentive

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

greatly benefits our nation's small farmers and keeps prime farmland available for our nation's own food production. Our nation's small farmers deserve full credit for their invaluable donations of conservation easements that eliminate development and ensure the best soils are kept permanently available for food production. 2. Increasing funding for the Farm Bill conservation programs, including the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and Wetlands Reserve Program and increase the leverage of these funds by allowing land trusts to acquire conservation easements. This will greatly reduce government spending at the same time that it increases private/public partnerships. And it protects farmlands and water our nation's most valuable resource. 3. Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy Program and the new Community Forest and Open Space Program and change these programs to allow direct acquisition of land and easements by land trusts. Thank you for taking the time to read our comments. We are committed to working in close partnership with our federal government to achieve the best land protection and, as a bonus, reduce the workload burden on our federal resource agency partners.

Thanks for conducting a listening session in New Hampshire to receive input about how to best protect America's Great Outdoors. (<http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/Join-the-Conversation.cfm>). I will not be able to attend your event so I am submitting my comments via email. Bigger threats than insects, disease, and fire to my family's forests are state and federal Government Regulations. The state of Massachusetts' Department of Conservation and Recreation has all but eliminated forestry on 60% of public land and they now threaten to limit private landowners' opportunities to sustain their family forests. Job losses as a result of the state's preservationist policies are enormous. I urge the Obama administration to support family forest land owners, jobs, and open space conservation by enabling private landowners to make a living on their sustainably managed land. As the president and 9th generation of my family's Tree Farm business, I oversee the sustainable forest management of thousands of acres in Massachusetts. W. D. Cows, Inc., is the largest private landowner in the state. As the past president of the MA Forest Landowners Associate and the MA State Director for the national Forest Landowners Association, I presume my views are shared by many. Last year I closed my family's long held sawmill because manufacturing lumber in Amherst just doesn't make economic sense anymore. Moving forward we are focusing our efforts on sustainable forest management and log sales. We also are seeking other forest-based economic opportunities to sustain our family business into future generations. To ensure the future of private forests, we could use your help improving our forest-based economic opportunities in areas including solar and wind power, carbon credits, spring water production, conservation restrictions, and markets for logs. Biomass power has become virtually a criminal thought in my state. How is this environmentally preferable and renewable fuel source not being given full encouragement of the Patrick and Obama administrations? We need your help to turn MA and this country around. If you want to protect open space, please do not take rights and opportunities away from private forest landowners. Please encourage our sustainable and economic opportunities and encourage the state of MA to do the same. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a financial donor to your primary AND presidential campaign, and in light of this country's growing support for the Republican party, I want you to act now on wilderness conservation. We have a limited amount of time to create, expand, and better protect our wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, and rivers. To ensure that future generations will always benefit from our public lands, consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors: - Address conservation on a large scale - Protect our wilderness - Improve watersheds and wildlife habitat - Connect people with nature - Fully fund the land and water conservation fund Thank you for your leadership. You have this one chance to shape a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century. Please act now.

Dear President Obama et al., It has come to my attention that the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), which I am a member and whose great-grandfather served in the Union Army's 27th Ohio Infantry, Company "H", has proposed that battlefield preservation be made a key element of this outstanding conservation initiative. For more than a year, CWPT has encouraged senior administration officials to use this opportunity to commit resources for preservation of the nation's remaining unprotected battlefield land as a lasting legacy of the Civil War Sesquicentennial (2011-2015). We ask that you please take a few moments to express your interest in battlefield preservation, and let the Administration know many Americans believe in the importance of protecting our nation's endangered Civil War battlegrounds. When you visit the website <<http://members.civilwar.org/site/R?i=otRGnRo8FlxudHXqexJiCw..>>, be sure to vote "promote" for battlefield preservation and offer your own personal thoughts on why this should be an Administration priority. Here are a few points I wish to have included: Preserved Civil War battlefields are tangible links to our country's past. The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation. Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses. Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict. Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation. Battlefield preservation in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. Parkland created through battlefield preservation near growing population centers like Nashville, Atlanta and elsewhere can benefit quality of life for residents. I hope, sir, that you will definitely consider these salient points in your decision.

I support battlefield preservation, especially of Civil War sites. This is very important ground to protect, and provides open space as well.

Save our national heritage!! Fund Civil War Battlefield preservation!! Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Obama's, more than any other couple to ever occupy the White House, should understand the sacrifices made by Civil War soldiers on their behalf. It is obvious that they do. The preservation of those historic battlefields leaves a legacy that they can share with their children and the nation's children. Here is an area that they, as much as Theodore Roosevelt did for conservation of Natural Resources, can own in their own spectacular way. Roosevelt once asked what it would take to save millions of acres. He was told his signature on an Executive Order. I urge the President to sign an Executive Order and using his signature to save millions of acres of battlefields in the United States.

When I was a child, the Civil War was still being taught as a major event in school. These days, it's a minor blip. In 1961-65, the Civil War centennial was a remembrance of a bloody, sad chapter in our collective history. The folks in New England, who seem to "edit" our history texts, see a need to trivialize that era (except for slavery!). This is why we need to preserve our battlefields; so this history is not lost to future generations. Thank you for reading this,

Dear Department of the Interior, As a member of the Civil War Preservation Trust, ancestor of two Civil War Veterans, and a civil war reenactor, I would like to urge you to make "Battlefield Preservation" a key element in the "America's Great Outdoors Initiative." As a civil war reenactor, myself and thousands of others have had the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors on civil war battlefields across this country, while at the same time teaching literally millions of Americans about our civil war heritage. As we approach the sesquicentennial of the Civil War in 2011 - 2015, I feel there is no better way to honor those who served and died in that great war than to set aside land for future generations to enjoy while at the same time re-living history. Battlefield Preservation is the most honorable way I can think of to conserve America's Great Outdoors. Thank you so much for your attention to this initiative.

DEAR SIRs WE SURELY HOPE YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN TO PRESERVE ANY WILDLIFE HABITAT. PLEASE SEE MY ATTACHMENT. THANKS

Buffalo are not endangered. There is a very healthy, numerous population. It is absurd to classify them as wild animals. They are domestically raised, and are in fact an ag animal.

PLEASE SAVE OUR HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY.....

Our history is short. We cannot lose any of it by destroying or ignoring places where people fought and died for our country. Citizens cannot do this alone. We need the government to support these historic places. Visit them. Stand on the ground. Then decide that nothing is important about that land.

please keep up with the support of civil war battlefield preservation, thank you

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As the single greatest catastrophe in this country's history, yet it's seminal event, we have a duty to preserve the blooded fields on which our ancestors fought and died to preserve the Union and free a people from slavery. Please do not let our heritage be paved over.

As Americans it is incumbent on us to protect the hallowed places where so many of our forefathers gave their lives. The protection of Civil War battlefields provides this opportunity to our current generation. Battlefields are rapidly disappearing because of unwise development that disregards our historic resources. We do not have much time to act. Those of us who share this common interest and sense of responsibility must act now. Our numbers are many, and our will is strong. Our battlefield organizations, National Park Service, and government officials must be strongly encouraged to protect these legacies of our national fabric.

President Obama: It is important to preserve our Civil War battlefields. We don't need Walmarts or Casinos built next to them, destroying their historicity. The Civil War has impacted our country like no other and our battlefields, if preserved, will keep reminding us of that now and for generations to come. If we lose sight of this and allow our history to fall prey to developers who only want to build malls, office parks and housing developments. They can all be built on non-historic property and it is important to uphold that on the federal, state, and local levels of government.

Federal Government...Please continue your support of the CWPT that works so hard to preserve our heritage...

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a professional geologist with over 30 years working in private industry and state government (Oklahoma Geological Survey). In the past, I have worked for the National Park Service (Crater Lake) and the U.S. Geological Survey (Yosemite National Park and Arizona). I have also worked with the Nature Conservancy, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, and the Norman (Oklahoma) Environmental Control Advisory Board (to city government). I am also a petroleum geologist and work with local education and rockhound groups. The United States (and the world) is facing some critical decisions regarding the wise use of its natural resources, including water, petroleum, and minerals. As such, we are going to need trained professionals in these fields to give us direction and provide solutions to some of the important questions we face. The geosciences community is in the forefront of these issues, and it is critical that we continue to attract young people into our profession. One way to do this is at an early age grammar school. And there is little that young people like to do more than collect things. As a child, one of my earliest and fondest memories was breaking open a rock in a local streambed to discover it was loaded with small shells ancient brachiopods that lived millions of years ago. The Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts have programs and merit badges in geology, and one of the requirements is building a rock, mineral, and fossil collection with identifications. In addition to Scout leaders, local rockhounds often sponsor kids programs in which adults take children into the field to collect specimens. A column in a recent rockhound magazine that I subscribe to discussing the AGO initiative is titled "Conservation and Recreation." To this title I would add "Education." I would encourage you, in your deliberations about allowing collecting specimens on federally managed lands, to allow the small-scale (e.g., no digging, even with only a shovel) collecting of common rocks, minerals, and fossils. Rockhounding is not only a popular outdoor pastime for (usually) older people, but is critical for engaging children at an early age. Obviously, some federal lands should be entirely off-limits to collecting anything e.g., national parks and monuments. But collecting on other lands in which the collector does not disrupt the surface and does not sell his/her specimen for private gain should be allowed. This is a complex issue and there are many points of view. However, my 30+ years experience as a professional geologist and part-time educator tells me there are many avenues of compromise. I would be willing to discuss this issue at greater length at your leisure.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thanks for a great time at Occidental college last week. It is great to have an administration that cares about the (our) environment. My comment: Even though off-road recreationists talk of large numbers of enthusiasts, the data is not accurate. There are many people that use their 4-wheel street-legal vehicles as access and touring of public lands. Our interest is in low impact use and protection of the lands. There is a sector of off-roaders that are mainly interested in their vehicles, the speed and the destruction of lands (carving hills, climbing boulders, racing in sand dunes and washes, riparian areas and the like). Off-roading on public lands should be limited to street-legal vehicles where law enforcement can easily check for id, see the license plates and enforce the law more easily. Speeding and destroying land should be reserved to contained parks, preferably funded by the recipients of the off-road related sales of RVs, vehicles, clothing, parts, etc. This type of activity should not occur on public lands since it destroys the land and excludes everyone else from the use. The nuisance, the pollution, habitat destruction, noise and chaos created is not something the public should accept on public land. This destruction has saddened us as local hikers in north San Diego county. We have hiked into the proposed Wilderness area of BLM and found beautiful riparian areas destroyed. BLM does not have enough rangers to control the problem. We fear for our safety as hikers and equestrians with our lands being open to this type of rampage, Thanks,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I know that most of the conversations were about money (an important part of nearly everything), our economy (which I feel is bankrupt), and the environment (which, sadly, isn't getting our undivided attention). Sorry for the rude comments!! I can't help but seriously put my heart into it! The youth (I think) don't get the following: informed are interested support guidance and most of all, funds or money Everything is cash, hard core cash that many people can't afford. I feel a loss because there are a bunch of careless people out there adults and kids who act immaturity to our economy, to our friends and families, and to our environment. There are people out there who have no homes, who can't get a job, who don't know how to make ends meet for themselves or their family. Then, there are some people who won't even consider the FACT that there are homeless, famished, and scared for their lives people in this world. Life isn't fair, that's a fact, but we can choose what to do with life. Some people make the wrong decisions, others don't. I'd hate to try to make someone listen to what I have to say because it just doesn't go into their head if they aren't gonna TRY to be into it. If they CHOOSE not to care about our education, our community, our environment, it's not like we can make them do as they're told. It takes persuasion, it takes facts, and we have all that, but we need their hearts. I know how hard it is to do something for others who are your age, and it's hard to get their attention. They just couldn't care less about their surroundings. It's like a girl from the pink group said, kids these days care about tests (without really learning anything), possessions (that won't belong to you when you're.....dead), and technology (even though it takes up a big part in life, it's not something that you should be addicted to). It's so infuriating when you can't get into their right mind that what is going on in this world is so important you can't believe they know nothing!! I sometimes think both parents and kids are part of it. Adults teach the kids and we are highly influenced by them, and our surroundings. Parents, I hear from people who are quite insanely immature and lazy as their parents, don't care if they get into trouble or stuff like that. I find that shameful because it seems like we just don't know how to help our country, the promised land, go higher in the future, instead of lower. My school cut every club except for sports. What about those (like me) who love art, literature, science, music, and all of the other subjects? Sure sports are great and all but it's not fair to those few who don't want to be in those clubs? What'll happen to them? No matter how many people I know love sports, what will happen to the musical industry? What will happen to all of our kiddy cartoons? Without music, there are no iPods or mp3 players. Without art there is no fashion or latest style. Without our trees and fields there will be no lumber or vegetation or soccer fields to play on. How can people be so absent minded about all of these keys that are right under their noses?! How can teachers teach us, but not teach us at the same time? What will we remember? When will we use it? Why is it so IMPORTANT?! Those are questions that I haven't found an answer to until now. No teacher will help us go deep down unless they realize how poorly we are doing. The number of kids who passed the NY state tests has gotten lower this year, I don't think it needs to be any lower! If we cannot get the education we need, why go to school? School helps you learn, that is what it is supposed to help you with. You need to learn math, social studies, english, and science because they are essential to our future. Math we will one day use every single living day. Social studies teaches us to learn from our past. Without english how is one supposed to communicate with one another? Science is just simply all around us and we don't realize ANY of this!! It really makes me feel bad. However, it helps ME realize that there are things to be done.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Now I think I'll try to convince my principal to have a nature club... thanks for reading this

My name is (name deleted) I attended the "Listening session" Friday August 27, 2010 in Nashville, Tennessee. I was in room 201 but during my comments the Moderator and the Note Taker were whispering to each other and my comments did not get attention or recorded (nor did my name). I am retired, but active in the Friends of the Cumberland Trail State Park and the Every Child Outdoors Tennessee Coalition (previously the No Child Left Inside" coalition). I am also a past Director of Tennessee State Parks. What works: Taking kids outside. I have taken kids on hikes both for pleasure, exercise, and education. The Friends' has sponsored some K-12 teachers to attend workshops to teach them how to prepare and implement outdoor classes and other activities. School, church, scouts, and park led activities to take kids outside works. It works for social ability, educational, health to combat obesity, and for future conservation/environment efforts. We should incorporate these efforts into our K-12 education standards and requirements. We should require outdoor activities to address childhood obesity and education of almost all classes. Teachers' degrees should have this training and education in their curriculum. Teachers should know how to create and implement outdoor activities and education when they get an education degree. The Challenges: To get (require) educators to place importance on outdoor activities and classes. Many teachers are themselves over weight and uncomfortable outside. Many educators I have talked with do not hold outdoor activities and classes as an option. In fairness to teachers they have a lot on their plate already, like teaching-to-the-tests. To address our liability laws and tort reform to encourage schools and other organizations to take kids outside, so that teachers, parents, and scout leaders are not afraid to take kids outside. The flip side of that effort is to train adult leaders in how to conduct an outside activity. We need to allow kids unstructured, unrestricted outside play at all levels, as well as supervised outdoor activity. Federal Government Role: Much of what I have mentioned does not involve more money or greater spending. If we change our focus and priorities at schools, church youth, and other adult-led activities it can be done. Get teachers and parents to lose weight and lead by example. Discourage and help parents to avoid "helicopter" parenting. Provide training to teachers, parents, and adults on leading outdoor activities. Increase levels in park staffs' in this regard will be necessary. The main people who will help teachers, and other adult leaders will be park/staff rangers, and health professionals. Friends- of-parks organizations can (as we have done) play a major role in bringing together environmentalist, educators, health professionals, etc. to provide a comprehensive approach. Tools: Educators have their hands full addressing the many requirements place on them without additional burdens that they will not be paid for. The number one thing we can do is make outdoor education and exercise for kids a priority, and reward effort and success. The second thing we can do is beef up the staffs' and resources of parks, park staff, health professionals scout and church leaders who can work with educators in this mission. Thirdly, we can encourage parents to lead by example in getting outdoors, losing weight, helping kids study about the outdoors and what happens out there. Thank you for this opportunity. Please acknowledge receipt of this message so I'll know it went through.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These are my comments for your report to the President on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. 1. Explain why. I attended the Annapolis meeting and heard many good presentations, including your video. What was missing was explaining to the "unwashed" WHY it is important to conserve natural resources, the importance of ecological health. I don't think that just emoting over beauty or saying we have to save resources for future generations is enough or convincing. 2. Focus on restoration. In many areas, there are no land or waters to buy or save. It's all been developed or destroyed. I believe we need a major effort by all conservation agencies to restore degraded areas. Also, we need to help people understand how small parcels can make a difference. The Audubon at Home program at the National Audubon Society is a good model. Thank you for this important effort.

It is very important to preserve the remaining special places and landscapes in this country. There are 9 million acres in Utah that have been waiting for 20 years to be approved for wilderness protection. The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance www.suwa.org has identified the most spectacular and important land in Utah for protection. The Utah land bill has been tabled for about 2 decades. Now is the time to protect this valuable land. We rush to drill gas wells on the public land because of the gas companies political clout, but what about the needs of the average citizen who pays taxes. The land is a valuable resource for tourism. When I have toured the national parks in Utah during the summer, the majority of the visitors to the parks are from outside the U.S. Please protect the land in Utah, and the rest of the valuable scenic and recreational resources that we have in this country. The needs of the citizens and tax payers should not be disregarded for the benefit and profits of gas and oil companies.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Friendly Greetings! I attended the August 4 meeting in Minneapolis which focused on the Mississippi River, and would like to elaborate on comments I made there. The Mississippi River and its corridor through the Twin Cities form the Mississippi River National Recreation Area. About half of this waterway is classified as "impaired" by excess turbidity, mainly caused by sediment contributed by a major tributary, the Minnesota River. A major study is about to culminate in a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for this portion of the river, which we call the South Metro Mississippi. It will provide numerical goals for sediment reduction as well as targets for restoration of the ecosystem. As water clarity improves, healthy aquatic vegetation will return, which will provide food and habitat for waterfowl, fish, and other forms of aquatic life. I would like to suggest that America's Great Outdoors Presidential Initiative takes explicit actions to support the achievement of the water quality targets that will soon be established through the South Metro Mississippi TMDL for Total Suspended Solids. By engaging the National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency and US Department of Agriculture in a concerted effort, the federal government can help us launch a major ecosystem restoration initiative that will greatly enhance the quality of outdoor experiences in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Exhaustive research has gone into establishing a water quality standard for the Mississippi that will restore the aquatic ecosystem, and to identify where the major sources of sediment are located. Citizens working with state and federal experts have developed a suite of Environmental Indicators and metrics analogous to those for the Chesapeake Bay. I believe that with federal support and cooperation, we can launch a quality, science-based Mississippi River restoration project that will greatly enhance the outdoor experiences of residents of and visitors to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

<<Large Landscape Conservation final.pdf>> September 2, 2010 Honorable Nancy Sutley, Chair Council on Environmental Quality c/o America's Great Outdoors 1849 C St NW Washington, DC 20240 Mailstop 3156 Dear Ms. Sutley: Thank you for your work in collecting and synthesizing an abundance of important ideas, recommendations, and policy tools as you prepare the America's Great Outdoors report for the President. We hope you will find the enclosed Policy Focus Report, Large Landscape Conservation: A Strategic Framework for Policy and Action, a valuable resource as you continue your work. Over the past two years, we have explored the topic of large landscape conservation with key policy leaders, practitioners, academic researchers, NGO leaders, and funders. Our conversations started with the recognition that the most important land and water issues facing North America—including land use patterns, water management, biodiversity protection, and climate adaptation—require new approaches, many of which transcend the reach of existing jurisdictions and institutions. This exploration has resulted in the enclosed report, which describes regionally based initiatives currently underway in forest lands, ecosystems, watersheds, and wildlife corridors that involve multiple jurisdictions and ownership. The report recommends ways to encourage such efforts and foster innovation going forward, including:

- * Gather and share information. Establish a common, coherent scientific database and develop an annotated atlas of governance efforts.
- * Encourage a network of practitioners to build capacity. Catalyze collaboration through a network similar to the Land Trust Alliance to identify best practices and ideas for policy reform.
- * Establish a national competitive grants program to enable and sustain promising efforts. Facilitate homegrown partnerships, improve coordination among ongoing efforts, and recognize the most promising approaches to large landscape conservation.
- * Improve the policy toolkit. Strengthen incentive-based tools for landowner conservation and improve coordination and participation by federal and other governmental agencies.
- * Facilitate innovative funding opportunities. Maximize and focus the use of existing federal and state programs and authorities that can be implemented quickly and without significant new funding.

The report provides greater detail on each of these recommendations. Thank you again for undertaking this important effort. Please contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Hi, just checking to see whether the Department has any plans to wrap up the comments and develop something with those it already has. The APA is interested in providing comments and/or participating in other ways. Thanks,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

What Works In my community of Western North Carolina, partnerships between land trusts, the state clean water management trust fund, the natural resources trust funds and the National Forests are effective in acquiring conservation easements. Coops of farmers and some state and federally funded local facilities help small local farmers process their products and get them to local and regional markets. The school system in Madison County uses local food in the school lunch program. Challenges Conservation easement transaction costs are very high and not possible for many people who would otherwise be willing to put land in easements. NC Farmland Trust fund has never been adequately funded and \$2M a year does not go very far. Local participation in providing funds for land preservation projects is not possible for poorer mountain county governments. Federal Gov't impediments The system of using volunteers is hopelessly tangled in bureaucracy originally meant to provide some kind of liability protection to agencies. In my own community, an effort to keep a NFS recreation area open more months of the year by having volunteers clean bathrooms, cut grass, and empty garbage complete fell apart because of onerous and unrealistic requirements placed on those who wanted to volunteer. Innovation and grass roots work is key but when all is said and done, all groups are desperate for funding, especially in these hard economic times. Agricultural policy does not take into account impact on small farmers but rather serves corporate farms. Farm subsidies need to be eliminated or completely restructured to provide benefits to small farms and farmers. Food Health and Safety Act as originally written would have put most small farms out of business. Tools Good data and research needs to be done and disseminated to the public and decision makers quickly -- and not so couched in cautious bureaucratic language as to be useless. Example, fish and wildlife initiative to study impact of large wind turbine installations on bird and bat life is disappointingly "cya" in tone. There needs to be some compensation to local governments when a large percentage of the counties land base is publically owned and therefore, tax exempt. Selling off existing public assets is NOT the answer to this problem

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

On behalf of the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, I would like to submit the following comments:

What Works · School field trips to the outdoors for elementary, middle and high school students, and participation in projects that restore the environment or recreation areas serve well to reconnect people to the outdoors. · Preserving outdoor areas and providing the means for the public to utilize them through trails, trailheads, parking areas, information kiosks and websites, definitely increase the use of the outdoors for recreation purposes.

Challenges · Funding for procurement and maintenance of outdoors spaces are two of the most pressing challenges to increasing conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors. Safety is also a major additional challenge in many urban areas. · Staffing to work on procurement efforts is another challenge; many local governments and land preservation agencies are short on personnel and other resources, and are burdened with innumerable priority projects, lessening the time these groups have to work on procurement.

· A lack of monetary resources has forced many school districts and other groups to cut field trips, physical education classes, and other non-academic efforts, reducing the time young people spend outdoors.

Federal Government Role The federal government can be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation, recreation and connecting people to the outdoors by:

· Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund every year · Remembering that even though Americans may not put environmental issues at the top of their "concerns" list every year, preservation of the environment and outdoor recreation opportunities will always be important to the American public. · Allowing more control to federal units such as individual national parks and wildlife refuges for determining priorities, allocating resources, and working with local jurisdictions to conserve environmental resources and develop joint recreation resources.

Tools Additional tools and resources that would help our efforts be more successful are:

· A database of best practices regarding strategies that local and regional jurisdictions have employed to encourage conservation, promote recreation and facilitate reconnecting people with the outdoors. · A database of grant and other funding opportunities to assist local and regional jurisdictions in the acquisition and maintenance of parklands and recreational facilities, and to hire and train personnel to manage conservation efforts and educate the public about outdoor resources and use opportunities. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a motorcycle rider, I have been involved with the Santa Fe National Forest Travel Management Rule (TMR) for four years. We formed the Blackfeathers Trail Preservation Alliance so that we may have standing and input on the TMR. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the TMR on the Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF) was just released. Much of our input for the 525 miles of single track trails appears to have been ignored! We have been granted about 140 miles of single track trail. Dozens of established trails have been eliminated. As you probably know, Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use has more than doubled in the past 20 years. Yet, the Forest Service plan is to cut the trails by more than half! Does this make sense? Increasing use of these remaining trails will only lead to the degradation of trails rather than their preservation. It appears the fix is in for decreasing OHV access to the forest. At this time, similar actions are happening on all National Forests and BLM land across the country. The SFNF claims not to have the money to maintain the present trail system. Most of the money goes to road and hiking trail maintenance. Little or no money has been allocated for OHV recreation that has doubled within the past 20 years. What little money is raised from fees and taxes goes to enforcement. In fact five years ago, a \$35,000 OHV Grant to develop trails was unused by the SFNF. Presently the SFNF has only five miles of declared OHV trail! Now it appears in the DEIS that the FS wants to reduce access and limit riding areas to accommodate hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders that are disturbed by the sound and sight of an OHV. What ever happened to a multi-use forest? As an OHV user, how are my fees and taxes benefiting me? Dont you think its time to recognize who the real users are and accommodate increasing trends rather than limiting access to OHV users? According to the Out of the Wilderness article in Newsweek 2/9/08 the Pergams and Zaradic study showed outdoor activities (hiking fishing camping) have been significantly decreasing, about 10% per decade, since the 1980s. That is a significant decrease! Ive certainly noticed the decline of hikers and mountain bikers in the SFNF over the past thirty years. Yet, the FS as well as the Department of Interior (DOI) are more responsive to the dwindling number of hikers, mountain bikers, and campers than the ever increasing numbers of OHV riders that actually use the forest. I attended the DOI public listening meeting in Albuquerque NM in July. I counted three OHV users, a dozen ranchers, a few educators, and several that already work with youth in the forest. All the other attendees, in large numbers, were the NO ACCESS environmental groups Ive seen for the past four years at the SFNF public meetings. These groups allow very little compromise in sharing trails; their goal is to eliminate OHV use as much as possible and to create a wilderness-like atmosphere within the multi-use forest. . I watched Americas Great Outdoor Initiative (AGOI) video and read the material and did not see a single word on OHV use. AGOIs purpose is to promote and support innovative community-level efforts to conserve outdoor spaces and reconnect Americans to the outdoors. It sounds like a great plan to involve youth in building trails and take ownership of their forests. Where is the AGOI connecting OHV use to outdoors? Where are the OHV advocates within the DOI? I believe the DOI is creating a platform for environmental groups to reinforce the limited access decisions of the DOI on public lands. Its also apparent the AGOI is headed off in the same direction by not including OHV users. The DOI and the Department of Agriculture claim to recognize OHV use as viable form of recreation and say that they are limiting access at reasonable pace. I would not call this first round of limiting access (over 50%) a reasonable pace. I would call it an agenda meant to severely limit OHV use on public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

What happened to the multi-use concept? The CEQ, EPA, and the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior are allowing major input into how public lands are to be managed from the same environmental groups (as indicated from the AGOI listening meetings) who are pushing for yet another wilderness omnibus bill that would declare millions of square miles as wilderness areas without public input. The OHV community is growing and is a viable means of creating jobs in America today. In Colorado alone, OHV use is a Three Billion Dollar Industry! We will all be watching very closely as millions of miles of roads and trails are closed to the public for OHV use. These decisions will affect millions of people everywhere. Many people are not as well-connected as the environmental groups and their input will not be heard. Their jobs will just disappear and they will be added to the rolls of the unemployed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important subject. First, there is a "real" discussion regarding fully funding LWCF at the appropriated \$900M+. This is very important to the success of any federal conservation initiative. Second would be increasing duck stamp prices and therefore the impact of those funds in the associated acquisition projects (offshore O&G tax's, etc...). With that said there are several issues that have accumulated in the last administration and out the USA at this point in time way behind in the ability to respond to this discussion: 1. There needs to be an immediate hiring of new real estate staff and planning staff in the Interior and Agriculture Agencies. The training of these new staffers needs to be fast tracked. 2. The appraisal services needs to be completely re-engineered. This has started but also needs to be fast tracked. 3. There needs to be an acceptance of third party appraisals and a very quick review of all appraisals. 4. Boundary expansions need to be put into a much more efficient process so that there is not a full year or more of time lags and discussions. This is not rocket science, we know these resources. For a successful program to be put into motion quickly and efficiently, say in 6 months or less than a year, the above items will have to be addressed ahead of funding. I have only touched on the tip of the funding iceberg so as to keep these comments concise (think MMS, NOAA, FEMA, etc...). This is short term as President Obama does not really have that much time left when you look at the reality of how DC works. Last but not least, we can "dialogue" all day long while our problems (or opportunities) are just growing bigger and bigger. We know enough about our resources that it is time to act. Another key element is that there is no such thing as consensus. Take comments and move forward. Thanks again for the opportunity.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a land planner and landscape architect who has planned a very unique (for this area of North Texas) 1200 ac Nature Preserve oriented residential development that is within 30 minutes of the eastern edge of the Dallas Metro Area and 10 minutes from the fast growing cities of Rockwall, Terrell, Fate and Royse City. It is planned to have 70% of each lot in a contiguous conservation easement dedicated to the Texas Land Conservancy, one of Texas' approved land trust. Currently, 625 acres have already been dedicated and it known as the HIGH POINT PRAIRIE. The development is named Los Establos and was envisioned to restore a Tall Grass Prairie ecosystem that is very scarce, particular in this part of Texas, where developers typically do high density suburban lots with little thought to preservation and open space. This residential development was a leap-frog to the typical development around here and the nation to make this financially feasible but is still having a difficult time selling lots in the current market. I recommend a special federal, state and county program to encourage other developers and adjacent land owners in semi-rural areas to set aside lands for the future that can save significant portions of ecosystems for future generations. I will be willing to serve as an advisor to a group that is interested in pursuing this. This is an opportune time due to the slow down in sprawling residential development to avoid the same mono-environment type of planning that steadily creeps along gobbling up and destroying native habitats and using high amounts of energy and natural resources.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Land should not have to PAY for itself. It is a God-given gift to man to enjoy. No man created it and man can pay to enjoy it by paying fees to walk or run or hike. Our country seems to think everything has to be commercialized and make money. Not true. Humans seem to lose their best attributes when they no longer have access to land and wild life. Examples are our cities. There should be more land saved for future generations so they can smell the rain on clean earth and see the plants and animals created for viewing. Too many people think Man rules the earth. More land and access to nature is humbling and soul-enhancing. Please set aside more huge tracts of land for people - not contractors. Our San Francisco Bay Area hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Our public lands belong to Americans of all ages and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. I urge you to implement the following priorities: --The Obama administration should create new national programs that help connect people - especially our youth - with nature. Outdoor play and a connection to the natural world benefit children in many ways. The federal government should develop new administrative incentives and funding to expand state and local opportunities for students to reconnect and learn about nature. --Enhancing sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation will benefit local communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding tourism-related industries and boost ecotourism in their region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services. --Stewardship and conservation of our outdoor recreation lands, important watersheds and valued private lands works when we come together around our shared common values. Everyday across our state concerned citizens, tribal leaders, conservation groups, recreation businesses, and local elected officials join together to enhance and preserve their treasured special places. --Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010: The bill (H.R. 1612) "increases service opportunities for youth and young adults on public lands (ages 18-24), providing green jobs, improving infrastructure, restoring public lands, encouraging cultural and historical research, improving the health of coastal, marine and estuarine ecosystems, addressing climate change and assisting with scientific data collection." --Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund: The administration should support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas, protect lands around lakes, rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails, or provide key wildlife linkage areas. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a community activist working with families to achieve a healthier lifestyle I encourage you to support efforts in our region to connect families with nature. Our San Francisco Bay Area hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Our public lands belong to Americans of all ages and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. I urge you to implement the following priorities: --The Obama administration should create new national programs that help connect people - especially our youth - with nature. Outdoor play and a connection to the natural world benefit children in many ways. The federal government should develop new administrative incentives and funding to expand state and local opportunities for students to reconnect and learn about nature. --Enhancing sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation will benefit local communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding tourism-related industries and boost ecotourism in their region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services. --Stewardship and conservation of our outdoor recreation lands, important watersheds and valued private lands works when we come together around our shared common values. Everyday across our state concerned citizens, tribal leaders, conservation groups, recreation businesses, and local elected officials join together to enhance and preserve their treasured special places. --Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010: The bill (H.R. 1612) "increases service opportunities for youth and young adults on public lands (ages 18-24), providing green jobs, improving infrastructure, restoring public lands, encouraging cultural and historical research, improving the health of coastal, marine and estuarine ecosystems, addressing climate change and assisting with scientific data collection." --Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund: The administration should support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas, protect lands around lakes, rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails, or provide key wildlife linkage areas. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am concerned about the future we are leaving for all of our grandchildren, yours and mine, particularly the environment, the depletion of natural resources and the loss of beautiful natural places still left in the country. If we continue taking and using what every we want or feel we need now to satisfy our every whim, there will be very little left for future generations. We need strong leadership in the country to change our ways and convince us to pay a price now so future generations will not have to pay a much bigger one in the future. Our San Francisco Bay Area hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Our public lands belong to Americans of all ages and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. I urge you to implement the following priorities: --The Obama administration should create new national programs that help connect people - especially our youth - with nature. Outdoor play and a connection to the natural world benefit children in many ways. The federal government should develop new administrative incentives and funding to expand state and local opportunities for students to reconnect and learn about nature. --Enhancing sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation will benefit local communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding tourism-related industries and boost ecotourism in their region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services. --Stewardship and conservation of our outdoor recreation lands, important watersheds and valued private lands works when we come together around our shared common values. Everyday across our state concerned citizens, tribal leaders, conservation groups, recreation businesses, and local elected officials join together to enhance and preserve their treasured special places. --Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010: The bill (H.R. 1612) "increases service opportunities for youth and young adults on public lands (ages 18-24), providing green jobs, improving infrastructure, restoring public lands, encouraging cultural and historical research, improving the health of coastal, marine and estuarine ecosystems, addressing climate change and assisting with scientific data collection." --Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund: The administration should support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas, protect lands around lakes, rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails, or provide key wildlife linkage areas. Thank you for considering my comments.

Our San Francisco Bay Area hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Our public lands belong to Americans of all ages and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. I urge you to implement the following priorities: -- Create new national programs that help connect people - especially our youth - with nature. --Enhancing sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation will benefit local communities. -- Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010. --Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The San Francisco Bay Area is a critical habitat not only for humans, but for wildlife and aquatic life as well. The public lands in our area must be protected for the benefit of future generations and to ensure species survival. Accordingly, please: (1) Enhance sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation that will benefit local communities. (2) Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010. (3) Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which fosters conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas, protect lands around lakes, rivers and streams. Thank you.

I've received notification from The Wilderness Society that you're looking for public input on actions for public lands. I'm sick of industries operating without any concern for human or environmental impacts. Regulations and penalties need to be sufficient to ensure that human safety is guaranteed and that ecosystems are preserved for future generations. If companies can't make those promises, they shouldn't be allowed to operate. Clean water and air, beautiful landscapes, and diverse species that are older than our own species are not worth losing for a few transient dollars. Companies that violate regulations need to have severe penalties. If companies can consider penalties a standard operating expense, then they're not severe enough. Our country is creative and industrious enough to come up with alternatives to destructive practices. Stop holding back progress and destroying our planet for economic reasons. Thank you for considering my comments.

I would very much like your input on the issue of walking dogs free of leash in conservation land. I live in eastern Massachusetts where land is crowded. There is a movement afloat here to ban off-leash dog walking in our conservation lands, lands that have been purchased using our municipal and federal tax dollars. The Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge is a huge part of several eastern MA towns and the federal government banned dogs (both on-leash and off-leash) completely from all of this land. Many communities in eastern MA have banned off-leash dogs from conservation lands. Yet dogs need off-leash exercise and off-leash socialization with other dogs to be emotionally and physically healthy. PhD animal behaviorists have done studies that prove that dogs need off-leash exercise and off-leash socialization with other dogs in order to have good quality of life. If we can't provide for this need for our companion dogs on conservation land, our society is turning its back on "man's best friend". If you look at the writings by animal scientists, small fenced in parks do not enable the amount of exercise needed for most dogs or satisfy a dog's "seeking system" (see Dr. Temple Grandin's research). Conservation lands with trails and a variety of terrains, water and shade are needed for healthy dog exercise and socialization opportunities. I hope that the need to provide off-leash dog walking on conservation land will rise to a high level of importance in the President's Initiative. I would like to know how I can participate under the Initiative to bring this issue the attention it deserves.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our country is blessed with many beautiful and diverse natural ecosystems. Most Americans quickly recognize that the everglades, the Rocky Mountains, our coastlines, and other sites as national treasures. Less well known is the Prairie Pothole Region of the Northern Great Plains. This magnificent expanse of native prairie and wetlands supports a host of important wildlife species and is absolutely critical to the future of continental waterfowl populations. Despite its significance, bits of the Prairie Pothole Region are lost every year to agricultural conversion and wetland drainage. It is my hope that the America's Great Outdoors initiative will recognize and protect the Prairie Pothole Region and a national landmark or similar status to help preserve its future for wildlife and people.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Sir/Madam: On July 1 I attended the Listening Session on Americas Great Outdoors and have included an expanded version of the ideas and issues I presented that evening. I hope you find them helpful.

Eastside Audubon The mission of Eastside Audubon is to protect, preserve and enhance natural ecosystems and our communities for the benefit of birds, other wildlife and people. Thank you for holding the Listening Session in Seattle. I welcome the opportunity to tell you about our program and contribute to the discussion of conservation of our natural areas and the promotion of greater involvement in the outdoors by American families. I represent Eastside Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society with a service area that includes East King County from Lake Washington to the Cascade Crest and from the Snohomish County line to just south of I-90. Established in 1980 as a Chapter of the National Audubon Society, Eastside Audubon has grown to about 450 members and conducts all its activities using volunteers. Eastside Audubon has three primary means of serving the community: Conservation of birds and preservation and restoration of bird habitats, education of children and adults about birds and conservation issues, and recreational bird watching. The chapter sponsors a variety of bird watching trips and native plant walks, provides classes for adults, works with youth in a variety of settings, monitors land use and development that impact our communities, and conducts bird surveys of sensitive areas. I will respond to each of the four questions discussed in the breakout sessions.

1. Challenges: What obstacles exist to achieve your goals for conservation, recreation, or reconnecting people to the outdoors? A major obstacle is the lack of a national priority to support the consolidation of natural areas at the local level in multi-use urban and suburban parks and neighborhoods. Other priorities such as continual construction of soccer and baseball fields, hardening the environment by paving trails, and brighter lighting of parks seem to take precedence over preserving the natural environment. The introductory film reinforced the belief that nature is far away and the need for people to have to travel to amazing vistas to appreciate the outdoors. There was only token mention of local parks. In addition to protecting our national parks and forests we need to help people appreciate the outdoors where they are.

2. What works? What are the most effective strategies for conservation, recreation, and reconnecting people to the outdoors that you have used. Eastside Audubon has a number of programs that have been effective. For example, over the past five years the chapter has made a major commitment to conservation and bird watching recreation at Marymoor Park in Redmond, WA. We hold a monthly work party of 15-30 people and have been successful in restoring and preserving habitat for birds and other wildlife, and establishing a network of birding trails with high quality interpretive signage. This was done with the volunteer labor of our members, community people including high school and college students who were contributing their community service time, and employees of companies such as Microsoft and the Puget Sound Bird Observatory. We are committed to establishing a legacy of stewardship to pass on to children. Our chapter works closely with teachers in 14 schools in East King County and provides classroom-based educational programs on birds and the environment which include topics such as bird migration, species identification and typical foods birds eat. Each year we provide nature camp scholarships to six children from low-income families, a \$150 grant to a teacher to support environmental education, and a \$500 college scholarship to a high school senior who plans to study science or the environment. Chapter volunteers lead over 75 bird watching field trips per year for people of all skill levels and are committed to getting people out

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

of their homes and into nature. 3. Federal Government Role: How can the Federal Government be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation, recreation, and connecting people to the outdoors? We welcome this new initiative and hope it will get the federal government involved in many kinds of grassroots conservation and recreation activities. Promoting this White House Initiative as a national priority in a manner similar to President Kennedys Presidents Council on Physical Fitness would be a great beginning. We recommend that the federal government provide ongoing and consistent support for citizen science projects such as the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and the Cornell Lab of Ornithologys urban bird count and their joint Project Feederwatch. Also needed is financial support for analysis of the collected data and promulgation of the results. We also recommend that the government establish a massive effort to remove invasive species from natural areas, to plant native species of plants, to clean and repair trails and waterways, and to preserve open land in urban and suburban areas where most of the people live. These programs will also provide jobs to millions of Americans. In addition, we need government leadership to help the country stop burning fossil fuels and to review all legislation for its effect on the carbon load in the atmosphere. 4. Tools: What additional tools and resources would help your efforts be even more successful? Federal, state and county coordination will greatly help local organizations expand the kinds of activities conducted by Eastside Audubon which rfect the overall goals of the White House Initiative. These programs can be expanded to new communities and strengthened in the communities where they are already in place. Support for public-private partnerships is also important. Eastside Audubon has partnered with King County in its work at Marymoor Park, and with local businesses such as REI and Puget Consumers Coop to support education and conservation programs. Other communities have asked us to participate with them, but we are limited by size and budget. America is blessed with natural beauty and it has taken the active participation of citizens in Audubon and many other organizations to advocate for cooperation among the various levels of government to protect what we have. To expand the range of opportunities for families and improve the natural areas we cherish will take not only government but also average citizens who feel a sense of belonging and ownership for their country. Conservation and recreation can co-exist and enhance one another. Local community groups are one important aspect of a program to reconnect people to the outdoors. We hope the federal government will support this kind of community involvement. Thank you,

Along with many thousand others, I insist that our HUGE, Centralized Government continue funding our nations hallowed ground: Civil War Battlefields. Aside from the many wrong-doings being committed by Congress, etc., these hallowed grounds must be cherished and understood by all! Thank You,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would like to take this opportunity, as an American citizen of the greatest nation on Earth, to remind you to remember all National treasures that have been created and desperately need to be preserved. Both land and sea, from the actual salt water to the highest redwood trees, these are Americas greatest symbols. They cannot lobby or vote, but must rely on a President with foresight and a love of preserving what is truly great about our Nation. Please put conservation and preservation on your list of priorities so you can leave a permanent and pristine home for our treasured national symbols. Thank you in advance for your time and attention to my request.

We are writing to express our support for continued equestrian use of federal land. This country has a long and proud history of horses on our trails and continuing this tradition is an important link to the past, an opportunity for our citizens to connect with the outdoors in a unique way. In addition, it is crucial that we continue to allow access to vehicles with horse trailers. Without it, how are we to actually reach those trails? Horse owners are, for the most part, good stewards of our wild places. We know the importance of maintaining the land, protecting trees and wildlife, packing out what we pack in. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Department of the Interior and President Obama;. As a Committee Member of the St. Louis Bay Chapter Ducks Unlimited, outdoors enthusiast and supporter of waterfowl habitat conservation, I strongly recommend designation of the St. Louis Bay Estuary and River watershed as a "Treasured Landscape" in the administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The St. Louis River provides the headwaters for the Great Lakes which sustain many millions of people. Its heartbreaking to see the lack of waterfowl over the river compared to my childhood growing up in the Bayview Neighborhood of Duluth when great flocks of ducks could be seen traversing the flyway over the St. Louis Bay. Now Duck sightings have become relatively rare. One of the causes that I can see is the pollution from Iron Mining. Sulfides, Heavy Metals, suspended solids, and other pollutants continue to be discharged into the river. I have looked at reports from the Dunka Pit where the above pollutants are discharged into Birch Lake which then flows into the Boundary Waters Canoe area Wilderness. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency records on close scrutiny show the science that is generally overlooked. In wet times the tested biology seems to fair well due to the generally followed dilution solution to pollution followed by these state agencies but in times of droubt the impact of the pollution kills everything which results in stream sterility unable to sustain wildlife further up the food chain including waterfowl. Recognizing the influence the outdoors has on our youth and the need for conserving america's natural landscapes, the president and his administration have proposed the America's Great Outdoors Initiative(AGOI). This initiative is designed to promote the outdoors to youth, advance private-land conservation strategies, and use SCIENCE-BASED management practices to resore and protect our lands. Our Great Lakes Headwaters are not only being polluted, they continue to be further threatened by newer sulfide mining proposals to extract base metals. These newer sulfide mining proposals are intended to provide jobs. However these jobs are being proposed by an industry with a horrible legacy of envfironmental destruction. Sulfide mining is a net job killer in tourism, logging, agriculture, and public employment. The pollution diminishes recreational oppurtunities, kills wildlife, increases health care costs, increases electricity cost through PUC agency subsidy, causes widespread property devaluation reducing government revenue and concentrates these costs on surviving businesses, for a thousand years. The federal governement needs to join the State of Wisconsin in banning these sulfide mining activities in wet areas which are at risk including the BWCA Wilderness and the Great Lakes. We need laws that prevent State and Federal Agencies from protecting polluters by being allowed to issue permits to pollute and pre-empting lawsuits by environmental organizations intending to enforce the law. Once polluted by sulfide mining, the Great Lakes would take many thousands of years to recover. These Lakes of which the St. Louis River forms the headwaters contain 25 percent of the world's fresh waters. Let's make a good first start by cleaning and keeping clean the Lakes St. Louis River headwaters and it's estuary. Let's bring the Ducks back to the St. Louis Bay. Let's stop sulfide mining and force iron mining to at least make attempts to mitigate their pollution.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Policymaker, Here are policy priorities we think the Obama administration are to consider in designing a policy for America's Great Outdoors. 1) Conserve large landscapes, including our healthy wildlands and rivers, connecting them with working forest and ranch lands, private lands and the connections across these large areas. Protect large natural areas such as: Mid-elevation lands currently proposed for Wilderness designation by citizens of Colorado - especially the Hidden Gems Wilderness Proposal. The Hidden Gems specifically seeks protection for ecologically rich landscapes at lower elevations that are under-represented in existing wildernesses and protected areas. 2) Critical migration corridors, landscape linkages, headwater areas, and areas of varying elevations must be protected in the face of increasing development, destructive recreation, and climate change. Areas like the Thompson Divide (NE of Paonia and SW of Carbondale) should be protected from the fragmenting impacts of energy development and road building to ensure that we don't isolate the last great pods of habitat in western Colorado. Protecting these public lands and rivers will provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. This will give us the opportunity to actively reconnect our children to their incredible natural heritage. Just recently, there was a huge success for wildlands protection in the magnificent Vermillion Basin, which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced it will close to future oil and gas leasing. Following this lead, we need bold actions like this to protect large, unfragmented treasured landscapes. 3) Reaffirm and implement BLMs authority to establish Wilderness Study Areas. This effort should include giving the Bureau of land management the authority to establish new Wilderness Study areas and to protect the wilderness characteristics of those areas. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land across the West that were identified by citizens and BLM as worthy of wilderness designation have been leased, and they deserve both a commitment and an approach to real protection before they are lost forever. 4) Create a comprehensive Quiet Recreation Strategy for federal lands in Colorado. This strategy should variously provide for non-motorized activities such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing, family camping, wildlife photography, and more. A formalized acknowledgement should create more sustainable use of our lands while encouraging things like stewardship, trail maintenance, volunteerism, and getting youth outdoors. Using Colorado as a pilot project for a Quiet Recreation Strategy will also provide a sustainable use model for the rest of the country to follow. 5) Support and implement more science-based management of our resources in Colorado. This science-based management needs to provide a better understanding of the impacts of conflicting land uses on other resources across the landscape. Colorado is fortunate enough to have many important native species, such as the sage grouse, which would benefit from the incorporation of a more science-based management plan for their protection. 6) Support opportunities for sportsmen to continue enjoying healthy and challenging hunting and fishing on federal public lands and rivers. Preserve the values and access that make backcountry hunting a wholly unique endeavor. This can be done through a variety of measures, including through the designation of backcountry hunting Special Recreation Management Areas as has been proposed by the Jarbidge, Idaho and Little Snake, Colorado BLM Field Offices in their respective Resource Management Plan revisions. Please consider these conservation policies in your decision making.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

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Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would love to see a return to the Conservation Corps Idea now that our country needs job creation. State and local governments are cash poor right now. I vote for hiring local people to staff state and local parks that have been forced to close (i.e. in Oregon and California among others). Pay local residents \$15/hour to keep these parks open and keep vandals and thieves out! It would be a cheap solution, create jobs, protect the resources we the people own, and allow stressed out Americans to recharge in the Great Outdoors. No more motorized off-road vehicles, jetskis, or snowmobies in our parks, please. It is way too noisy and dangerous when they are allowed to ride roughshod over pedestrians. Thanks,

Dear Secretary Salazar, I am attending the listening session in Albuquerque today. While I have the opportunity, I would like to make my views known. I am in favor of non-motorized recreation on our federal lands. Please limit oil and gas exploration and development, cease road building in sensitive public lands. I would like you to make more opportunities for Wilderness recreation, and I support the tread lightly approach to mountain biking on public lands. I appreciate your help with these efforts. Best,

There is no such thing as "good" habitat destruction (e.g. mountain biking and mountain bike trail building) vs. "bad" habitat destruction (e.g. sprawl). ALL habitat destruction is bad. Selfishness and ignorance of basic biology is driving the push for vehicular (ab)use of wild lands. And, yes, mountain bikers ARE lobbying to allow bikes in Wilderness and Wilderness Study areas, proving that they are out of touch with reality. We DEPEND on the existence and health of other species! -- I am working on creating wildlife habitat that is off-limits to humans ("pure habitat"). Want to help? (I spent the previous 8 years fighting auto dependence and road construction.) Please don't put a cell phone next to any part of your body that you are fond of!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Everyone should be able to enjoy the sky at night as part of our national heritage. In the northeast there are many cultural sites which are unidentified or unstudied. These sites were meant to be viewed at sunrise, sunset and during certain night events, such as the Perseid Meteor shower. These ceremonial landscapes played a 'lost' role in our nation's history. The federal government could now play an important role in supporting the identification and protection of these sites. The federal government could also play a role in reforming our night-time lighting - inefficient fixtures, wasteful timing and overuse of lighting. 'Dark sky' street fixtures are no more expensive than traditional fixtures. Residential lighting can also be manufactured to be 'dark sky' friendly - I own several. The federal government could provide incentives to states and towns to become more lighting efficient. Public education could go a long way. A one night national 'dark sky' event could bring partners together to raise awareness of the beauty of the night sky as part of our great outdoors and to generate support for more year round changes. In the recent National Geographic issue, a nonprofit in New York working with community farms asked children who had participated in their programs if they had seen the stars - sadly only two children who had recently immigrated from Africa could answer 'yes'. Viewing the stars should part of the outdoor experience for every child. Consider sponsoring a 'Big Star Night' on August 11th each summer to coincide with the Perseid Meteor shower and bring a greater awareness of this light pollution and energy conservation issue. I think corporate sponsors could also be found who are interested energy conservation. Nonprofit and community partners around the country would offer local family oriented events (a sort of 'Trails Night' similar to Trails Day). When everyone realizes what we've been missing, it will generate excitement for restoring our great national night sky! Thank you for considering this idea, please feel free to contact me for additional details. Respectfully submitted,

I am very concerned at seeing all of the current indicated support for OHV activity. I feel this is totally opposed to the growing environmental disasters of CO2 and need to reduce use of fossil fuels for unnecessary electricity and petroleum use. Only perhaps special use for persons whose mobility is imparied should be accomodated to some extent. Purely recreational use which involves blasting around public lands with ATV's, ORV's, etc. etc. needs to be eliminated. I am 76. If that rule means I never get to go some places, that is part of the burden which our developing society has placed on some of us. The land, water, air - resources - are primary and should not be compromised for personal whim/wants etc. Thank you for your reply re my two questions.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, I was unable to attend the recent Great Outdoors public meeting in LA (July 8). First of all I just want to say what a great idea it is to go out and get feedback directly from the public - thanks for taking the time to listen. My background is as a former faculty in an Earth Science department (GPS at Caltech) - but not in a capacity that gives me any credentials in environmental conservation. Mainly, I have just always had a passion for the US southwest - even from my days looking at Arizona Highways magazines in a school library in the north of England. Since being in the US over the last two decades - very recently as a citizen - I have grown much more attached to this wonderful region. I thus feel internally the tension between conservation and access that so plagues policy on land usage. One of the very best ways to access and be immersed in the vast landscapes of the desert west - where hiking and foot access is largely impractical - is via offroad vehicles, be it along the breathtaking Mojave road in California, the stunning White Rim trail in Canyonlands National Park in Utah, or the numerous trails over the Panamint Mountains near Death Valley, California. Such offroad access is often viewed as destructive to landscapes, and in a very limited number of extremely sensitive areas, this may be true. But on the other hand, most of the people I have come across who use offroad vehicles are connected to the land in much more real and impassioned way than the many city-bound of my friends: they access the land because of their love of it, not to destroy it. Indeed, access to the land and the opportunity to experience it personally is, I think, key to the nurturing of a true appreciation of America's great geographical inheritance in current and future generations. Responsible access, employing a reasonably large number of designated trails and allowing the opportunity for wilderness camping is essential to allow the land to be appreciated. The current policy in many areas of closing trails and limiting camping opportunities, by excessively concentrating activity, only serves to artificially fuel negative images of insensitive intrusion of civilization on the land. Those of us who value the land and want vehicular access want this intrusion less than anyone - the last thing we want in the solitude offered by the vast West is to be packed into tight confines with others. The west has survived and thrived through much busier and more destructive times than these, of logging and mines and the early booms of the 1800's and early 1900's. It is largely emptier now than in those times. Partially, I think, we often suffer from the fallacy of "the fragile Earth" - the idea that with the slightest touch we may break it. As a climate scientist, I have rather grown to appreciate the profound robustness of the Earth and its climate system. Make no mistake - the climate challenges we face are challenges to our own wealth and comfort, not to the planet. We also suffer from a romanticism of the primordial - the myth that much of the west is untouched wilderness that remains in a pre-Columbian state. Yet invasive species, extensive nineteenth century logging, mining, excessive fire prevention, and other activities have touched almost every corner of it. Despite these various ravages, the West has survived and adapted, a new equilibrium reached. A relatively small network of offroad (more properly unpaved road) trails across this land threaten it much less than prior challenges. Yet when larger threats to the global environment are at hand, the connection to the environment offered by direct contact with the land is threatened if we close people off from it. Once closed, and out of sight, the environment seems much more distant and less meaningful. We need to make it more meaningful and tangible. That can best be done by encouraging people to get off the freeway and see it - if only up close once in a lifetime on a offroad trip with a friend. Please consider the

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

importance of the human connection with the land and the critical role of widespread offroad access for this connection in the vast expanses of the west. Sealing it from the people may ultimately be the least effective way of protecting it.

When the guns are out of the parks, we'll start to participate again. Until then, we say away.

Your voting site is hard to use: the instructions given in the email do not match what shows up on the screen. there is way too much on the screen -- those of us that only have dialup connections have to wait and wait. How can I participate when you design sites for the privileged?

America's parks are not only an important part of her history, but also of our future. If expansion of parks is impossible (which is a silly thought because nothing is impossible; some things are just a greater challenge than others), then the preservation and beautification of the present parks is a necessity for present generations as well as those to come.

America's parks are truly something that we must protect and preserve for generations to come. I myself travel to several of these across the U.S. and fell lucky to have them available. I fear the movement that has become ever more apparent that many parks are becoming less and less accessible to the general public for interests such as Fishing, Hunting, trailriding of ATV's, camping and hiking. If some had their way, large portions of the Everglades and Rocky Mountain parks would be unaccessible except by non-motorized means. Some of these particular areas are places so remote and can hardly be accessed except during narrow windows each year due to weather alone. As a tax paying citizen I feel that these parks should continue to be available for me, my children and grand grandchildren. Thankyou.

Dear Mr. President, I am writing to warn you of the great dangers today's youth faces. Kids no longer want to take part in society; rather they are resorting to using drugs at an early age, exploring their sexuality, and spend their leisure time in front of the TV/computer screen. We must remember that we did not inherit this earth, but rather borrowed it from future generations. It is our duty to step forward to create a healthy future by creating outdoor spaces for children. This will enable them to fully develop friendships, values, and their imagination. Fear not to help us achieve this goal. Everyday we imagine, but we do not do. If we fail to do what we imagine, then what is imagination to you?

Dear Mr. President, Theodore Roosevelt once spoke about preserving our natural resources for our future generations by protecting them from the short sightedness of industry. I hope that you will work to expand the funding and support for the stewards of our land and game resources, like the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management. Without these protections, national treasures like Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Canyon would not exist as we know it. The Parks, Monuments, Forests, Grasslands and Wildlife Preserves need another champion like Theodore Roosevelt. I hope that champion is you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama, I bet it's been a long two years. Did you remember some of the people who helped get you here? I know there's a fear of midterms and a prevalent sense of apathy among congress, but I know there's so much more that could be done. We stand at a crossroads, a final chance to curb the excesses of our society. Not to be cliched, but its on your shoulders Mr. President. Please, help save this land for future generations.

Every generation past has had the opportunity to enjoy one of the greatest joys of living-- nature and the beautiful outdoors. I urge you to consider the detrimental impact that would occur if you chose not to better protect this beautiful Earth.

Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul. John Muir God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches, and a thousand tempests and floods. But he cannot save them from fools. John Muir In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks. John Muir SELFISHNESS - IS TO NOT LET THE UNBORN SEE WHAT GREAT GREAT GREAT GANDPA GOT TO SEE. HOW UNFAIR IT WOULD BE TO TAKE THAT AWAY FROM THAT TINY B. C.

I am the next generation, the ones who will be living the consequences of our parents decisions for the next fifty years. I am young, and I want to have many an opporunity to enjoy the great outdoors as you have had. I speak for the trees since they cannot speak for themselves, and I insist you extend the amount of space put aside for parks, nature trails, and hiking trails. Because it IS important.

I believe each person has a right to wilderness whether they choose to indulge is their own choice yet I feel they should have the option open to them. Why not protect the land, from rivers to forests to deserts, no matter how forsaken someone somewhere needs them so why not keep them open for all the generations still living? Thank you if you actually read this, but I understand you've got things do. Have a nice day.

I enjoy spending time outdoors, exploring, hiking, fishing, kayaking, camping. Eventually I hope to get my sportsman license and be able to participate in deer season. I love the outdoors, and it's important to protect and our expand our many wonderful outdoor places.

I spend a TON of time outdoors and we absolutely NEED more conserved and preserved and restored land. Without it we have nothing. You should read up on Teddy Roosevelt a bit. Regardless, I am devoting my life to conservation and spreading the joys of the great outdoors. Every president has a duty to expand our protected lands and improve what is already protected. Thank you!

I take my ten year-old son backpacking here in North Cascades National Park and every year for a week in Kings Canyon and Yosemite National Parks. On this last trip a month ago to Kings Canyon we were sitting in Dusy Basin surrounded by granite and quiet and he turned and said to me 'Dad, the mountains teach you things.' I said, 'what?' He replied 'To be stronger and to appreciate nature.' I hugged him tightly and smiled. He was right. And he is only ten.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would like to see the outdoors safe for every person without taking anything away from nature. I was in a bad mountain bike accident two years ago and haven't been able to enjoy much of the outdoors since. I was riding with some friends when two trees fell on my out of nowhere. The injuries could and should have left me unable to walk or move at all. It isn't just your responsibility it's all of ours but more help would be very much appreciated.

I would not be the person I am today without America's protected outdoor spaces. I have never felt better than when I'm standing in the glory of nature's magnificent beauty. Protected outdoor spaces allow people to come together for quality time with each other and they provide a vacation from Blackberries, iPhones, laptops, email and the industrialized world. Please help protect these outdoor sanctuaries for America's future. Thank you!

Kids need dirt! (Big kids need dirt boosters every so often too.) Being in the wild puts us in the middle of something larger than ourselves, and there are so many things our urban lifestyles neglect to give kids the opportunity to experience and so many lessons to be learned through observation and interaction. I want my kids and anyone else's to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors. The wilderness teaches us so much about ourselves, other people, and what is most important in our lives. That's why I want you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation. Why? Because we all need fresh air and scenery with our dirt!

Let's get America's children off the couch and into our forests, on our beaches, on our waterways. Your consideration of all aspects of outdoor recreation during this planning process is critical to the health and well-being of the United States. From proper management of our natural resources, to the maintenance and protection of access rights for EVERY American citizen. This includes a robust and all-inclusive motorized access policy. Do not lock up America's most treasured natural resources and spaces with the most discriminating and exclusive land use management designation available - Wilderness. Leave America's wide open spaces available to its citizens. Not for development, but for access and recreation.

Look all around you, most of the people in the room are overweight since they sit on their butts most of their lives in their small worlds/houses. They need to get out and explore the world around them instead of stuffing their bodies with junk. The junk I speak of is the media world and its efforts to make us buy items that hurt ourselves and our true environment. We need to change, we are killing ourselves by wiping out our world.

MOUNTAIN BIKES DESTROY NATURAL AREAS - PLEASE KEEP THEM OUT. THANK YOU.

Mountain Biking promotes a healthy lifestyle, appreciation for nature, and more. Please help promote this activity by allowing access to more trails. Allowing bikes into wilderness areas already used by horses etc would be a great start. Thanks for all that you do, especially given all the conservatives out to destroy you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of my favorite parts of driving up to college two weeks ago was driving through Pennsylvania. My mom was napping in the passenger seat while i drove through the Pennsylvania Wilds and the Northeast Pennsylvania Mountains, and for those few hours, I could not have been happier. Sitting there, making my way through the ever-present road work on highway 80, i found myself imagining what it might have been like to live in the wooded hills surrounding me. That is a moment that everyone should have the privilege of having-finding a connection with the land's original inhabitants. If that, more sentimental, view doesn't move you, maybe a more scientific and pragmatic look would help. In my first grade class we learned a song about the habitat. I don't remember it all now, but i do remember that there were two main habitats we discussed: the forests and the oceans. The points we covered (as first graders) were that the forests and oceans help their respective inhabitants to "breathe." As a middle schooler, I learned how the forests and oceans help organisms "breathe"-they recycle carbon dioxide that we produce and give off oxygen, which we breathe. As a junior, driving around with my mother, visiting colleges, we were listening to a book on tape, specifically Bill Bryson's A Short History of Nearly Everything. While listening, I heard him mention something about trees and how they produce oxygen and take in carbon dioxide. Naturally i was intrigued. As i listened, however, I became slightly horrified: the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was at a dangerously close point to overwhelming the naturally "fix-it" threshold of the trees, who have been helping counteract our trials and errors of the past millennia. Needless to say, that's not good. I have now presented two views to you on this issue and all that is left for me to do is give you my support. So, i urge you to take every opportunity that you find to help protect our wildlands, where lingering memories of days long past might flash through some young persons mind, and where the flora is doing its best to keep us, as a species, alive and well.

Please retain this great nation's nationalism through what our terrain has blessed us with. Keep our Rocky Mountains tall and mighty, keep our Great Plains broad and fruitful, and keep our seas deep, fertile, and lively.

Stop Factory farming, whaling, killing of innocent animals and the destruction of their habitats. The survival of humans, the animals and our planet earth depend on changes now.

The conserved land and State Parks in our area are what unite my growing family. Having beautiful protected and well cared for grounds to take my children hiking strengthens our family bond. It is cherished meaningful time that we spend hiking, and my children learning and thriving. I can only hope I can share these same moments with my children and their children decades down the road. Please invest in our shared land. Thank you!

The more people that hike and enjoy the outdoors will result in more people who care about the land. Those people will in turn want to invest in it. Preserving our national parks and monuments is vital for our continued high quality of life. There is something deeply spiritual about walking a trail and being with Nature. I want my children to enjoy it someday too.

The park system in America is the best this about America in my opinion.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To paraphrase Dorothy, "there's no place like America's Great Outdoors." Please let us out to ramble about and figure it out. Unstructured experience outside a structure. Start with the Gaviota Coast and move east. Thanks.

We are very fortunate to have some wonderful places in Minnesota - Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Itasca State Park and the Headwaters of the Mississippi River, just to name a few. We have experienced first hand the beauty and importance of preserving these precious places for wildlife to flourish and people to visit and have had the pleasure of sharing these places with our children and hope to have the opportunity to do the same with our grandchildren. Please help support preserving these very important places. They are part of what makes our country GREAT!!!

When I have vacation time, the only way I ever want to spend it is away from the busy metropolitan streets. I choose to spend my time in nature, especially in national parks and forests. In my mind, these parks and forests are our greatest national treasure. To see them fall by the wayside would not only be incredibly sad for me; it would be incredibly sad for America as a whole.

Excellent listening forum in Denver. Unfortunately we had to leave before the breakout. A few thoughts: Waterways should be central to AGO themes. Not only waterways in urban areas but also from their source. The upper watersheds are in danger in many areas. Focus on multi jurisdictional projects that protect the watershed and provide for recreation from the source down. Waterways would also appear as a "new" emphasis and give a refreshed image in the Park and Forest system which has appeared to focus on National Parks and Wilderness Areas. (without losing focus on Parks and Wilderness). Continue to increase roadless areas. In general, motorized transport does not reconnect anyone to the earth. Recognize conflicts in directives to the USFS. Example, if forests are to be open to alternative energy development does that include a string of windmills on the Continental Divide? How are energy, recreational and wildlife concerns to be balanced? Right now it appears that the USFS is encouraged to support all alternative energy development. Urban green space is vital, even on the top of buildings. Another Colorado idea, Historicorps, directed through Colorado Preservation Inc, is an excellent model for the means in which to couple experience in the natural environment with a recognition of the importance of our shared history. Do we need a national lottery? Thank you for the effort.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ideas for America's Great Outdoors Initiative This initiative is partly motivated by a need to enhance recreational opportunities on public lands. But increased recreation opportunities will not flow from a whisk of a pen in Washington D.C. Any successful recreation management policy must be accompanied by adequate budget, staffing, and above all, management's priority to achieve critical on-the-ground goals. Federal agencies' allocation of budget, staff, and management effort should reflect the developing reality that outdoor recreation provides a greater good for more Americans than any other aspect of its multiple-use mandate. The time has come to make managed recreation the BLM and Forest Service's top priority. Prioritize all efforts on clearing the repair/maintenance/improvement backlog in the National Park Service before designating any new National Parks or other similar protective area designations. (The National Park Service alone estimates that it would need an extra \$9.5 billion to clear a backlog of repairs and improvements.) All too often "conservation" means reducing public access and recreational uses. The AGO Initiative should explore ways to enhance a diverse range of recreational uses, including motorized and non-motorized recreational uses, across federal, state and private lands. Federal land managers too often limit or restrict public recreation activities. Federal land managers should focus on recreation friendly management plans that are not restrictive and embrace a wide range of diverse recreational uses, including motorized and non-motorized recreation. Thank you,

First, we need to fund permanent land conservation in a meaningful way. With all the billions spent on completely useless stuff at the federal level (like F-22 fighters for \$250 million each, that have never, ever been flown in combat), surely we could find a few billion each year to buy and protect wilderness areas for future generations. Second, in regard to western states in particular, we have to stop this ridiculous dance with the anti-predator wackos in Idaho, Wyoming, etc. who hate wolves and bears pathologically, blaming them for every dead sheep, or for killing elk and leaving fewer of them for human trophy hunters to shoot. The United States' past anti-predator campaigns were cruel, short-sighted, and stupid, and there's no reason to repeat them. More wolves does mean fewer elk, but that means healthier herds and more trees and other vegetation, leading to less erosion and a healthier ecosystem all-around. Third, we need to ban destructive activities like off-road vehicle and snowmobile use on federal land. The small minority who is only able to enjoy the outdoors by tearing it up with machines, should not be able to ruin these lands for the wildlife and people who respect them.

I support the OUIBUS proposal and I for sure want to raise Otero Mesa to a national monument and the Organ Mountains to wilderness status. Thank you,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I do not know if it is still timely to provide input to the America's Great Outdoors discussion. If so, I would like to add this: There is a great impediment for the majority of Americans to enjoy the outdoors: they have to get to the outdoors by road. Most roads provide either no access for pedestrians or poor access. Federal highway standards now call for new highways to have sidewalks and marked bike lanes. Sidewalks that are built are generally truncated with hydrants, signs, and utility poles, and traffic signals at intersections (if present) do not allow for safe highway crossings. Bike lanes at the sides of the roads are on pitched shoulders, often gather road debris, have no physical separation from adjacent vehicular traffic, and disappear at intersections. These lanes are very dangerous to use, hence are rarely used. I strongly recommend that all highways built or modified with Federal money be required to have bicycle/hiker trails built as part of the highway project, in the place of both bike lanes and sidewalks. It is imperative that these trails be physically separated from the highways for safety either by distance or physical barriers. In addition such construction must allow for safe crossings at major intersections, employing bridge overpasses if necessary. Trail construction should be cheaper per mile than the combination of sidewalk and marked bike lane since the trail does not need to be built to such high traffic load designs as the 6 feet of bike lanes now allocated for highways. While designs that employ bike lanes and sidewalks often see limited use, designated bike lanes are likely to see heavy use both as access to outdoor activities and as transit options to vehicle use on highways. Their development would allow for greatly increased use of the outdoors by large numbers of people with no increase in spending. VR,

Sirs, America's Great Outdoors is an unprecedented conservation effort spearheaded by President Obama and several government agencies to reconnect people with nature. You're off to a good start with America's National Parks, National Forests, National Monuments, National Wilderness Areas and National Wildlife Refuges and other protected places set aside for the American public. A few suggestions for how to proceed from here: Expand farm programs that help farmers return their farms to being places where biodiversity reigns and the farm is fertile, productive, sustainable, profitable and serves as excellent wildlife habitat. The CSP Tier III effort is a good example of how all these elements can work together. Expand wilderness areas and put a stop to logging therein. Period. Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and America's National Parks, National Forests, National Monuments, National Wilderness Areas and National Wildlife Refuges. They have all been underfunded for years and this needs to be stopped and turned around. Thank you for adopting a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

By tracking statistics for those leaving ideas and comments, you have created a contest for people who often do not take this process at all seriously, or who are opposed to the existence of National Parks. Those who oppose the Parks have an additional forum now for their destructive speech; those in pursuit of "Top Innovator" status, as if it were a contest they are winning, treat the process with disrespect by posting irreverent, sometimes cruel and often nonsensical ideas (have you seen the one by a top innovator who wants to ban fat people from the Parks?). Have you considered that many of the comments your "top Innovators" receive are in opposition to their ideas? I and many others who have discussed this in a public meeting in our community at the entrance of the Angeles National Forest who appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To Whom It May Concern: I would like to express my concern that you please consider battlefield preservation in the 'Americas Great Outdoors' Initiative. Positive things about such preservation include: Preserved Civil War battlefields are tangible links to our country's past. The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation. Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses. Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict. Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation. Battlefield preservation in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. Parkland created through battlefield preservation near growing population centers like Nashville, Atlanta and elsewhere can benefit quality of life for residents. Thank you for your consideration in this.

The White House Initiative on America's Great Outdoors. A specific proposal to increase youthful physical activity on public wildlands. What Works Orienteering is a "map reading sport" and has become a popular outdoor activity for high school groups, scout groups and others, of all ages, across the country. The sport challenges the orienteer to solve a series of physical and mental problems by interpreting features on a map and then navigating their way to a solution. High schools, from across the country, have come together to compete on our state parks and public lands in orienteering events. Challenges In preparation for these events, school groups would like to practice in more places, more often and not just at few, local orienteering events. However, because a map fee is made necessary by the expense of the special purpose recreation map, most agencies consider an orienteering event a "Special Use" and therefore require a special use fee and other requirements that make an event expensive for the orienteer and difficult to administer. By simply recognizing that orienteering events are a non-profit activity and not applying special use requirements to the orienteering competitions, the agencies could greatly increase the opportunities for youthful participation in this sport. Federal Government Role- All federal agencies could have a "MOU on Orienteering" that recognizes orienteering: - as a legitimate backcountry activity and should not be considered a "special use." - has minimal and no lasting impact on wildland habitats - has a role in training search and rescue personnel as well as preparing the outdoor recreationist for the backcountry experience - as opportunity to enhance the physical fitness of the participants - investment in maps is an investment in public land infrastructure (as if the agency itself produced the maps) and that recouping the investment by charging a map fee should not be considered a commercial activity. Tools- The best tool the federal agencies could provide is to encourage orienteering on appropriate spaces within their jurisdiction. This would not require funding on their part, just a well understood "Memorandum of Understanding".

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am disturbed to see the "fuelish" Americans desire to promote more OHV use on our public lands. Come on people, wake up, end motorized recreation, and get back on your feet. The benefits include : a cleaner environment, less oil consumption, and improved human health. If observant you may notice most motorized recreationalists have poor physical fitness and need exercise. Take a hike ; ride a bicycle ; paddle a canoe or kayak ; replace your snowmobile with X-C skis ; sell your powerboat for a sailboat. Wake up humans ! Human caused climate change is real so we must change. We cannot "stay the course". As a supposed world leader, America must set a "pro-environmental" example for the developing world. A convincing part of this would be to denounce our previous non-environmental practices as having a negative impact on the earth and admit to leading developing nations astray. In other words the U.S. must admit our mistakes, commit to pro-environmental change, and promote the changes for all humans. Only then will The U.S.A. truly be a world leader with the foresight needed to create a sustainable future for all life on earth. Currently, we are so preoccupied with the delusion that improving the economy and resuming our accelerated growth and consumption based on fossil fuels is in our best interest. This short sighted ignorance will be our demise. We have kept our oil based economy so long that we may have setbacks as we develop and implement cleaner technologies, but they will result in a stronger, more sustainable economy. If we don't commit to a "green" change for human development then we truly are "Earth Cancer". With a growing population of 7.2 billion cells we will end our hosts (earth's) ability to support life. How ironic that, Homo Sapiens, the most intelligent (?) of Earth's life forms could be so ignorant as to cause environmental damage to our host and therefore compromise our future.

I attended the listening session yesterday, and would like to reiterate a few points missing from the breakout sessions. First, let's get an omnibus wilderness bill onto the floor of the Congress like last year. Being from southern New Mexico I would like to see the Organ mountains-desert peaks wilderness bill included. This bill, co-authored by senators Bingaman and Udall, has been carefully crafted with all constituents and stakeholders included in the process. I would also like to see Otero Mesa designated as a National Monument. This very unique and fragile ecosystem is also a cultural monument. It is the last contiguous stretch of Chihuahuan desert grassland left in north america, home to many rare/endangered species of plants and animals, and native american petroglyphs in the surrounding mountains. I hope to see it as a protected area, and not spoiled and polluted by HEYCO's oil drilling for what BLM describes as an "insignificant" oil reserve. Much more important to this arid region is the enormous water table under this small oil deposit. Get these two southern New Mexico treasures on an omnibus bill for wilderness this year! Thank you,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative has two problems: 1) AGO must ban GMO crops and trees. GMO "foods" cause cancer, diabetes, aborted fetuses, permanently altered DNA, etc. ArborGen's GMO eucalyptus destroys native plants, water, and wildlife (proved in Brazil, Thailand, etc.). It also hosts *Cryptococcus gattii*, which causes fungal meningitis. GMO pine and poplar are also threats. 2) AGO's administrators (Jackson, Salazar, Vilsack) are untrustworthy. They did not, e.g., clean up toxic supersites, reform the Minerals Management Service (key in the BP ecocide), or curb Monsanto's filthy GMO "crops." Monsanto is committing domestic terrorism by knowingly selling disease-causing GMO products. Industry skills must not administer an environmental program.

Our next generation will be able to enjoy our state and federal parks, monuments and forest preserves because we already have huge control over wilderness areas throughout the U.S. The founders of our Constitution intended for a smaller federal government and wanted the states to have more control. Mr President, please reduce the size of the EPA and remove carbon dioxide gas as a listed pollutant. We all want to protect the environment that we live in, even us republicans. Unfortunately a scam is being perpetrated on the American people. Global climate cycles are due to solar activity, mass volcanic eruptions, asteroid strikes, etc. At this point in history, humans do not have any significant effect on the Earth's climate.

I would ask that you NOT set aside any more land for designation as a National Monument or Wilderness areas. I live and work in Siskiyou County California which is a very rural county that has more than 65% of the county managed by the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. The attempt to establish a Monument here would take more of what little private land we have and eventually take it off the tax rolls and hand it over to the federal government, not for management, but for set-aside land that can not be managed. This should not be allowed to happen. In these economic times, we do not need more land that is unproductive, but we need to start wisely using the resources that we have in this country. We should not be importing all of our needs (fiber, energy, steel, wood products, etc.) when we can and should be providing them for ourselves while at the same time producing thousands of jobs with this production. We have some of the most productive land in the world in the Pacific Northwests Forests; and the worlds best land managers, we can managing these lands wisely for the benefit of both forests and our societal growth if given the chance. Creating Monuments and Wilderness areas only locks up this land making us more dependent on other countries to supply our basic needs. Please do not create more Monuments and Wilderness areas. We can encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors, while educating them on the needs of using our resources responsibly instead of using other countries resources where the management is not done as responsibly.

Although I wholeheartedly support better protection of America's shared outdoor spaces, our entire constitutional democracy is now threatened from within by crazies. Please address that first. Stop letting fear of the crazy people dictate your policies.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the next generation to enjoy America's dream for greatness. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to undo the damage you have done by not allowing drilling, exploration and production of the incredible oil and gas reserves. We are allowing the Middle East to unfairly assert its influence on our nation. The only way to stop them is to beat them at the energy game. I am tired of being accused of being an Islamophobe. I am tired of high energy prices. I am tired of depending on other nations who use oil and gas as an iron boot against us. Our energy independence is the only way to insure national security. Exploration and production is done all the time without harming the wilderness. As in the example of the Alaska pipeline, it benefited wildlife with caused an increase in the wildlife population by providing heat in the winter and shade in the summer. To ensure that future generations will always benefit we cannot hold lands captive from energy production! Thank you for your leadership in shaping a bold energy independence strategy for the 21st century.

"Protect America's Great Outdoors"----now isn't that the ultimate plea?? My heavens, have we really reached a point in our society that we have to campaign for "outdoors!!!!" I also hate to think it's up to our government to do this protecting, but am afraid it's so. Please, for all that's sane, for all that is comprehensible intellectually, for all the breathing and drinking of water that we humans do every second, PLEASE protect every square inch of our natural world! As of yet I know of no substitute for it? Do you?

A healthy mother earth is essential. Clean water is essential. The practices of permaculture can benefit all, from mountain streams to inner city pocket gardens. We are all jointly responsible to future generations. Thank you for your leadership.

Americans need to stop treating the outdoors as theirs to trash. We need to establish nationwide policies that protect our remaining wildernesses, and our watersheds and wildlife habitats. And we need to back up policies by supporting land and water conservation. Thank you so much for your vision and leadership! Don't cave to the worst in our own human nature.

Be our Teddy Roosevelt and protect the outdoors for everyone's enjoyment and for the benefit of the wildlife, not for oil and gas corporations.

Dear President Obama or whoever might read this, I am 65 years old and have been a lover of natural places my whole life. I do not hunt or fish, but I realize that people who like to do that have been a help in keeping our natural places. I like to hike, and observe nature. I became a Democrat after being a Republican for a long time in part because I felt the Democrats seemed more likely to protect our environment, and secure our National Parks, Forests, and Recreation Areas. Even though there are so many pressing problems to deal with I hope you will not let us down on this issue. As I am sure you know, once lost these places are lost forever. I know you are aware of all of us counting on you to do the right thing.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Enough of allowing the filthy rich corporations to plunder our planet and leaving nothing but illness, suffering, death and a destroyed/poisoned landscape in their wake. Leaving a legacy of such a poisoned landscape for countless generations. Just because the corporations can make more money. Sick. So for ONCE to something GOOD and preserve these wilderness areas for US the people of America. And stand up to these evil people who don't care how much death and destruction they leave behind.

I am a voted for you, volunteered for you, and donated to your campaign. Make me want to do that all at least one more time. Please don't mess our country up. We only have one Earth. We need to share it with those alive today and ALL those who come after us. This is our duty, responsibility, and reason to live. You have power - do something with it. Here are some things you can do: Address Conservation at a Large Scale Protect our wilderness Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat Connect people with Nature Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fun

I am so excited that you are our president. Please keep up the good work and save our environment for our grandchildren. Keep wolves protected Put the money into the Land and Water Conservaton Fund Protect our wilderness from logging and ATVs- keep at least some part of our country as close to what God made it as possible- RAMP UP THE EPA!!!

I ask that the Government and all agencies achieve Conservation at a Large or International Scale; protect Wilderness; improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitats; connect people with Nature via Education and Direct Exposure; provide increased Access and Recreational Opportunities; revive the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and abandon, now and as long as America exists, all Dependence on the Business Sector.

I believe it is extremely important to protect our natural resources, certainly for our own generation, but also for our future. Our children and grandchildren don't yet know how important the protection of our natural resources is, but, with education and the example we, as parents, show, we'll be able to offer our children a future that more closely resembles our own. Let's not give them more troubles to deal with than we already face, ourselves. Thank you

I grew up in the country and spent many days just walking and enjoying nature. I was an adventurer and needed much space to roam, I found the outdoors to be perfect for me. This is home to the animals and should be protected like we protect our own!

I have reached the age where my health will not allow me to get out and hike the trails of my younger days. But my memories of those trails and sites are still with me and I want my grandchildren to understand why I loved the wilderness so much.

I've spent many years canoeing and camping in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota. This unique and beautiful wilderness is one of our national treasures, and must be preserved and protected together with our other wilderness areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

i was just reading about FDR and the CCC program he initiated and the creative people, on the whole, that were charged with its implementation--and the USA is certainly better off. i applaud the obama administration with also caring about the wilderness and wetland areas and i support whatever it can do to leave such a legacy. it will have to hang tough since the gop seems intent on scuttling any of his ideas, independent of their merit or the benefits for our country.

It is myopic to think of nature solely in terms of human recreation (although that is somewhat preferable to thinking of the earth as a limitless resource that we cannot use up). I'm stunned to see that even the Democratic Party does not have climate change as one of its top agenda items -- yes, we need to protect "America's Great Outdoors" but we need to look beyond this to our constant stream of toxic waste, the pollution that already fills the ocean -- such as the Great Pacific Gyre, a mass likely larger than the state of Texas consisting entirely of human rubbish.... When will the White House face the reality of what is happening to our planet as a whole? How many more catastrophes will it take --more fires to destroy Russia? More floods to cover 50% of Pakistan instead of only 20%? A further increase in the occurrence of severe storms that wreak havoc on our cities, cause our rivers to overflow and wash away precious soil, destroy the trees in our parks? We are sorely mistaken if we think we can protect one parcel of land (or destroy one parcel of land) without considering the global situation. We've decimated the diversity of species on both land and water -- some 80% of ocean species have disappeared. We're hurting human health, causing cancer, premature puberty, all sorts of chronic diseases through environmental pollution. (No wonder the cost of healthcare is so high. You can't fund both sides of a war and expect to win it.) Toxins in, toxins out. What waste we create remains waste, if not forever, then for a very, very, very long time. Please: show us you understand the connectedness of these issues. Take the need for clean energy seriously; reduce the production of plastics; do whatever it takes.

It is very important to protect our wilderness for many generations to come. We must cherish Nature and do everything we can to make sure it stays the way it was meant to be: free and wild.

It's the right thing to do for those who come after us!Thank You!

More wilderness,more open spaces...less drilling and environmental degradation and destruction. I am asking you to save NOT give away my (our) country to the greedy industrialists who would defile any and all in their wanton disregard for all that is great and beautiful about this country and planet.

My hope is that the majority of people will more and more see humans as part of the Earth and honor the complete cycle of its contents. I want decisions that reflect the responsibility we have to each other and the future, and respect the essence of every being, both alive and not-alive. Respect to me means not wasting, using materials for their intended purpose in no greater amounts than necessary,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of my greatest pleasures in life is hiking and birding in the GREAT OUTDOORS! Americans are so fortunate to be able to camp, hike, and backpack in our many great national parks and wildernesses! I know that money is tight and the economy is way down, but with our burgeoning population, now is NOT THE TIME to cut back on protecting and preserving our special wild places. It is important that we fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund as it was intended to be, and not keep taking money from it for other services! If we don't continue to save and protect our special wilderness lands and fully fund our national parks, then we will have done a great disservice to our children and those that come after us! There is only ONE EARTH and once its inhabitants, species, plants, and ecosystems are gone, there will be no more! We cannot create more! Please continue your strong leadership in protecting and creating a better tomorrow for all Americans!

One of the fastest and most effective way to reduce global warming is to restore wild forests and wetlands. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's remaining natural outdoor spaces, including wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and even some historic sites. To ensure that future generations will be able to live at all and and enjoy our public lands, please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors: - Stop the paving over and wholesale destruction of any existing wild land and water. - Restore and protect our existing wilderness - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Connect people with Nature by providing Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities One way to do this immediately is by fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund Thank you for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy for the survival of humanity.

One of the things I love about America are its open spaces. We have such wonderful pristine habitats, let's keep them that way for when I'm old.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

our great outdoors are a national treasure, and part of the heritage that we should protect for future generations. I am an American citizen living abroad in Costa Rica, teaching ecology and conservation courses at the undergraduate level. One of the wonderful aspects of Costa Rican culture is the value that the average citizen places on the country's natural heritage. Everyone, from taxi drivers to school teachers, is proud of the many national parks here. I would love to see Americans as involved with the great outdoors as my neighbors here are. America, too, has a great diversity of beautiful protected lands that we can all be proud of. In order to make sure that future generations enjoy our natural heritage as well, it's important to make conservation and environmental education a priority. In planning the America's Great Outdoors initiative, I think these priorities must be addressed. Specifically, we need to: 1) address conservation at a large scale. To preserve species that require large home ranges, and to give species a better chance to survive warming-associated range shifts, we need to look at conservation beyond the local-scale park approach. We need to conserve landscapes and create corridors. 2) we need more community-centered conservation, education, and recreation programs that connect people with nature. If we can get people out enjoying our amazing natural landscapes, we'll have more people invested in preserving them. Also, we need to consider conservation programs outside of reserves-- encouraging tree planting, involving local schools in constructing bat houses or restoring riparian ecosystems, etc., etc. 3) fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In order to protect America's natural areas, we will need resources. As an educator and as a scientist, I ask you to consider these three priorities for the future of America's wild lands. Thank you for your leadership in this vital endeavor.

Please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors: - Address Conservation at a Large Scale - Protect our wilderness - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Improve and restore offshore barrier islands - Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund We need your leadership to shape a bold conservation strategy.

Please do all you possibly can to protect America's great outdoors and wildlife. It is very important, it is our heritage, it's the right thing to do for now & future generations. This should be a priority that all Americans can be proud of. Thank You for listening.

Please do not sell or privatize any national parks or BLM lands. Provide funding for maintenance and prevent money from park fees from going to the general fund

Please protect our wild areas before it is too late and they are swallowed up by development. Please, please preserve space for the wild animals and plants. It's the LEAST we can do to preserve at least a part of nature.

Please protect our WILDERNESS AREAS and our SMALL FARMS, especially our DAIRY FARMS. THANK YOU AND HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY,

Thank you for your leadership of our country during such trying times. My prayers, hopes and actions are with yours to help our nation grow healthy, smart, and clean.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please....No more wilderness. Locking up our public land does nothing but to serve those with self serving interests. These people want us off of foreign oil, but won't let us drill...they want us to drive electric cars, but with no infrastructure to charge such vehicles, they promote wind generation, but don't tell of the inconsistencies, they want clean renewable power such as hydroelectric, but they make us pull out our dams, they won't support nuclear or anything related to. We need to ask ourselves today...are we better off than we were 50 yrs ago...is the direction that these individuals are pointing us to really going to make us better than we are today....I think not. Lets take the steps to put this country back on it's own two feet!

Protecorate! Save them dang trees! Please. Thank you, savior of the forest.

Protect our wilderness! Haven't we converted enough wilderness to cities and suburbs? Please protect what little we have left!

Protecting natural areas and species is one of the most important roles of government. Once they are gone, they cannot be returned to their original state. In addition to enjoying the outdoors, my research focuses on freshwater snails and mussels. The U.S. has globally exceptional diversity, with hundreds of species, but these are among the most critically imperiled organisms in the nation, with about 70% at risk if not already extinct. Only by preserving natural, free-flowing rivers, can the loss of species be halted. Similar concerns apply to other organisms. And a better environment promotes human health. Large-scale conservation efforts, expansion of protected areas, enforcement of environmental regulations, controlling greenhouse gases, developing sustainable energy-all of these are key parts to a sustainable future. While we develop other energy sources, well-regulated expansion of nuclear energy, including cutting the red tape that prevents establishment of a suitable waste disposal facility at Yucca Mountain, is probably a necessary intermediate.

The "Great Outdoors" will not be all that great if it begins to resemble the indoors. Continue to protect roadless areas and true wilderness

These lands need to be available for the next generations of Americans to enjoy.

To give the future the benefit of our public lands, I hope you will - optimize conservation - protect wilderness - improve watersheds and wildlife habitat - provide more access and recreation, and - fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Thank you for your leadership in the 21st century.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Unadultered wilderness inspires my imagination, creativity, and sense of wonder. I bring that sense of wonder and joy to school children in my community through after-school outdoor nature and birding activities. It's important to know that extensive wild places will be enjoyed by them in the future. In our overcrowded world, wilderness needs to continuously be created, expanded and increasingly protected. Please consider FULLY funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

As Conservation Chair of the Salem Audubon Society, I am writing to urge you to help expand and protect America's great natural places, including parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, forests, and rivers. To prepare for a future in which the only remaining natural places will be those that have been purposefully set aside, it is imperative that we take action now. Specifically, please address conservation at a landscape level, which is needed to ensure the survival of larger species of mammals and birds. Protect wilderness wherever possible, as it is an ever diminishing resource valuable for recreation and wildlife habitat. And fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund to make this possible. Please take advantage of this opportunity to leave a great natural legacy for future generations.

Each year coal plants pour millions of tons of harmful pollution into our air. This pollution doesn't stop at state lines, and as a result people throughout the country are forced to breathe unhealthy air. I am pleased that the EPA is acting to help states be good neighbors by reducing air pollution escaping across state lines. The proposed rule will produce at least \$100 billion, and possibly up to \$290 billion, in public health savings, and it will prevent at least 23,000 heart attacks, 26,000 hospital visits and 240,000 asthma attacks, according to EPA estimates. In contrast, delaying action could result in up to 36,000 deaths related to dirty air. Like the highly successful acid rain program, the rule sets final clean air requirements but gives coal plants flexible options to achieve those requirements. The areas with the most cleanup to do will also realize significant benefits so that no state will bear an unfair burden. This is a national problem that needs a national solution, and I urge the EPA to quickly finalize this common sense approach to protect public health and help states efficiently and cost-effectively clean up their air.

Have you ever hiked to the top of a mountain, sat on the peak and viewed the wilderness below with a feeling of awe and gratitude? Have you ever meditated at the foot of an ancient sequoia and felt the centuries do a slow spin? Have you ever traveled through Denali National Park and watched grizzly bears roam and mountain sheep climb the cliffs? We owe our children these spiritual experiences that help them--and the rest of us--stay connected to the sanity of nature. If we ever forget the wild garden from which we came, we are lost indeed.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mr. President and Staff and Members of the Administration, I write this in the name of the future. For our land, wildlife, and water and for the generations of Americans who will either praise or damn us for what we do here. America's great outdoors need our protection and this can be best achieved through continued vigilance over what we have, the need to expand beyond what we have and the determination to create new ways of preservation and conservation for today, tomorrow, and onward in this dream called America. This would include our shared outdoor spaces such as wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Please consider such important priorities as large scale conservation including wilderness protection which is at the heart of any logical meaningful attempt to improve and protect watersheds and wildlife habitat as well as allowing Americans to continue to share in and be shaped by our natural world which is the heart of America herself. Please fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and continue to provide access for these critical recreational opportunities. We need you to lead. America's wildlife, lands, and waters need you. We need you. Please act for our children and our children's children. This land is our land. It is the land of the free. Please don't forget.

My father was known as the Father of Texas Wilderness, and I was most fortunate to grow up camping and hiking in wilderness areas in our beautiful country. He received many local, state, and national awards for his work. I follow his footsteps to ask you to step up to your highest truth by understanding that we are all connected in the web of life and that we need to respect and preserve natural areas for relaxation, inspiration, knowledge, health -- too many vital and important reasons to list here -- books have been written. Please take these letters to heart. The future well-being of mankind depends on our actions now.

One of the few government benefits left for us citizens is visiting wilderness areas which retain their natural state. Please do whatever it takes to carry on the traditions started by Teddy Roosevelt and supported by many later Presidents. I do not want my grandchildren to be robbed of their heritage for short term gains by corporate scavengers. Please be strong!

Please do all you can to take leadership in protecting our natural resources and the beautiful recreational lands that we now enjoy. I know that when we respect all creation, we will more and more respect one another.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for calling for a renewed effort to connect people with nature in America's Great Outdoors initiative. As a scientist, educator, and naturalist, I can personally testify to the need to connect people with their natural world and the many benefits of doing so. This is true even in a rural state like Vermont, where I have had to teach people how to do things as simple as observe the migration of geese in fall, see wildlife signs all around them that they had never noticed, and recognize common wildflowers. Along the way, people of all ages and backgrounds have come to appreciate the restorative power of nature something that E. O. Wilson calls "biophilia". The keys to making nature a greater part of our life are few and simple:

1. Restore our damaged forests and grasslands. People cannot be expected to cherish clear-cuts or cornfields. They need places that are truly natural and inspirational. These places can vary in size from a few acres in a city park to millions of acres such as the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Natural areas of all sizes are needed, but to make them most valuable, we need to develop greater sensitivity in how we treat all of our lands, including agricultural lands, developed lands, transportation networks (it doesn't help to have a preserved area if no one can reach it), and residential areas. Whatever the intensity of use of land, we should instill a belief that every place in America can be beautiful if we want to make the effort to do that.
2. Conserve landscape-size natural areas in every state so that every American can actually visit one within a day's drive. These areas should be at least 10,000 acres in size and should have as their primary purpose the restoration of natural ecosystems, such as old-growth forests, prairie grasslands, or other outstanding features that made America such a land of wonder and opportunity for the first Europeans who reached this country 400 years ago. Restoration should include both the natural vegetation and wildlife to each area.
3. Protect wildlife. A landscape without wildlife is just open land. A forest with wildlife is paradise. We need to conserve critical habitats, establish protected wildlife corridors, and provide information to private landowners on how they can take simple and inexpensive steps to improve habitat for wildlife, such as protecting streamside vegetation and leaving a few dead trees to provide cavities for wildlife.
4. Provide more opportunities for people to learn about nature. The 21st Century equivalent of the Civilian Conservation Corps would be to staff every public land from city parks to national parks with naturalists who can teach people to observe nature and understand what they are seeing. We need thousands of naturalists to share their knowledge in biology, geology, astronomy, and meteorology with the general public.
5. Ensure that all Americans have access to natural areas. We need to provide public transportation to more natural areas and create more opportunities for people to recreate in the outdoors. Until we get the people to the natural areas, they are not achieving their potential value to Americans.
6. Bring more land into protected natural areas. As America's population grows, so too should our conserved lands. We must protect and restore more land and the best way to do that is to fully fund the Land And Water Conservation Fund. Thank you for bringing this issue to the attention of Americans.

There should be no debate--if we deny our devastations to nature we will be punished.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We all need nature to be at peace with ourselves. Wilderness is essential for my wellbeing. I grew up to be a responsible person, especially influenced by my interactions with "mother earth." The same holds true for my own children. Raising them, and sharing exciting natural areas was a joy. We never had any of the typical teenage problems, there is so much excitement to be had in America's wilderness. Thank you for saving these irreplaceable wonders.

We need nature to help calm us in these turbulent times. The higher power and good is reflected in nature. I want our children and grandchildren to enjoy nature too.

I want everyone to cherish and protect the world in which we all live. Appreciate the beauty of each tree, each body of water and each animal that lives there. Please put more emphasis on our wild places and encourage people to get out and explore the world around them.

Please do all you can to protect America's wilderness, parks, forests, wildlife refuges, etc. These beautiful and wild areas, once lost or destroyed, can never be replaced. If kept as they are, they offer so much to this great country and her people and animals. Thank you in advance for protecting these areas.

Please put a moratorium for the wild horses' protection !! Do it now !! Their existence is at stake and the BLM's propaganda must be stopped. It is deplorable what legacy this administration is leaving for our wild horses and burros - please do this now - end the corruption of BLM. Place a moratorium on all round ups !!!

Wild and open spaces must be preserved for future generations. No financial gain, business benefit or gain in employment can match the value of nature that is unspoiled. Allowing commercial interests to utilize our national parks, forests and other natural areas for capital gain amounts to selling off a treasure that cannot be replaced in return for a short-term gain that can be accomplished through other means. The national wild areas are themselves attractions that generate capital, jobs and opportunities on an ongoing basis. It does not make sense to allow any exploitation of these lands for the gain of a few, when the loss is felt by so many. I appreciate your attention to maintaining the wild and natural areas of our nation for current and future generations.

I see two major areas for increased natural resource protection that are currently much neglected: 1) There are many relatively small areas of unique ecosystems and rare species that should be protected as scientific natural areas. In my part of the country, there are many small bogs, fens, and native prairie remnants that are extremely important scientifically for the rare ecosystems and species they contain. Most of these ecological relicts are areas of only 10- 1000 acres, but they should be protected from all human alteration. 2) While our national parks and monuments were wisely created to protect our most spectacular natural treasures, there need to be more federal parks and natural areas closer to human population centers. As the petroleum age declines and transportation becomes ever more expensive, I think that it is essential to have suitable natural parks near cities, where urban dwellers can travel quickly and with relatively small use of fossil fuel to hike, camp, and otherwise enjoy natural environments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I just learned that aquatic life is gasping for air in the shallows of the Gulf of Mexico. My grandchildren deserve better. Please fully fund the Land and Water Conservation fund. The outdoors is our legacy and we need to pass it on better than we find it. I look forward to cycling the trails of our forests, swimming in our lakes, enjoying clean air and sounds of wildlife, not machines, in wilderness. There is so much to undo when cattle overrun public lands, eroding and polluting to make their owners richer. We mustn't use it all up in one generation! Please do all you can to secure, protect, support and improve our wild heritage. Thank you for all your efforts bringing this country into the 21st century.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too, so please seize every opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces. AMERICA'S BEST IDEA deserves our best protective efforts. I hope this will be a hallmark of your presidency -- leaving our natural heritage in better condition than it was when your administration began.

You have already taken steps to protect earth, sea shores, rivers, and air of this country. Thank you, heartily. I write this letter with gratitude and to urge you to address conservation on a large scale, to continue to strengthen protection for our wilderness lands, as well as for the practical cleanliness of soil, water, and atmosphere. Wilderness is spiritual "money in the bank" for future generations' discovery and enjoyment -- and perhaps holds solutions among its life forms to inspire us in future. Protecting soil from toxic wastes, protecting water sources, air and sea shores are matters of immediate safety. This has been a most difficult Congress. However, I hope you know how many of us will back you in defending our wildernesses, lands, waters, and air. Thank you.

Mr. President, Besides the economy the greatest single threat to this country as identified by the U.S. Military is climate change. Working to stop further damage that, once done cannot be repaired, would create jobs, build a new world economy, and provide new infrastructure tax bases to rebuild our world. Of course as part of that renewal we must deal with the individual parts of the puzzle. This must include protecting those wild places we have now. They are some of our greatest assets and why would we not more assets as we rebuild our country economically and environmentally. Don't let the obstructionist block what we know will heal this country. Don't let their hollow promises of compromise make us compromise our values. Stand tall and lead this nation. Those of us who will follow only need a leader with true vision who will do what it takes. President Obama, ... be that leader!!! Thank you

The wilderness areas are the jewels of America. Please do whatever you can to preserve and maintain them. We must spend more money on our national and state parks.

America's Wilderness Areas are a national heritage and are under constant threat from human activities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Mr. President, For too long we have watched big money take whatever it wants and leave us the scraps, then tell us it was the American thing to do. Please stand up for all of us. Even those of us who don't have the sense to know what is really patriotic. While the public is bombarded with BS from Fox news; we have very little to keep us going except to know what is right and good. Please keep the wilderness wild and preserve it for my child's children.

Dear President Obama, The short term thinking of constantly economic growth is unsustainable and deadly. We must begin to think about how to live for the duration on this planet in a way that doesn't poison us all and foul our own nest. Please think of this when you work with others in deciding how to conserve the legacy of our wild places. It's not just about the sentimentality of beauty and grandeur, it's also about life. Our continued life here. What could be more practical and make more economic sense than that?

FYI - it belongs to all of us, NOT corporations or their bedfellows! I voted for you to represent all of us and to stand between us and those that would do harm to us and our nation. The right-wing is either ignorant or misguided and their views should be considered under the scrutiny of educated enlightenment. The corporations on the other hand know exactly what they are doing and their views should be considered in exactly the same way. You are the one with the power. Use it to muster the forces of our intelligence to your side. Speak to us! Lead us! Embolden us! I beseech you to use your power to bring us to your side. Not just in the case of conservation, but with the many causes that brought so many of us together to elect you our leader. We must see you in front of us on TV. We must hear you speak to us on radio. We must read your words in the newspapers and on the web. But you must do it now! Next month is TOO LATE!!! PLEASE OBAMA, CALL ALL OF US OUT! THE LEFT, THE RIGHT, THE MIDDLE! USE ALL OF OUR PATRIOTISM AND NATURAL HUMAN DESIRE TO DO GOOD TO EACH OTHER AND OUR COUNTRY. IT IS NOT ABOUT THE LAW, IT IS ABOUT WHAT IS RIGHT! IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT WHAT IS RIGHT FOR ALL OF US IS THE LAW! THAT IS WHY THE FOUNDING FATHERS MADE IT SO, BECAUSE IT WAS RIGHT FOR EVERYBODY! FOR THE SAKE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CALL US TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND TELL US WHAT IS RIGHT AND SHOW US WHY IT IS SO! THIS IS THE BASIS OF YOUR POWER! USE IT! DO IT!!

I hope to continue using America's great natural resources, the mountains, forests, rivers, shores and all of these incredible spaces set aside for nature and the citizens of America. My children now enjoy these places on their own and I hope the next generation will be as fortunate. Stop all thoughts of drilling, mining and wholesale lumbering of forests. We need more natural spaces set aside for us, the citizens of America. Keep the privateers from damaging these treasures...please fund more land and water conservation initiatives. Protect our natural resources from pillage by private greedy corporations and anyone else who would put these places up for auction. America's great natural spaces cannot be replaced. Thank you for addressing this most important issue of conservation.

I love my wild places, and I don't want to see them destroyed by our terrible energy plan. We should develop more clean energy, and make it more available to people so that we can avoid using fossil fuels.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want to tell you about the trip we took to Canada in August. The Canadian Rockies are beautiful, they are cared for, and the government protects the wildlife and wild flowers before people and making money. It was a joy to find large areas where people are not allowed so the wildlife can be protected. They even build viaducts over the highway so wildlife can move from one safe area to another without the terrible results of fast moving cars. I was very impressed with the cleanliness without sacrificing the wildness. I was impressed with the well designed signs to inform travelers of the animals, the forests, and the history of the area. Please look to Canada for their solution to protecting the great outdoors. We all need clean air, clean water, clean beaches, and clean roadsides. It benefits us all when our government works as hard for the wildlife as they do for big corporations. In the long run, we will be a better country.

Please protect our current Parks and wilderness from short sited overdevelopment. May I suggest using all media to raise awareness on conservation. TV News broadcasts are a great and often only source of information to the general public. Of course, the newspaper (hard copy and on-line) would be a far reaching source as well. It's important to keep this at the forefront of the American consciousness just as much as "Going Green". I also strongly encourage you to develop more educational programs and opportunities to keep our upcoming generations involved with nature. Right now, many could care less. I think it would be beneficial to, if possible, work it into the school system. This will ensure they keep up the stewardship of our great wildernesses. Currently, we are well beyond the carrying capacity of this earth. I know this is very controversial but ultimately, we as Americans must control our population, which in turn should resolve overdevelopment issues. I have a great love of nature and I have witnessed this time and again as a fundamental need of repair and replenishment for the human race. Please use this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces, which of course includes wilderness, wildlife, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors: - Address Conservation at a Large Scale - Protect our wilderness - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Connect people with Nature/this must be a constant. Too many young people are completely out of touch. We are raising generations more interested in video games, Blackberries, shopping malls. - Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities - Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund There is nothing much more important than this. Thank you for your involvement in the stewardship of this great Country.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please stop "gifting" American oil, water, mineral, and timber resources to industries demonstrably willing to rape the land for riches that belong to all Americans! Their actions prove the dishonesty of themselves and the promises they make. We've lost too much already. Without strict, unyielding conservation my children and grandchildren will never see the beauty of America. So much of the natural beauty, the clean lakes and rivers, magnificent mountain scenery, and places to camp and fish away from the filth and noise of the cities has disappeared in my lifetime. Without strong leadership from you my great-grandchildren will have to wait in line for a peek at what my generation has experienced and loved. They deserve so much more but will not find it without your help. For the sake of all Americans please demand of Congress the laws to protect what belongs to all our people and the financial commitment to make it happen. Don't let congress give away America! Please be the Roosevelt of the 21st Century. Attach your name to the legacy of Teddy. Thank you for the leadership to save our natural wealth that you and only you can provide in this effort.

This group wants me to write you to protect the wilderness so future generations can enjoy it. While that would be good, I think our wilderness areas will be essential for the survival of future generations. I grew up in WV and I can guarantee that the coal industry puts their bottom line over all else. My Father was a State legislator and what I saw and heard of these people was a horror. My proof that they have not changed is in the actions of the mining companies in WV compared with the actions to save miners in Chile. From what I have read, the oil companies are quite willing to take shortcuts to save a buck. They seem very much alike to me. We can't let these greedy folks get ahead of real people. They don't care about anything but their bottom line.

My granddaughter deserves to enjoy America's great outdoors, as do your grandchildren yet to come. Therefore please seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces, especially the estuaries and their land edges where rare creatures like the Diamondback Terrapin live between ocean & inland waters. I live near & have kayaked the Kiawah River estuary where these turtles as well as nesting eagles have found a fragile home. Yet housing developments threaten this region. This is an area deserving of protection. In advance I thank you for your leadership as I understand you plan to shape a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

Please protect America's outdoor spaces. We owe ourselves and our descendants access to unspoiled lands and natural resources. Please promote and sign the necessary legislation. Your leadership is critical if we are to save our environment from current destructive practices.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In the last three hundred years humans have become dominant among the creatures on Earth, but only aware of it in the last thirty years or so. We are about as qualified as the Pauper in the palace of the Prince to lead the nation, or in this case the living world. Appreciation and love of anything must be a combination of knowledge and exposure. Now that the vast majority of our citizens inhabit cities, it is especially important that they have an appreciation of nature. Without such an appreciation, it is doubtful that our species will survive the climate change that we, in or ignorance have precipitated. I therefore suggest that we need some kind of natural experience and education appropriate to the age of students at every grade level. The education must take place in the schools and be complemented by experience in the fields, woods and streams of America. The education must emphasize the many ways in which we humans are dependent on the natural world: for breathable air, filtered water, vegetables and medications, psychological development. For the exposure, it is important that wherever possible our national parks, reclamations and wetlands be as accessible to our big cities as possible. Cleaning our wetlands, streams, rivers and oceans should probably be our first priority. Most

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's Great Outdoors Listening Session Comments Obstacles to getting outdoors and recreating: · Perceptions of Risk · Costs (money & time) · Equipment · Skill I think that the biggest hurdles to getting people outside are the perception of risk and the lack of free time and transportation/access to public lands. There seems to be a perception that parks are filled with perverts and drugs/crimes. Parents are reluctant to let children play outside unsupervised, due to the perceived risks and the stigma associated with "letting" your kid get hurt. Perhaps an educational campaign (advertising) could help to break down this perception of the outdoors/parks being scary places. Pools have lifeguards to supervise and provide rescue skills if needed to visitors to the pools; Can parks/public open space provide (volunteer, paid, combination) "parkguards"? Would a system of parkguards that patrol parks and supervise and assist visitors help to get more folks out enjoying the outdoors? Other big hurdles are the cost of equipment needed for many outdoor activities. Trails can be enjoyed via human powered (hiking, bird watching, running, cycling) for low to no costs. These activities are similarly impacting on the environment. Motorized and equestrian uses require additional expensive equipment and skills, and are heavily impacting on the landscape. Most of the nation's population can partake in human powered recreation on trails in the outdoor setting, utilizing a wide variety of types of trails (greenways, rail-to-trail conversions, ADA accessible boardwalks and nature trails, as well as challenging natural surface trails). Trails provide access as well as experience while conserving public lands by concentrating foot (and other) traffic on the trail's surface. Trails that don't provide the access and experience that users' desire will be used less frequently and users will establish their own trails to get the access and experiences they desire. Trails need to be properly designed and maintained to minimize their impacts to natural resources; Trails need to be inventoried and treated as facilities with appropriate budgets for maintenance and construction. Other than breaking down the perception of risk and keeping the monetary costs associated with outdoor recreation low, we need to make accessing public lands easier for all Americans. National Parks and Forests are wonderful places, but are inaccessible to the majority of the nation. Regional, state and local public lands are where the work needs to be done: Trails and facilities need to be built and maintained. Access needs to be improved, by providing safe pedestrian/cycling routes and public transportation alternatives that access the parks/open spaces and fit the typical and atypical American's busy daily schedules. We need to encourage citizens to "make time" for the outdoors: put down the remote and take a hike, picnic dinner with your neighbors or family in the park, skip the gym go for a run in the woods. A nationwide advertising campaign that makes outdoor recreation seem cool, coupled with paper and electronic resources to help Americans locate and access their public lands is needed to get folks motivated and active. Construction of new public lands and greenways can further enhance the natural and man-made landscape by providing connectivity b/w parks and people and other parks. Greenways and rail to trail conversions provide transportation corridors. These can be co-located along natural features (rivers, waterways, ecological communities) and planned/constructed in a manner that symbiotically provides benefits to man and nature. Corridors can provide safe and efficient commuting routes for students and working Americans as well as recreation for weekend/evening users. It is important to balance access and recreation with conservation. Science and research can help inform and enlighten the public as well as land managers about many management concerns. Science provides an objective lens

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

to investigate problems and formulate solutions that will help provide an optimum balance of high-quality recreation experiences with conservation/environmental goals. Finally, I would like to point out that there are a range of types of parks from National Park Service Units to the local urban open space or playground. America's Great Outdoors come in a variety of flavors and are managed by a plethora of agencies and departments. This initiative is being put forth by DOI, but needs interagency cooperation and public support to be successful. Thanks for hosting the listening sessions; America has great people and great lands that need to be united. I am a researcher at Virginia Tech (cooperating with _____ of the USGS); our primary research efforts have been on recreational impacts to public lands. My passion is for science, trails and outdoor recreation. I am very excited to see the Obama administration and Secretary Salazar put effort into reuniting American's with the outdoors. I believe that this is needed and can/will help address several pressing societal issues (health, energy, economy).

What kind of country, what kind of world will this generation leave behind? Our grandchildren will ask "What were you people thinking?" Is their entire grasp of nature to be found in books & National Geographic? National Geographic can put out a new series - "Remember When?" Remember when there were actual live animals here? Oh, that's right - we destroyed their habitat & food sources. When is enough enough? Suburban Sprawl - cut down all the trees, destroy animals & then name subdivisions after them. Maple Grove? Yeah, it once was. Whispering Pines? They don't even whisper anymore as they are all dead.& gone. Mallard Cove? This goes on ad infinitum. Please vote to help save what little we do have left.

Hello, I would like to see access to public land ownership made easier to poor people. That includes the imposible- Land Trust and the BLM. They hold auctions that you have to pay a registratiomn fee and a current market price to start the bidding. This makes it impossible for the poor, because we are cut off before we can even start. The rich get richer, only they can get access. Also the burning of forests by the BLM, should be stopped. Isn't there enough forest fires every year, loosing billions of acres and yet they burn more. It is not a scientific fact that it is a sound practice. Millions of animals lose there homes and winter supplies of food. Thanks

You have a web blog spot at this URL - <http://ideas.usda.gov/ago/ideas.nsf/0/625231BF5E40D3218625774B006BC113> I am from the UK and I have been unable to find out how to make a comment on this web page. I simply want you to be aware that the LA Times in 1897(!) remarked that electricity would extirpate English songbirds - <http://www.lightpollution.org.uk/dwnLoads/Anonymous-1897-Los%20Angeles%20Times-2.pdf> They are now, in the 21st century being, "extirpated"!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I received the following email comments from someone unable to attend the Listening Session in Fort Pierre, SD scheduled for tomorrow. Please see their comments below. Dear Sir/Madam I am sorry that the Pioneer Grazing District will be unable to attend the Public Listening Session on the Presidents America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The enclosed letter is our comments. I hope they are helpful. The Pioneer Grazing Association is an association of independent livestock producers who utilize and care for a portion of the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands in southwestern South Dakota. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The Buffalo Gap National Grasslands are for the most part, well maintained and being exceptionally cared for and preserved for the next generation. Allotments are managed as an economic unit with private area ranches in order to fulfill the goals of Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of stabilizing and perpetuating the rural, agricultural economics of the arid plains of the western United State. Unfortunately, unfounded concerns and political ideologies have prohibited range management and control of the population of prairie dogs inhabiting the grasslands. This has not only adversely affected the health of the range, but also allowed for the spread of disease in the prairie dog population of other species. Reconnecting people to the outdoors must include proper management of our collective resources and wildlife so people will be able to view aesthetically pleasing vistas without soil erosion and fear of disease. Further, closing existing roads and trails creates obstacles to people enjoying the grasslands. The Interior Department should be facilitating, not discouraging, the public's enjoyment and making it easier, not harder to access public lands. The Buffalo Gap National Grasslands has traditionally been managed for and achieved: conservation of the land and sustainable use of the resources, provided vehicle use for access to private lands and recreation; and equal opportunities the disabled, aged and/or infirm. Recently, these conservation and recreation achievements have been threatened by ideological management of the National Grasslands. If the goal of America's Great Outdoors is to reconnect people to the outdoors and activities please encourage scientifically based, as opposed to ideologically based management of the population of all species of animals inhabiting the National Grasslands. Further, encourage use of the grasslands by maintaining access for all people no matter what their limitations are. Restrictive designations, reservations and/or areas will not achieve the goal of reconnecting all people with the outdoors. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these comments. Pioneer Grazing Association sincerely desires continued and improved sustainable development of the grasslands in order to encourage people to reconnect with our great outdoors.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To whom it may concern, I recently had the privilege of attending the Listening and Learning Session for the America's Great Outdoors initiative held on June 25, 2010 in Annapolis. I was not able to attend the breakout sessions in the afternoon so I would like to provide comments now. I am a Professor of Biology and a book author (Teaching the Trees: Lessons from the Forest, 2005, University of Georgia Press). While studying the nation's old-growth forests for my next book (Getting to Old Growth, in production, Ruka Press) I learned how few of this nation's forests are left uncut and allowed to develop their full ecological richness and beauty. I would like the Federal Government to form a network of old-growth forests throughout the nation. What a wonderful project this would be for AGO! I would be willing to oversee its creation. Please see the attached document "Old-Growth Forest Network" for more details. In answer to your specific questions: What works: The best strategy of all is 1) protecting natural land, and 2) helping average citizens get out and experience the natural land (through maps, signs, tours, etc.). Challenges: I would like to work full time at forming this network of old-growth forests, but I still need to eat. My challenge is finding income to support me while I do the conservation work I believe in. Federal Government Role: In the same way that chain stores and chain restaurants benefit because all over the nation they have name recognition and people know what to expect there, the Federal Government could help in this conservation effort by centralizing and giving "name recognition" to the Old-Growth Forest Network project. Being part of a Federal Network would make the project more likely to be successful. While the Federal Government support initiatives via the National Forests, please keep in mind that not all states have National Forests and therefore not all states benefit from the initiatives. Tools: I need a way to reach someone in the Federal Government with my idea. If it is supported I would need a small budget.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, I am writing to find out if it is possible to request a listening session be held in northeast Montana (i.e. Malta or Glasgow). I attended one of the first meetings in Missoula, Montana and was involved in one of the roundtable sessions. From the opening presentations to the roundtables, the moderators emphasized the great partnerships being built in the state and the goal of the Initiative to involve local people and grassroots conservation groups. I liked what I was hearing but felt the locations of these meetings excluded an important segment of the population of Montana. While the sessions were open to the public, the travel expenses and time commitment made it impossible for many in the area to participate. Northeastern Montana is a unique location. It is home to some of the most intact mixed-grass prairie left in existence. Because of this, it has attracted much conservation interest. In Phillips County alone there are large tracts of BLM, Fish and Wildlife, and State land and a number of NGOs working in the area. There are also dedicated landowners who have been stewards of the land for over a century. There is even a grassroots organization, the Rancher Stewardship Alliance (<http://www.rancherstewardshipalliance.org/>), that was formed to promote both the ranching way of life and conservation of the prairie. Recently, federal documents were leaked that outlined the potential to turn a lot of this land into a National Monument. This, along with some actions of the NGOs, has not been well received in the area and has left the landowners wondering what more they must do. Given the ecological importance of this area and the interest of local people to sustain their communities while supporting conservation, I believe that it would be appropriate to hold a listening session in this area. Although there are few people in this region, they are the ones in constant contact with the land, water, and wildlife and hold the potential to do the most for conservation at a landscape scale. I believe there would be great interest in the area and it would be well attended. I look forward to hearing back from you on this issue. Please let me know if this is the appropriate venue for this request or if this is something that should be posted on the discussion board. I have a number of other groups interested in posting a similar request and would like to pass on the contact information.

Wildlife and Land are important to us as Americans. We have a treasure trove of species and land that is incredible. We must find methods and techniques that replace warfare such as animal poisoning, hunts, and aerial shooting of our wildlife. Alternatives: Preservation of National Parks as Wildlife Sanctuaries that prohibits any type of wildlife hunts, wolves as example. Population control through sterilization methods such as tubal ligation that has been tested in Albany, New York and birth control in the form of chemical sterilants. Population control of wild horses and burros/donkeys where the animals can run free and not be kept in holding corrals filled with displaced mustangs and burros. Alternatives: Mustangs and burros are part of our culture, our heritage. Instead of being scapegoats, as has been the case for years, there needs to be Equal Representation of mustangs and burros when litigating with cattle rancher interests. Federal sanctuary lands need to be established such as sanctuaries already established by private individuals. Working animals such as special bred dogs and donkeys to protect livestock. Population control through birth control in the form of chemical sterilants and methods such as tubal ligation that has been tested in Albany, New York.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Sir: I TOTALLY support the conservation of Prairie Pothole region!

I fully support national wildlife refuges and national parks.

Title: Save the Central Valley through Sacramento Parks Idea: California's Central Valley is identified as one of America's most completely altered eco-regions with the fewest remaining natural landscapes. Remarkably, many of its last natural landscapes are still intact near the city of Sacramento. These include riparian forests, fresh water marshes, vernal pools, wildflower prairies, alkaline prairies, oak woodlands, and chaparral. Sacramento is also one of the most underserved of America's great cities for nearby recreational experiences in natural landscapes. Even its one remaining natural park, the American River Parkway, is threatened because of its shattered economy. This situation presents a great opportunity to save the Central Valley, provide recreation for Sacramento, and stimulate its economy through development of a regional park system similar to the one Golden Gate National Recreational area provides for San Francisco. Habitat 2020 of Sacramento has initiated an effort to do this called the California Heartland Project. It is endorsed by the Environmental Council of Sacramento, Sacramento Urban Creeks Council, Save the American River Parkway Association, California Native Plant Society, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Save Our Sandhill Cranes, and Friends of the Swainson's Hawk. On behalf of these organizations we urge Federal help to implement this project. Submitted by Please help.

I have VERY strong opinions on the subject of ATV's etc. on our public lands, but apparently am not techno savvy enough to figure out how to use it. Obviously others are able to do this, but it appears you have made this as difficult as possible so many will not be able to navigate this and will not be afforded an opportunity to express an opinion. It says to go to "promote", "demote" etc, but I can't find those and your "help" page doesn't tell how to either. Guess it comes down to this....either you're a techno geek or you can't express an opinion on this important matter.

What is OHV ?

Please invoke added protections for wilderness areas from all kinds of despoiling. Please work on Conservation efforts for our wilderness areas. Please put in place laws which protect watersheds from pollution, run off, and destruction by impervious cover thereby protecting our drinking water. Please instigate laws which protect the habitats of our indigenous wildlife. By fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund you will be doing much toward these goals. Thank you,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have been exploring the wilderness since I was a Cub Scout in 1963. My family took us to wilderness lakes in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Canada. We were taught to respect and nurture nature as a prime responsibility. I think our government has a prime directive from our nations finest leaders including Theodore Roosevelt and many others. It is a critical need even and especially in hard times, to protect our natural world from exploitation and irreversible destruction including wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Having been a teacher, officer of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, a journalist and parent, I am insisting these priorities be met for our national heritage to be kept intact and the health of our people, living creatures and awe inspiring heritage.

- Address Conservation at a Large Scale
- Protect our wilderness, especially in Alaska, the Arctic, shoreline health and reefs.
- Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat with adequate protections from development.
- Connect people with Nature with excellent school and community programs.
- Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities through youth corps and other ways for young people to save us.
- Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund

WE desperately need your leadership in shaping a powerful conservation strategy for the good of our planet and likely for our actual survival.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am discouraged with the postings that appear on the website. Many are only requests for personal projects and have little to do with national leadership that seeks conservation and connection with the outdoors. The most important leadership the outdoor initiative can provide does not fit within the categories you provide. It is the articulation of a land ethic. (Although I said this at a Listening Session it does not appear in the notes from those sessions) If nothing else appears in the final document, the national need to articulate a land ethic needs to be there. We need to be stewards that care for the perpetual functioning of the natural world for our clean water, food, and materials for shelter. The dominant American culture makes us forget this connection to the landscape at all levels including our personal health and physical fitness. If we had clear guiding principals about the land and water upon which the nation stands we would not make inconsistent and costly decisions about natural resource management, transportation, food production, residential development and even public health. In terms of your categories I will offer limited discussion: What works Spending time outside works. Getting people to spend time outside is not always easy. Some of the places that inspire people require effort in terms of time and physical capability. I think the physical requirements improves the quality of the outdoor experience and develops an understanding that is lacking when a person drives to a place. Not everyone can spend time in wilderness, but for me it is a place of rejuvenation and solace. There is nothing else like it. When I take someone new into wilderness they start with a level of anxiety that can only be dispelled through the accomplishment of the journey, particularly a hiking journey. Without exception they want to go again. It might take a while but the experience is not forgotten and there is a request to go again. Anything that expands the opportunity for young adults to work outside is helpful. Not all families have a chance to hike together because of time and ranges in physical capability. This was true in my family. For me it was the formative period of my early 20's when I was lucky to have jobs in the woods with natural resource agencies. The many months I spent living in tents and doing hard physical work gave me a level of confidence that has served me well and allowed me to take others outside to see the wonders there. It also laid the foundation for my determination to live near wild places and arrange my work and family life to accommodate time backpacking, hiking and nordic skiing. That time working in the woods in my 20's laid a foundation for lifestyle choices for which I am very grateful. Until recently I did not appreciate how much women in particular were hesitant to go outdoors. I moved to my current home to be closer to hiking opportunities. As it is always safer to have a hiking companion, than to go alone, I looked for others that wanted to go hiking. I found that if I started with shorter hikes, and gradually took people on longer and longer hikes they became quite confident and compelled to do more. The first year there were five of us. The next year over 30 women wanted to be on what they called "the hiking email list", then next year there were over 50 women, and some of the men in the community knew where we were going and asked to go along. You can imagine this number of people gets unworkable. It works better now that we started categorizing hikers as preferring long haul and short haul hikes; people started using subsets of the list to hike with people with similar skill levels. Barriers to getting people outside Proximity: In our busy world, it is the proximity to wild places that can make a difference. The closer you are the more you might visit those places regularly enough to venture further and further into the wild places. Lack of access to mentors: While none of the outdoor skills are particularly difficult, it is easier to love

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

the out of doors if a person's first experiences are with a mentor. The mentor can quietly demonstrate basic outdoor skills and backcountry travel ethics. Simple things like trash, pack it out. Personal responsibility for your raingear, your foot care and the ability to ensure your water is safe to drink is all important. The hiker needs to be able to read a map; experience reinforces what the topographic lines really mean.

I have two: 1. Sponsor a photo contest for the various parks inviting all to submit pictures taken in the parks. This will have the result of participants really examining the beauty and wildlife found in the parks and will provide pictures to exhibit in public and in private. A HUGE WIN WIN event The prize could be a calendar made from the pictures. 2. Make use of the marvelous lectures and demonstrations given in the parks offering talks in schools and auditoriums around the country. It will generate an interest in travelers who do not usually think of the National parks as centers of learning and the opportunities that can be found there. . Thank you

Please STOP wasting efforts to OVER-protect key landscapes on a large scale -- for the land, for the people.

I am a long-time Utah resident, and someone who greatly enjoys hiking and watching wildlife on federal lands in Utah. I've seen increasing problems and resource impacts in recent years. These include the dangerous expansion of cheatgrass and other invasive/noxious weeds, destructive fires due to excessive fuels from past and current mismanagement, overgrazing of riparian and Mojave desert tortoise habitats, and illegal OHV route proliferation. The status quo is not working; we are "losing ground" on several resource management fronts. I also do not agree with most elected Utah politicians who are simply shills for fossil fuel, ranching, mining, and/or OHV industry interests, have financial conflicts of interest, and/or are ideological wingnuts. They do not speak for me or many other Utahns who realize that we are on the wrong course and need to change direction. Of course, it would help if more Utah voters stopped selecting anyone with a pulse and "R" next to their name on the ballot as their representatives. In short, Utah needs your help to preserve its precious wild lands that give us clean air, drinking water, open space, beautiful recreation areas and wildlife habitat. From Cedar Mesa to Red Cliffs, Utah offers an extraordinary home to wildlife and outstanding recreation opportunities. However, development, increased recreation, overgrazing, cheatgrass fires, and climate change have put some of our most precious outdoors destinations at risk. Large natural areas, such as Cedar Mesa, the San Rafael Swell, Wasatch Mountains, Beaver Dam Wash and Red Cliffs -- provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife, recreation and lands we enjoy today. Protecting these lands will give us the opportunity to actively reconnect our children to their incredible natural heritage. In addition, it is imperative that the backroom Norton/Leavitt "no more wilderness" deal be revoked, and BLM's authority to inventory and protect (on an interim basis) wilderness quality lands be restored. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a landscape architect who designs parks and believes completely in the power of outdoor experiences. Children who grow up with quality outdoor experiences are at a distinct advantage in life. The outdoors is good for the mind and the body and I believe all people should have easy access to the types of outdoor spaces that set this country apart from many others. As an adult, I know I have benefitted from my outdoor experiences and to this day find a calming power in the mountains, by the water or on a bicycle cruising down a safe trail. This power is real and lasting and the more people who are able to benefit from it, the better off we'll all be. The value of urban parks, wilderness and everything in between is difficult to measure; but far more important than most of what we strive for in our daily lives. I continue to firmly support this administration and look forward to watching you find new and creative ways to protect and restore the places the citizens of this country need now, as much as ever. I will professionally and personally throw whatever support I can towards this effort. Thank you for your efforts to date and please do all you can. It matters more than so many things, yet sometimes is easy to overlook. Sincerely;

Please plan for America's future by creating, expanding and better protecting America's shared outdoor spaces, including wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Furthermore, please make these priorities: large-scale conservation; protect our wilderness, improve watersheds and wildlife habitats, provide increased access and recreational opportunities, and finally, fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Thank you for taking care of our natural heritage.

As you decide on what to do with our national parks, forests, wilderness areas, and other national outdoor treasures, I ask you to consider the following:

1. Please work to protect vast areas of unfragmented land throughout the country, particularly in areas with significant biodiversity or unique ecological systems.
2. Set as a goal to protect at least a third of all land in the US
3. Work hard to preserve existing biodiversity on protected lands and restore biodiversity as much as possible where it has been lost (such as restoring large carnivores to areas where they have been extirpated).
4. Expand access, camping sites, and recreational opportunities in national parks, while retaining and expanding wilderness areas.

Regards,

Now is the time to do the right thing: PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT for both us and our next generation... like YOUR kids and THEIR kids. Personally, I am fighting the gas-drilling horror that wants to come into New York State. Yeah--- that's exactly what we need: another BP-type environmental disaster... and the inevitable destruction of the NYC water supply. But what about saving the wolves, the mountains, the water....all our beautiful natural resources? Do the right thing- and make your families, friends and constituents proud.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The continued destruction of wilderness and biodiversity around the globe not only makes this planet a less enjoyable place but threatens human existence. We've only begun to understand the complex relationship between humans and the rest of the natural ecosystems but those who study nature know enough to believe it must be preserved. Please do what you can to prevent temporary difficult economic conditions from eroding the conservation efforts that have been made so far and do what you can to expand conservation and expand opportunities for people to connect with nature. I'm particularly concerned about our Oceans which although out of view, have experienced extreme change over the past few decades due to the sharp rise of CO2 content. Thank you in advance for your leadership on this front.

Please make it a priority of this administration to preserve and protect our remaining wilderness, conserve habitat for wildlife and native plants, improve our watersheds and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. For me, personally, I feel closest to God when I am in the natural world. It is rapidly being lost to the interests of big business. Please take BOLD STEPS, and make conservation and connection to the natural world a priority. It's very important.

I've always thought that America's parks, forests, and other wild places are among the best things about this country. Protecting and expanding this aspect of America should be one of our highest priorities. I urge you to protect existing wilderness and implement conservation at a large scale. Without parks, trails, and wild places, we'll lose our connection to the land--please don't let that happen.

We all are enriched when we connect with nature. Please do all you can to help us protect the natural environment for future generations. Thank you.

I backpack into the wilderness ocean beaches of Olympic National Park, Washington, each summer for the last 16 years. The peace, serenity, clear air and quiet are worth any amount of money. And like other coastlines, like California's, once a forest or prairie is developed, cut-up and/or paved over...It is gone. Most of America is developed and used such that watershed values, wildlife habitat and peacefulness is seriously compromised, degraded. My wife, Kirsten want as much of our remaining undeveloped public lands to be forever kept that way for generations of Americans just growing. Please take every opportunity to be a "protection President." Even as he despoiled our country, President Bush set aside that great big area in the Pacific Ocean. Please do better than him and, like Teddy Roosevelt, set aside just as much park, wildlife refuge and federal forest land as you can. The Antiquities Act lets you do...So please do it!! I endorse the following guidelines: - Address Conservation at a Large Scale - ecosystem scale - Protect our wilderness - Set-aside, Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Connect people with Nature - Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities - Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund Fully funding the LWCF funding is a real biggie. Money is there from offshore oil drilling; please see that it gets used as it is supposed to be and not left in the Treasury. Thanks!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The same people post over and over, and they are collectively skewing the results of this "survey" The site is tilted heavily to environmental, and eco causes, whenever an idea is proposed that these few individuals do not agree with, it is given multiple "demote" votes by this group of people, I have been looking through this site for the past few days, and anyone who looks at this claim by me without any bias can easily see that my claim is correct.

I really HATE having to beg you over and over again to stop making us regret having elected you. People like me, who believed you would make altruistic, courageous, conscientious, humanitarian, egalitarian, intelligent, enlightened decisions, are devastated by what you've done. From the moment you refused to indict, convict and punish Bush et al for treason and war crimes, we've been more ashamed than ever of our country. And yet I have to continue to beg you to serve our interests: Liberty, Justice, Peace; that Good Will be done ON Earth and FOR Earth. I want the next generation to enjoy the Great Outdoors. But that won't happen unless you're mindful of what's at stake. You have to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect outdoor spaces, including wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. So, I continue to beg you NOT to give profits priority over people and Nature; I beg you to say NO to Republicans and Blue Dogs, to big corporations and the wealthy top 2%; please promise to protect and preserve the Great Outdoors.

I didn't just vote for you. I worked for your election. Progressives across the country are looking to you to protect us from the multinational corporations that loot our personal and national resources.. At some point, lawmakers must come to the realization that extracting & using oil is a loose/loose proposition. That mountaintop removal is devastating to the ecosystem and the health of the people in the surrounding watershed and the people who breathe the fouled air all over the nation. We can base our economy on forward thinking & sustainable endeavors or we can continue to plunder the earth and condemn future generations to a bleak and meager existence. We have a choice. Are we going to trade short term profits (that don't even stay in America) for long term health and well-being.

I am writing to urge you to create meaningful science-based public policy that will protect America's shared outdoor spaces, including wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Especially important to me are protecting forests and watersheds, including wetlands. Adequate wetlands public policy could have greatly mitigated the flood damage caused by Katrina, as you well know. Thank you for this opportunity to comment and to advocate for a meaningful, science-based public policy for protecting our country's wilderness areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I've been grateful for what remains of Maine's wilderness for the past thirty years I've lived here. Only six percent of Maine is public land, so the threats to what remains continue to rise. Here are some proposals.

- The Western Mountain and Lakes landscape totals over one million acres, encompasses both the Mahoosuc and Rangeley Lakes/High Peaks Regions, links the Northern Appalachians as they pass from New Hampshire to Maine, and serves as a bridge between the White Mountain National Forest to the south and the Maine Woods. This region comprises the southwestern boundary of the Maine Woods closest to population and tourism centers making it the demonstration landscape that is most vulnerable to development pressures that could fragment the forest. Loss of lands from the timber base and severing recreation corridors, such as snowmobile trails, would undermine the area's local economy which relies primarily upon forest products and tourism. This provides us with an unprecedented opportunity for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and climate change adaptation while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.
- Protect our Wilderness: In Maine, we are working with Congressional leaders to protect wilderness and wildlands from the islands off our rocky coast to the mountains on our western boarder Your support of these proposals can preserve our wildest lands for future generations.
- Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat: Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. The Obama administration should prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands, making restoration a national priority.
- Support Proposals to Connect the Outdoors to People especially Youth: Support nature education programs, a revived civilian conservation corps, and programs that inspire people to go outdoors.

Thank you, President Obama, for working to keep Maine the most forested state in the country. We look forward to your involvement with the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

The ocean is a wonderful place being threatened by a variety of factors, the least of which is the oil spill in the gulf. Marine debris, ocean acidification and over fishing are killing this most important of environments, please do something now! I voted for you before, and I'll vote for you again, as well as all democrats if you increase your commitment to nature conservancy.

Dear President Obama, Please direct your staff to do what it can to protect our great outdoors so that it will be there for our future generations. Don't let our natural resources be destroyed or wasted. Fund public water projects; put people to work for the betterment of our national parks. You get the picture--save our country's treasures. Thank you,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As I am sure you are aware, we are in a new era of our development as a species. As such, we have a responsibility to this planet to do what we must to protect not only ourselves but all the living things on this planet. We have been negligent in our duty to do this. We have overpopulated, destroyed valuable habitats for our own comfort, poisoned our waterways and exterminated more species during our time than at any other time in Earth's history. As the leader of the most powerful country on Earth (at present), you have an opportunity..., no a duty, to help change the destruction we are bringing down upon us and the planet. This will not be an easy course. Many will block your attempts, either for political or financial gain. Disregard these fools and do the things that are needed and right. You are an aka-mi fellow, and I know you know what needs to be done. This may well be the last generation that has a hope of making the changes to save not only mankind, but most living things. Stop being "Mister Nice Guy" and use your office to force through regulations, laws and programs to stop the rape of this planet or we will have no future. I know, you know I'm right; NOW ACT. Mahalo,

Hello, I attended the July 1st Seattle listening session and wanted to contribute my comments. In terms of federal government role, we need an overarching vision for the future that acknowledges our current living patterns and economic system are not viable, even in the short term. It is this system that, at the micro level, has limited funding for outdoor preservation and sustenance of facilities and programs. At the larger level, it is responsible for the pattern of wasteful suburban and exurban land use, wanton resource extraction, and the religion of the car that are driving the losses others described at this meeting. I realize these problems are beyond the scope of the DOI. However, a significant change in the relationship between government and the economic powers shaping the landscape and constraining our future must occur for the DOI to meet the Great Outdoors Initiative's goals in any meaningful way. Primary among these is a reform of land use to forbid further exurban development, to make roadbuilding the last priority of the Department of Transportation, and to tax pollution and financial ponzi schemes to fund clean energy and infrastructure development. No serious attempt to acknowledge these problems has been made since my childhood memories of President Carter. The near-trillion dollars used to prop up a financial system based on junk mortgages and Monopoly money would have been much better spent on restoring our existing rail system, building the high-speed rail system Obama announced, developing smart grids, fixing disintegrating water and sewer systems, and reinstating the CCC as an employment and environmental restoration program. Hands-on doing and building of systems and infrastructure to carry us into the indefinite future will connect people with nature as they perform restoration work, and make them aware of how the systems we depend on constantly teeter on the edge of failure. The NGO and other professional environmental speakers at the meeting miss the larger point, and are probably incapable of getting it. Incremental adjustment of federal law and massaging the bureaucracy for funding or rule changes will not address the economic and political forces causing the problems they are working to solve.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

President Obama: The public lands in this country that we all share are a critical part of our heritage, our present, and our future. Whether in cities or in rural areas, they are precious pieces of land remain in a natural state for all Americans to learn from and to enjoy. Additional lands must be added in the coming years to any and all US government public land agencies to preserve and conserve natural areas for the expanding US population to use and enjoy. These lands provide wildlife habitat, watershed preservation, recreational opportunities, educational settings, historical lessons, scientific laboratories, spiritual experiences and much more. Public lands are the one and only locations where all Americans can enjoy these opportunities in diverse areas and on a large scale - private America does not afford this. Many Americans have special places and have special stories of those places that they treasure - I do. Let me tell you about mine. My favorite place is the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina and Virginia. I have been going to all parts of it as often as I can for 50 years. My parents took me to Peaks of Otter as a small boy and I was hooked on the Parkway. Mount Pisgah is a special place for me these days also. I enjoy hiking, nature study, and camping while on the Parkway. The non-commercial setting and rustic appearance is also a plus for me, as the NPS does a great job maintaining the area in pristine condition. I truly enjoy the fact that I can always depend on the Parkway appearing the same now as it did 50 years ago. The campgrounds there provide an affordable, clean, and scenic spot for my family to spend the night actually right on the Parkway and I always stay in them when open. My times hiking on the Parkway have been some of the best in my life and I look forward each year to returning to experience it all over again. Public lands conservation in this country must become a national personal, social, and political priority if it is to succeed. This land ethic must be learned and adopted by all Americans. Large natural areas set aside provide the best hope for meaningful conservation to take place. All public land agencies must be involved in the process and include expansion of these agency units. Partnerships with private citizens and American business will be needed in coming years to be inclusive of all segments of America and provide out of the box thinking. Citizen connection with public lands through educational and recreational opportunities is essential for any meaningful conservation to take place - Americans will only protect what they know and care about. More resources must be used for this goal. Education of Americans, especially children, about the wonders of US lands is needed. Full funding of the Land and Water Conservation fund is needed to help assure these conservation goals are met. Previous generations of thoughtful Americans made my enjoyment of the Blue Ridge Parkway possible. I am thankful for their hard work, sacrifice, and vision. We must continue that legacy now for future generations. Thank you very much for listening.

Self Serve Rental Mountain Bikes: This provides revenues for Forest Conservation while providing a service to the public that will encourage outdoor activities. Visitors can't always bring their bikes and locals do not always have the means to get their bikes there or have mountain bikes versus street bikes. The City of Denver has self serve bike rentals where you can use a credit card to rent by the hour and if you don't return the bike your card gets charged for the cost of the bike.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello. We had a great dialog going on the KEEP IT WILD idea, and then all of a sudden the comments disappeared. What did you remove the dialog?

This is a very good statement. Except that it is illegal to claim that the third airport is a done deal. This is a flimsy tactic contrived to get people to sell out. The FAA has not approved the project for a very good reason. The airline industry itself recognizes that future plans are uncertain. Take a look at the market. Big airports and planes using jet fuel have permanent toxic impact on a large area. Our need for the upcoming century is healthy food, clean water and clean air. Flying is fun for a part of the population and allows at this time for general population to escape the environmental mess they have made to go to far away quiet and clean places. Our planet cannot afford to finance the enjoyment of your friends. Until they pay the true cost of their fun and have designed planes that do not need monstrous use of agricultural land and are fueled by fossil fuels, let us concentrate on the main issues facing our world.

Like many states, Illinois is facing severe cutbacks in State funding for conservation. Land trust organizations, like the Natural Land Institute, have stepped up to fill the gap in funding for land protection programs, using private funds and volunteer labor. The Federal government can assist these private land protection efforts by:

1. Maintain and expand income tax incentives for gifts of land or conservation easements. These incentives need to be reauthorized and made permanent.
2. Do more cooperative agreements and partnerships between the NRCS and private conservation groups to do planning, outreach and technical assistance needed to implement federal conservation assistance to landowners.
3. Invest in green infrastructure through use of the USEPA state revolving loan funds for clean water and safe drinking water projects by promoting the use of these funds to finance land protection projects and best management practices.
4. Energy legislation should help fund carbon sequestration using existing permanent land protection programs.
5. Develop more permanent land protection alternatives for the Conservation Reserve Program, including paying for conservation easements on land that lacks a cropping history and that should never be farmed.
6. Remove barriers to the use of the Wetland Reserve Program and Conservation Reserve Program by conservation agencies and private organizations for permanent land protection initiatives, such as payment limits, ownership requirements, nontransferable applications and prohibited reimbursement of restoration expenses.
7. Recognize the Upper Mississippi River bluffslands between the Quad Cities and Twin Cities as a Treasured Landscape.
8. Put additional resources into implementing the Mississippi River Basin Initiative.

Private land trusts in Illinois have been effective partners to implement the goals of the State Wildlife Action Plan and federal, state and local conservation priorities. Developing partnerships with land trusts is a cost effective way to deliver federal conservation programs. Respectfully submitted,

Dear group, Thank you in advance for letting me write in... Although Kansas has the Tallgrass Prairie Reserve, the government owns only 1.2 percent of Kansas land for natural habitats / national parks vs. 84 percent of Nevada, by comparison... The buffalo need a "home on the range" and I hope you'll please consider Kansas when making any key decisions...

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Your policies are locking the old and infirm into the cities. Youth who could become outdoor enthusiasts are similarly excluded because of the costs associated with access to wilderness areas, and the specialized equipment required for hiking and backpacking. Hunters and other sportsmen must hike into desolate areas in California's Mojave desert, a region which requires one to carry a gallon of water for each day. It is clear that the intent of the preservationists is to exclude man, as though he were a threat to the very lands that he is part of. Our "land of the free" is rapidly becoming a land of slaves, subject to the whims of special interest groups and their Quislings in the federal government. Stop restricting public lands, they are not the exclusive property of the progressive misanthropes who jealously restrict the open spaces. Keep the neo-animists political ambitions restricted to San Francisco and Berkeley. There they can pass laws in support of America's enemies, consume a steady diet of Nat Geo and Animal planet on TV, and leave the rest of us in freedom.

HI, I HAVE NEVER UNDERSTOOD THE REASON IS BEHIND HUMANS GROWING AND MAINTAINING GRASS (LAWNS). FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, I SEE THE WASTE OF WATER, SEED, CHEMICALS, TOOLS, MACHINERY AND MANY HUMAN HOURS. AN ALTERNATIVE: 1. ONLY ZERO SCAPING, NO MATTER WHAT THE LOCATION OF THE COUNTRY. 2. ONLY PLANTING SEASONAL AND ENDEMIC, GROWING HERBS, FRUITS AND VEGGIES. 3. THE GOVERNMENT REWARDS THOSE LAND OWNERS NOT GROWING GRASS, INSTEAD GROWING THINGS TO EAT. 4. CHEMICAL INDUSTRY MUST ONLY PRODUCE AND SELL NON-TOXIC SUBATANCES. WE ARE FOREVER CHANGING AND KILLING THE LIFE CYCLE OF HUMANS AND ANIMALS WITH THE UNEEDED USE OF UNHEALTHY CHEMICALS. THIS PROCESS IS FULLY SUPPORTED BY OUR GOVERNMENT OR THEY WOULD STOP IT COMPLETELY. THESE CHEMICALS CHANGE THE FRAGILE BALANCE OF BOTH HUMANS AND ANIMLAS.

Basically, all this programs needs to do is create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces. Just keep these priorities in mind for America's Great Outdoors: > Address Conservation at a Large Scale > Protect our wilderness > Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat > Connect people with Nature > Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities > Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund Thank you.

We have recently completed a book on Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota. It is a history, description of the ecosystems, discussion of weather and climate, and the impact of climate change on the park. It is a wonderfully illustrated book with beautiful photos covering a 40 year span. Our publisher is the non-profit Afton Press, but we need more underwriting to get the book out in printed form. We intend to use the book for educational programs about Minnesota's water resources, and to promote visitorship to Voyageurs. Is there any chance the AGO program could provide funds to get this book out in print?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'm writing to applaud President Obama and his administration for publicly supporting the work of non-profit land trusts. I am a founding board member of the Black Canyon Land Trust in Montrose, Colorado. This small non-profit has taken more than 300 conservation easements on private farm and ranch lands, working with these willing landowners to protect about 30,000 acres for working agriculture, wildlife, and scenic open space. We could not have done this work without the important programs of the federal government that provide tax deductions and other incentives to encourage private landowners to conserve their properties for the benefit of the public and future generations. There is no other land conservation work in the U.S. that is having such an important and far-reaching effect on the permanent conservation of private lands. Please do all that you can to provide permanent funding and programs for conservation easements through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Farm Bill programs, and to make the enhanced easement incentive permanent. Thank you for your support of conservation for working private lands,

I was fortunate many years ago to do a three week trip through the National Parks and Forests of the Western US. Since then I've spent many vacations traveling through some of the most beautiful and environmentally important lands in America. Recently my 21 year old daughter completed her own three week whirlwind trip of our nation's national parks and other public lands. I am writing to ask that you ensure the lands are available for future generations and that even more lands are protected. Thank you for having your administration take the time necessary to talk with the American public about what is important to them. These are lands owned by all Americans and it is important that our voices are heard above those of businesses that look at our nation's natural resources as just a way to make a lot of money. These lands are much more important than that. Primarily I encourage you to preserve lands that have already been protected and to provide funds needed to manage these lands property. The National Park Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management are all under funded and need more money for staff and to improve infrastructure. Lands that are protected are threatened by in-holdings and by development along the boundaries. Money needs to be appropriated, especially Land and Water Conservation Funds, to let agencies buy in-holdings and adjoining lands in order to protect lands already set aside. LWCF needs to be fully funded, as you have already requested, to allow this to happen quickly before these lands are destroyed and lost forever. Wildlife corridors are needed to allow wildlife to move between protected areas. As more and more land is developed and roads are built it is becoming increasingly difficult for animals to not become isolated in small pockets of habitat. While developed recreational lands are important it is also important to establish and secure wilderness areas where people can get away from the hustle and bustle of their everyday lives. The wilderness values of these potential areas can be lost very easily and swift action is needed to identify and protect wilderness areas that need to be protected quickly. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please give serious consideration to the private sector as the source of funding for open space and farmland protection. Create a program not unlike The New Market Tax Credit program which has been very successful in creating capital for inner cities throughout the nation. Rethinking the way we protect land on a national basis could be an initiative of the Dept. of Agriculture and Department of Treasury that models itself on the New Markets Tax Credit Program in permitting taxpayers to receive a credit against Federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in to be created or perhaps even existing organizations akin to Community Development Entities (CDEs). Substantially all qualified equity investment would be by design invested in the purchase of development rights (farms) or fee properties (open space). The syndication of these credits would allow for socially responsible investments in farmland protection and food security. In addition I would urge the administration to look to flexibility in federal agricultural programs that can accommodate our smaller farmers. Trends in our county indicate that fruit and vegetable producers have a bright future if food safety programs can be administered in a way so as not to bury producers in fees and additional paper work. When future programs are instituted I would suggest that the control of the actual transactions be decentralized and done in a manner which can be directed by those who know the import of strategic properties.

As a board member of a local land trust in California, I want to say thanks for supporting the enhanced conservation easement incentive. Making the incentive permanent will encourage other property owners to put their lands that are worthy of protection under easement by making this option financially feasible. I appreciate your support.

As a Board member of the Whidbey Camano Land Trust on Whidbey Island in the State of Washington, I want to say thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Our Land Trust protects natural habitat and working farms and forests. We do amazing work and significantly leverage donor dollars. We know the local area and its needs and priorities. We enjoy widespread community support. Partnering with local Land Trusts is a great way for federal agencies to accomplish things they can't do on their own. Give us the tools and we will accomplish the job for you: make the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations permanent provide for community forest conservation bonds fully fund LWCF and the Forest Legacy Program and change these funds to allow direct acquisition of land and easements by land trusts. Respectfully submitted,

I was pleased to attend the Nashville, Tennessee Great Outdoors "listening" session. I was sorely disappointed to find mostly overpaid arrogant, backturning bureaucrats wasting public money and time. It was a waste of time and will only serve to get more of the same Telling and little or NO listening. America has become hostage to free-riding and withholding self-serving bureaucrats at the general public expense. I am sorry to be so blunt but Washington is the epitome of what one of my former students called out from the back row: "...haven't you heard, the bottleneck is at the TOP!!!!"

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In a small town on Washington's Olympic Peninsula, our local Jefferson Land Trust (which is among the 6% of land trusts in the US that have earned national accreditation) is working collaboratively with private citizens, local business, and other non-profit organizations, as well as city, county, and state governments and federal agencies to preserve open space, habitat, and working lands for future generations. Over the last 20 years we have collaborated with many partners to accomplish far more than any one group could on its own. Broad community financial support and volunteers make this possible. Federal support could be even more effective with enhanced tax incentives and full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Farm Bill conservation programs, the Forest Legacy Program, and other conservation funds. In addition to protecting working farms and forests from conversion, our work also helps mitigate the effects of climate change and provides habitat corridors to aid species in their adaptation to those changes. We have also convened a broad coalition to envision the Olympic Peninsula 100 years in the future and plan ways that we all can work now to provide a diverse and healthy environment that also is economically viable and sustainable for future generations. Thank you for your help and interest.

Dear President Obama, Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors Initiative: A 21st century strategy for conservation in America. We appreciate your support in helping us to protect and preserve America's great places. Lummi Island, WA is one of those special places. As a board member of the Lummi Island Heritage Trust, I am well aware of the importance of your action in furthering our mission of preserving the land and the rural character of our beautiful island. Preserving this rich environment directly benefits and protects the flora, fauna, and the quality of life of the 1,000 people who live in our community. In the 11 years since our organization was founded, we have successfully created 3 preserves which encompass 273 acres of protected land. In addition, we have worked with land owners to place conservation easements on 557 acres of private property, thereby limiting much potential development. For such a small community, these are substantial accomplishments which are due in large part to the L.I.H.T.'s commitment to educating our island community about the value of conservation. Their phenomenal response clearly demonstrates their dedication to this place and the principles of conservation. One of the greatest threats to our continued success is the economic challenge which our country currently faces. We need federal support for this work through grants and tax incentives for land owners who donate land or conservation easements on their property. We are working with our legislators to help make current enhanced tax incentives permanent and to insure adequate funding for this program. We truly appreciate your decision to mention America's 1,600 land trusts in your remarks in launching this initiative. It is our belief that the federal government can achieve far more with limited resources by working in partnership with land trusts, such as the Lummi Island Heritage Trust, to engage private land owners in conservation across America. We appreciate your leadership in these important issues. Thank you for making the America's Great Outdoors Initiative a priority. With your help, this initiative can preserve the gift of the natural world for our children, grandchildren and generations to come.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama, Thank you beyond words for launching this initiative about the Great Outdoors. Our natural areas are great treasures for all our people and need to be loved and cared for. The focus you have put on this truth will help open people's eyes to the importance of protecting our natural areas and precious, natural places. One of my most important concerns is that the uses made of these places includes caring for wildlife and their need for homes. All life is precious and wildlife is quite vulnerable to the intensity of human lifestyles. We need, as a caring society, to be aware of and concerned about our feathered and furred and scaled friends. Thank you for taking a stand on this important need. A second concern that I have about the uses made of America's Great Outdoors is that we continue to set aside places that can stay wild and undeveloped. We human beings need places of quiet for solitude and to restore our weary spirits. In our increasingly busy lives, we have to take time to rest the soul—for health and for life balance. Finally, the work of land trusts across the country helps protect important areas for wildlife and for the community, for public benefit. Land Trusts identify the most important areas to protect for today and for future generations. In our work of partnerships between private landowners and nonprofit organizations, we actively think about the kind of world we are leaving our children. Thank you for keeping the needs of nature and all of us depend on nature in the forefront of conversation. We are grateful for your leadership.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a member of the North Carolina Horse Council, Back Country Horseman of America, and Equine Land Conservation Resource. I also serve on the State Trails Committee that reviews applications and recommends grant awards for Federal RTP and state Adopt-a-Trail funds. Equestrian access to public trails is one of the most threatened and diminishing resources, particularly in the eastern US; only OHV users have less access to public land. Though Federal lands like National Forests seem to stay committed to all forms of outdoor recreation, this open-minded ethic has not been transferred to State and local governments in their planning for parks and recreation. Repeatedly I encounter State and local planners and land managers that are absolutely oblivious to the equine industry around them, and (one of) the erroneous assumptions they operate from is that as urbanization increases, horse ownership decreases. Part of the role of the organizations I support is to raise that awareness and educate, and we do the best that we can, case-by-case. However, an increased push from the Federal level to equally consider ALL forms of outdoor recreation in the planning process would be helpful, particularly if any part of the land purchase or facility development receives federal funding (CWMTF, RTP, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act/Pittman-Robertson funds, etc.). ALL uses should be OBJECTIVELY evaluated before being ruled out based on sound scientific/technical reasons, not based on elitist preservationist or just plain uninformed opinions. A particular problem in NC is the Wildlife Resources Commission that manages hundreds of thousands of acres purchased with the assistance of Federal money; they will barely tolerate non-hunting recreation until it becomes a "problem" - which it almost inevitably does because WRC will not commit any resource to management or facility development. When the problem is perceived, they prohibit the use (be it mountain bikes, equestrians, etc.) in the state Administrative Code; how many other public lands codify their rules of conduct as law? When challenged on prohibitions, WRC will often produce a biologist who will claim the presence of some sensitive or threatened flora or fauna (which may only be present on a small portion of the land). This is a waste of public resource and a misuse of conservation policy. There are many models (adopted by other states) that could be followed and would foster responsible collaborative use (not to mention increased public appreciation for the importance of hunting and maintaining these conserved lands). Below is information and recommendations for consideration; * Horseback riding and carriage driving are legitimate and culturally-significant forms of outdoor recreation. * Riding and driving, along with the care and maintenance of equines and equine-property, is physical activity which gets people out of doors, encourages exercise, and causes appreciation for the natural ecosystem. * As urbanization increases, so does the equine population and the demand for recreation opportunities. This is, in part, because well paying jobs and disposable income are clustered around urban areas, and many fast growing areas still have ex-urban areas where traditional agricultural lands are being redeveloped as hobby farms or commercial equine operations. * Use of Federal funds to purchase land that will allow any form of recreation (including hunting) should mandate the inclusion of ALL forms of recreation. The exclusion or prohibition of equestrian, mountain bike, and/or OHV use should occur only through a methodical, transparent and reproducible evaluation process that includes input from all stakeholders. * State and local tax codes need to be revised to recognize equine operations as agricultural, not commercial, enterprises to be eligible for tax relief, farmland preservation, and/or voluntary agricultural districts. * As traditional agriculture is replaced by

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

hobby farms, federal state and local conservation incentives need to be developed and/or strengthened to recognize the open space preservation value of equine farms. * Similarly, incentives and strong indemnity laws should be developed for private land owners to allow trail easements on their properties. Public/private partnerships between local and state governments and large residential developers should be strengthened to allow public recreation opportunity. * Greater opportunities for "front-country" equestrian experiences in local and State Parks must be developed, so that people (and their horses) can gain the skills and appreciation to progress into the often more-challenging National Parks and Forests. * Equestrians need to become better educated about conservation ethics, impacts of trail use on the environment, the importance of volunteerism, and training to prepare themselves and their mounts for the multi-use trail future. This can be done through funding to agricultural extension, soil and water conservation districts, and state horse councils and equine industry commodity groups. -- BLOQ Resources

It is very encouraging to see the Obama administration taking such a strong interest in this issue. Thanks for supporting our great outdoors!

I want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak out about the wild places we deem most valuable and worthy of protection. This is a great country and I want to help preserve its riches for us and our children--as well as the animals that live there. Thank you for your leadership!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal agencies' allocation of budget, staff, and management effort should reflect the developing reality that outdoor recreation provides a greater good for more Americans than any other aspect of its multiple-use mandate. The time has come to make managed recreation the BLM and Forest Service's top priority. All too often "conservation" means reducing public access and recreational uses. The AGO Initiative should explore ways to enhance a diverse range of recreational uses, including motorized and non-motorized recreational uses, across federal, state and private lands. Federal land managers too often limit or restrict public recreation activities. Federal land managers should focus on recreation friendly management plans that are not restrictive and embrace a wide range of diverse recreational uses, including motorized and non-motorized recreation. The administration has prided itself in being open and transparent, yet Representative (name deleted) and Representative (name deleted) have not yet received a response to their requests for documents. It will benefit the outreach function of this Initiative if the Department of the Interior would respond to H. Res. 1406. The initiative and the public will benefit from a full understanding of the various public and private conservation efforts currently underway. Accurate information is critical for good decision-making. Statements that state large areas of our nation's natural landscape have been lost to population growth and development, or that a changing climate and new sources of pollution are affecting wildlife and watersheds, must be put into an accurate context. The initiative must disclose how much land is being conserved. The initiative should work with the over 1,600 privately run land trusts to find out how much land has been protected in recent years. The initiative should disclose how much land is conserved via federal conservation efforts, such as the Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program. In addition, it would help to disclose how many federal dollars are being spent on the various conservation efforts. Finally, the initiative should disclose the conservation efforts underway via the Land and Resource Management Plans of units of the National Forest System, the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service. ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness. OHVs provide access to the Great Outdoors for Americans of all ages, shapes, and sizes.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on The America's Great Outdoors Presidential Initiative. I was fortunate enough to have been able to attend the meeting at Occidental College on July 8, 2010 and was impressed by the members of the panel and their desire to reconnect Americans with the outdoors and to further the protection and formation of outdoor areas. While I do live in Los Angeles and understand the need for urban parks, my comments are geared more to the units that are under the NPS. As someone who spends almost all of their vacations in National Parks, I have much to say but will limit my comments to the following areas.

Education: There needs to be more education on protection of parks and their resources. This should not only take place in our parks but in our nation's schools. These lessons should also include educating the public on the proper behavior in parks. Too many people go to our outdoor areas without the knowledge of how to properly act. This causes negative impacts to the park, its natural resources and the enjoyment of other park visitors. This holds true for not only for NPS units, but also for lands under other federal protection and in urban parks. Since the NPS and some other federal agencies already work with the Leave No Trace organization, parks should utilize them more. While some parks, such as Rocky Mountain National Park, have embraced the LNT organization and have included LNT information in all their guides and information booklets, other parks have not. LNT information should be prominently display in visitor centers and also in the park newspapers that are given to visitors when they enter a park. Another way of using LNT is to arrange local LNT educators to come and speak at organizations, parks and schools.

Park Rangers: Visitors need more interaction with Park Rangers. I have been in parks that the only place that you see Park Rangers are in the Visitor Centers or on the few Ranger led programs. There have been times that we have been in a park we did not see any Rangers the whole visit. Get more Rangers out in the field because visitors enjoy the ability to interact with Park Rangers not only during Ranger led talks but, also while they are hiking or at a popular spot. Children who get to talk to a Park Ranger could become a future Ranger. Our Park Rangers deserve a career path that is stable, with better pay and benefits. Give seasonal rangers more opportunities to become career employees. This would allow the NPS the ability to hire and keep qualified people. Rangers and their families often live in substandard housing and some struggle financially. Many are transferred to other parks or units every few years and are never able to set roots down. These men and women protect our nation's treasures, sometime risk their own lives and should be have a decent quality of life.

Volunteers: With budget restraints, having park volunteers has allowed parks to continue to serve their visitors and protect the parks. There needs to be more opportunities for people to volunteer. We live very close to the Santa Monica Mountain National Recreation Area and there are only a limited amount of volunteer activities and most of them involve hard physical work, such as trail building. Those of us with physical limitations would like an opportunity to help in other ways. A program for "spontaneous" volunteers would be nice. Those, who at the last minute find out that they have a few hours to help out, could go to a visitor center and look at a list of things they could do for that day. For example, since trash has become a problem in parks, one could go to the visitor center and borrow some gloves, a pick up tool and trash bags and pick up trash while they are enjoying the park. Having volunteer activities for families is also important. This is a good way to get the whole family outdoors while also serving as a learning experience.

Over development: Over development inside our parks is becoming a problem.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is especially true in Yosemite where the park is starting to look more like an urban park not a national park and many projects are overblown. An example of this is what was done to the Yosemite Falls area. Although a parking area has been restored to its natural condition and a small picnic area was added adjacent to the restored area, a huge restroom was built right next to them and the area now looks like a city park. Instead of one's eye being drawn to the falls, the first thing one notices is the restroom. While corporate sponsors are a very important source of money to improve parks, projects they sponsor should not become a monument to their corporation. New building inside of a park should be limited to only facilities that are vital to the safety of visitors and the park or as replacements for an already existing facility. Any new structures should be built in areas that are already developed. Again, Yosemite comes to mind for they will be building an 18 acre complex to house the Yosemite Institute in an area that is currently undeveloped. This institute is used by only a small percentage of visitors and should be built outside of the park or in an area that is already developed. Development adjacent to our parks and outdoor areas should be controlled. This especially pertains to oil drilling, mining and power plants. While they are physically outside of a park, their activities impact visitor experience and the natural resources of the park. Over crowding: The problem of overcrowding in our National Parks has to be addressed. Massive traffic jams occur daily in our most popular parks during the summer. Traffic jams and crowds lessen the quality of a "visitor experience". While some people believe that adding more units under the NPS will help with overcrowding, they fail to realize that this will not alleviate the overcrowding of popular areas because people want to go to those parks. In fact, I was shocked to hear that there has been discussion of a campaign to get more foreign visitors to come to our National Parks that stressed our most popular parks. I personally could not get reservations in multiple National Parks that we had wanted to visit this summer because their lodging was already booked. It is not right that tax payers can not get lodging in a park when a campaign to get more foreign visitors is being planned. More parks or protected areas: One way to protect our great outdoors would be to incorporate more natural areas into the NPS System. For example, the Angeles Crest area in the San Gabriel Mountains is already partially under federal or state control, its status should be raised to at least a National Recreation Area. Also, there are lands in the San Gabriels that are worthy of wilderness protection. Its location near one of the largest cities in the United States means that it is easily accessible to millions of people but lacks the facilities and staff to protect its resources. However, before too many areas be added for protection, it is imperative that the already existing areas have enough budget to be able to maintain their facilities and protect their resources. Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share some of my thoughts.

Tools; I think the Federal Govt can use the tools on the local and city level to create Community gardens through parks and recreation not only as an outdoor classroom to reconnect children to the food we eat but also to provide a sustainable food supply to our starving future. This will allow individuals to enter prominent careers in agriculture and cities pay there park staff good money and benefits, it time that we start growing our own food instead of depending on Mexico and California to feed us. Its time we take the city parks to a new level and start feeding the future, this will benefit all especially the govt

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To Our Administration: My name is (name deleted) and I am an outdoor enthusiast, wetlands supporter and fortunately, a Ducks Unlimited employee. I urge and understand the importance of designating the prairie pothole region as a "treasured landscape". For all of my childhood and into my adult life, I was effected by this region, in that I grew up in Eastern, NE. Without the PPR, I would never have had the opportunity to enjoy the beauties of what North American Migrating Waterfowl bring to communities around our great nation. Research and public opinion will show that this region is the key player in preserving these dreams and lifestyles of not only NE residents, but all supporters around the country, due to the nature of migration. By not shining light and ultimately government support of this area, we do not risk the chance, we destroy the opportunity to do perpetual good to our nations heritage. Not only do I beg, I demand that this region be designated as a treasured landscape. It is on your shoulders to bring the voice of us citizens to the forefront. Regards,

My main comment is this: you don't encourage appreciation of our great outdoors, and you don't encourage more use and appreciation of our outdoors, by fencing us out of our wilderness. I'm a great believer in the long B.L.M. philosophy of multiple use of our public lands. Increasingly, here in California, BLM lands are confiscated by federal agencies either to be incorporated into military bases or as national parks and monuments. I'm a rockhound (and will be president of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies next year). My family and I have long enjoyed trips to BLM lands in California and Nevada and Arizona to collect rocks and common invertebrate fossils for personal enjoyment and education. Increasingly, such activity is being limited and constricted as BLM lands are placed out-of-bounds to American citizens. Please, on behalf of the 135 nonprofit clubs and societies belonging to the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies: don't fence us out! If you wish to encourage public enjoyment of public lands, keep them public!

Hello, I am inquiring about the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to support grassroots efforts and reconnecting Americans to the outdoors and the conservation of outdoor spaces. We have for the past seven to ten years been working on something similar in Metropolitan Kansas City in getting a diverse population involved and exposed to the Outdoors. In 2003 our TV show Urban American Outdoors debut across the country and locally featuring one of the first multicultural outdoors TV shows to air. Our audience both traditional and diverse became immediate fans. We never knew what to expect but we found out that a lot of people wanted to be a part of what we were doing and ever since we have continued to move forward in our goal of connecting all people, because we believe that Outdoors is for everybody! What I am interested in is how do we go about setting up a listening session in Kansas City? We are planning for an Urban Outdoor Summit Sept. 24 & 25, 2010 could this be done at the same time? Also do you have material we can hand out to our guest at this conference. I am so happy that we have an administration that is full inclusive when it pertains to the Outdoors. We have been trying to dispel some of the myths and fear associated with being in the outdoors and I think we have been doing a good job according to a lot of the emails and phone calls we get. I Hope to hear from someone soon and I will be able to provide any material you may need from us. Thank you,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I AM FOR EVERYTHING THAT HELPS AND PROTECTS ANIMALS, ALL OF THEM, BUT I DON'T HAVE TIME OR THE DESIRE TO SPEND ON FINDING HOW AND WHERE TO VOTE OR SIGN A PETITION. IF YOU WANT PARTICIPATION MAKE IT VERY EASY.

I can't imagine that you are all that foolish to think that the fed gov is not using you to take away our land. This is part and parcel of how imperialist gov's get a foothold. Though you think you are 'voting' blah, blah, blah- you dear blind ones are taking part in the obamanation to 'transform' this country into a pitiful empty shell of independence. YOU are being USED like pawns, and when you're usefulness is over- you will be shoved aside, as your 'voting' is doing to your fellow countrymen. I heard the owl call YOUR names.

What is behind the unprecedented takeover of land, water, and people?

Fear, power, control, lawlessness? To those in power/men/women everywhere; Have faith in God NOT in the earth, don't you know soon He will give it new birth? Isaiah 40:4-5, Matt. 19:28, Acts 3:21. Re-generation/restoration of ALL things/earth returned to pre-flood conditions. The curse upon the planet taken away as Messiah returns to rule the nations in righteousness. Matt. 24:29-31, Rev. 1:7.

Give them a list of good reasons to explore their public lands outdoors.

<http://www.examiner.com/x-35373-Oregon-Nature-Examiner> Something simple!

I probably won't be able to attend the meeting on August 9 in Concord NH, but wanted to send a quick email to urge that the Forest Service end the practice of clear cut logging in the White Mountains (and elsewhere) in favor of timber harvesting methods which are less disruptive to the local ecosystems. Also, I'd like to suggest that off road vehicles should be banned in conservation areas and on recreational corridors such as rail trails. Thanks and best regards,

To all the people that are helping save the wild mustangs and burros: I have heard about the cruelty of these wild mustangs by starving them in captivity and while rounding them up by helicopter, they caused the death of many horses. I know that colts and their mothers are dying because of mishandling in Nevada and other states out West. Why the rush? Why can't you handle these horses in a more humane way by feeding them and if some are giving them medical assistance? Preserving our Heritage as American, the choice to destroy one of the most loved animals that are apart of nations history. You will be hated by humanitarians everywhere if you don't find homes for the animals out West that you don't want there. What do you expect to gain by committing such a cruel act? A lot of people are finding out about what's going on and it will be the shock of America. Consider what you are doing as a cowardly act and you should be ashamed to call yourself Americans.

I believe the first thing that should happen is that Obama should tell Salazar to stop killing wolves. Humans need to realize that wild animals DEPEND on the outdoors to survive. Without animals, what is the outdoors ?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Good afternoon. I am (name deleted), President and CEO of the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD). The IAPD serves 350 park districts, forest preserves, conservation, municipal park and recreation, and special recreation agencies throughout Illinois. Our members have strived for years to promote community-based recreation, the conservation of land, water, and wildlife resources, corridors and connectivity, and to reconnect Illinois citizens to the great outdoors the very goals the President has set forth in the America's Great Outdoor's Initiative. We enthusiastically embrace and support this agenda! Illinoisans understand the importance of recreation and conservation. According to a 2009 survey,[1] nearly 80% of Illinois voters support a \$350 million capital investment in land and water conservation. In the past 5 years, Illinois voters have approved 11 out of 12 referenda to support forest preserves. And yet while the general public understands the value of parks and open space, our agencies struggle to obtain consistent and reliable funding sources to maintain and enhance our efforts. As a result, Illinois is in the bottom 10% of all 50 states when it comes to publicly-owned land for natural resource protection and enjoyment.[2] Our State is in the bottom third in spending for open space.[3] So, as we embark on this exciting national initiative, consistent and reliable funding must be at the top of any agenda. And there are many reasons why we should be allocating additional resources for parks, recreation, and open space. Not only would it help reconnect Americans with our public lands as the President has suggested, but doing so would help our nation attain many of its other priorities. For instance, our nation has spent a considerable amount of time debating and discussing how to provide healthcare for our sick and elderly. But public park and recreation agencies are approaching these problems head-on by working to keep our nation healthy and reducing the need for doctor visits in the first place. As the chief providers of recreational programming, organized sports activities and other fitness programs for children and adults, we are leading the fight against obesity. Because many schools have chosen to eliminate physical education from their curriculum due to budget constraints, our demand for these activities is only increasing. So our programs are already promoting physical fitness and good health, and with consistent and reliable funding we can do more. Much attention has been focused on the development of new technologies such as electric and fuel efficient automobiles. At the same time, champions of parks and open space have been working on ways to provide alternative modes of transportation so we can reduce the need for automobiles. Connecting corridors of green space such as trails and greenways provide the capacity for people to move from place to place without a car. But achieving widespread connectivity of our trails and greenways also requires consistent and reliable funding for more land acquisition. Parks and open space also play a critical role in fighting climate change. They help improve air and water quality. They help prevent soil erosion and pollution caused by agricultural and road runoff. They serve as natural floodplains. For every 1% of increase in protected wetland along a stream corridor, peak flow decreases by 3.7%, which is crucial for storm water runoff and flood management.[4] A single tree's contribution in controlling air pollution, soil erosion, soil fertility, recycling water and humidity is worth almost \$200,000 over a 50 year period! In other words, it makes economic sense to invest in our natural resources. There are countless other examples of the ways park districts, forest preserves, conservation and recreation agencies positively impact other national objectives. Congress recently authorized funds to save the jobs of local police. The after-school youth programs our agencies provide helps

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

keep kids off the street and reduce crime. With additional funding, these programs could reduce the overall need to fight crime. My point today is that investment in our parks and open space pays dividends well beyond simply engaging Americans with the outdoors though that is a worthy goal in and of itself. Investment in these resources would help reduce the demand for national spending in many other areas, too. But funding must be consistent and reliable. In closing, Illinois' park districts, forest preserves, conservation, municipal park and recreation, and special recreation agencies continually strive to connect Illinois citizens to the great outdoors, and we stand ready to help the President achieve the goals set forth in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. As we move forward, consistent and reliable support and funding are needed to enhance our efforts. [1] Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates survey taken of 600 Illinois voters from May 12-14, 2009. [2] Illinois State Land Conservation Funding, The Illinois Environmental Council Education Fund, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land, March 2007 [3] Ibid. [4] 1993 Illinois State Water Survey

Please protect America's Wilderness with wildlife a patronage of the mountains, the forests, the wetlands, the seas, and valleys, the cavedwellers, and the arctic, cascades, and the tundra left astray. Wildlife have some areas over-populated, and many which are just on a mere existence. Wolves, and other wildlife exuberate these harsh elements, assuredly as you've seen a Sarah Palin ad [of her own style] and the endangered species act, which also need updating to adjust to the life and death of some casualties of. Yet, a new milemarker should be here with your team helping a new arranged plan of support and wildlife eco system so desperately needed. Wildlife of all realms needs your support, even if it calls for sending some to another country to help out with our overpopulation of certain wildlife parks, trails, mountain areas and communities where families are endangered. Numerous tasks require a steady hand, a man whom can think on all these levels, and the courage to bring a wilderness society a new preserve for our future generations. Please remember Alaska was our last newest State, and it too offers a huge preserve and cause of understanding of wildlife intelligence, nature behavior, and eco systems to be in harmony for our future generations to see America's majestic creatures, and those whom choose to visit America's parks and wildlife preserves that actually have wildlife in its wake. I witnessed on June 20, 1977 the time of new life being brought while a 100% eclipse was taking place at Bimini, Bahamas. The sea turtles hatched millions of hatchlings, and they clickety-clacked up and down the entire white shoreline while I [humbly] sat on a Large Sea Turtle who ever so patiently, moved and dug herself out while letting me know I was no longer welcome to sit on her shell to see this sight. To the right, and left of me were many large sea turtles all moving after while, as the eclipse slipped behind the silverstreaked ocean and the sun came in full view of a lovely brilliance of a magical afternoon. Since I was 14 yrs old, the others on the island were all youths, with a counselor, boat captain, and island natives at this area. I am forever in their debt. - Address Conservation at a Large Scale - Protect our wilderness T - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Connect people with Nature - Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities - Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need more Wilderness on public lands. We need respect for the natural forests and wonders that we have inherited. There is plenty of private land for tree farms and cows, so keep them out of the national lands. Recreation is already a more important use of national forests, especially here in the East, than is log extraction. Machines are incompatible with protecting wildlife and natural ecosystems, to say nothing of the important spiritual connection of humans to nature. Protection of the natural habitat itself also leads to clean water supplies to adjacent communities, as well as air purification and soil creation capabilities.

BY ALL MEANS preserve the Civil War battlesites. I have been to Gettysburg (twice), Vicksburg, and Fort Sumpter. The Chicago Civil War Roundtable has been to Chickamauga. The Civil War has been called "America's Illiad". Homer would understand.

Acquire and restore damaged natural areas in exchange for public access. Acquire from private ownership damaged and abused natural areas, such as abandoned riverfronts. Engage community volunteers from all walks of life to clean up and restore the damaged areas in exchange for permanent public access. Improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, eradicate exotic invasive species and replant with native plant communities. Design trails and greenways with the health of the natural resource foremost in mind. One example is Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk www.gbriverwalk.org <<http://www.gbriverwalk.org/>> a National Recreation Trail.

I am in support of listing the prairie pothole regions as a Treasure which it most definitely is--there is a diminishing habitat for Ducks and if we do not be proactive and guard this treasure we will all lose

I am very pleased to hear about President Obama's new plan. I hope he also respects the Outdoorsman who fish and hunts. For as long as I can remember the industry has collected an 11% on top of state and federal taxes to go to projects to support our sports. I am sure the average person knows nothing about the Pittman-Roberts Act. I am also sure they know nothing of the looting of the fund to use the money for everything but fish and wildlife as California has been doing and again to use that money to close budget loop holes. I do not like what they are doing and think they better get on top of their game and practice what they preach when they tell everyone how they should save and live within their means. WELL IT'S ABOUT TIME ALL GOVERNMENTS DO WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT AND NOT JUST WHAT THEY WANT. WE ARE THE ONES WHO PUT THEM IN OFFICE AND WE WILL BE THE ONES WHO WILL REMOVE THEM IF THEY ARE NOT WILLING TO LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE! Thank you for the chance to air thoughts. I have been donating money to the following organizations for years even though I did not belong to some of them because of the good work they have over the years. Nature Conservancy, Wild Turkey Federation, Audobon Society, Trout Unlimited, Salmon Trout Steelhead Fishing Org's. NRA, Wilderness Society.

I am strongly opposed to government confiscation of private lands--it is violative of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the US Constitution.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Make illegal modified car, motorcycle and off road vehicle mufflers illegal to sell and/or install across the nation. They pollute and make too much noise!!!

Please save our battlefields!

when we do our taxes there is a box which if checked automatically gives a dollar to the presidential reelection campaign. We spend an obscene amount of money of campaigns and this dollar should do toward National Parks and historic preservation

Department of Interior, Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Presidents national dialog about conservation. This is an important opportunity to indentify issues that can make a difference for the future. The Federal Government, through the Army Corps of Engineers, (Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study[MRAPS]) has undertaken study of management of the Missouri River. The 65 year old law (1944 Flood Control Act) that governs management of this great river basin, which covers over 1/6 of the country is outdated, and inefficient in addressing the contemporary needs of the nation. The "Challenge" is to objectively review and study how a modernized management can better meet the contemporary needs of the basin and country, and make the necessary amendments to the existing legislation. The "Federal Role" will be to provide the leadership to implement the modernization process. Modernizing management of the Missouri River will provide numerous opportunities to enhance recreation use, environmental quality, and sustainable use of the river resources for all the Basin States.Modernizing management of the Missouri River will diversify state economies through numerous opportunities for enhanced recreation development and use. Applying adaptive management tools to future management decisions will provide for efficient, cost effective, and sustainable use of river resources, and can provide a pathway for addressing developing issues such as the effect of climate change on river flow. And finally, creative use of river functions to meet authorized purposes will save multiple millions of management, resource restoration, and resource enhancement dollars. Our Chapter urges the Department of Interior to fully engage and partner with the Corps of Engineers to modernize management of the Missouri River!

Comments regarding America's Great Outdoors Initiative: The Williamson Act that was established in California in 1965 is an incentive for ranchers & farmers to keep large tracts of land intact. It helps protect watersheds, provides space & water for wildlife among other advantages. However, this year the funding in California was essentially dropped--\$1 Million in funding out of the \$39 Million that is needed to fund the Williamson Act. Why can't these funds would be restored? If the President wants people to use the Great Outdoors more, why is the U.S. Forest Service proposing to close roads in our National Forest (Sierra National Forest)? They also propose a ban on vehicles driving more that 10 feet off a main road--how does that promote dispersed camping? That doesn't seem family friendly. I support H.R.5580 by Rep. Devin Nunes' (R-CA) that would require Congressional approval before designating future monuments. The designation of National Monuments impacts ranchers, farmers, miners, etc. by restricting their traditional activities within those areas. I am unable to attend the Davis or Los Angeles Listening Sessions due to prior commitments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Today, many families are losing touch with America's great outdoors. Fields, forests and streams are becoming fragmented by lack of support for conserving these crucial areas. As Ducks Unlimited members, we understand the importance of habitat conservation and have led this charge for decades—and we will continue to do so. Recognizing the influence the outdoors has on our youth and the need for conserving America's natural landscapes, the president and his administration have proposed the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGOI). This initiative is designed to promote the outdoors to youth, advance private-land conservation strategies, and use science-based management practices to restore and protect our lands. I am asking that you take a moment to e-mail the Department of the Interior, which is currently accepting ideas from the public on how and where the AGOI can provide the greatest benefits for Americans and the natural landscapes that support their outdoor lifestyles and livelihoods. Through sound scientific research, DU knows that the future of waterfowl and waterfowl hunting depend on more aggressive conservation of the Prairie Pothole Region, also known as the "Duck Factory." Encouraging the AGOI to designate the Prairie Pothole Region as a "Treasured Landscape" will help secure the future of waterfowl populations throughout North America.

WHO WANTS OR NEEDS 'EM! OPEN YOUR EYES! WHEN YOUR DRIVING DOWN COUNTRY ROADS, U.S.A., THEY ARE THE LAST VESTIGE OF THE WILDERNESS IN THE COUNTRY. THEY PROVIDE FILTERING MECHANISMS THAT CLEAN THE WATER THAT PROVIDES WATER FOR THE MILLIONS OF HOMES SURROUNDING THEM. FURTHER MORE THEY ARE THE NEST PROVIDERS FOR ALL OF THE U.S. WATERFOWL. THE PROCEEDS OF WATERFOWL LICENSES, GUNS, AMMO, CLOTHING, MOTELS, HOTELS, TRANSPORTATION, AND OTHER PERIPHERALS REACHES INTO THE MULTI-BILLIONS. AND THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL! IT BEHOOVES THE PRESENT POPULATION TO DO THEIR UTMOST TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THEM. THANK YOU.

Agency, The problem is not the duck factory at all as stated by the Ducks Unlimited organization. The Ducks migrate south from these areas where they have food, water, and protection against the predators. Once the young ducks are hatched and fly south with their family group they go to places like the Sacramento valley, and the deltas to pair up for the return flight to the so called duck factories. There is a large natural lake left after the ice age call "Salton Sea" that is being deliberately being drained to place a highway on the north end that has been taken over by an Indian tribe that will completely destroy the habitat. Also, there is a Wild Life Refuge on the east side of the Salton Sea that is "The Wister Unit" that could use more help that the ducks unlimited organization has neglected for some time now. The harvesting has not been very successful due to lack of interest of the low number of birds that have been showing up there since the "Sea" started being destroyed, and neglected. The global shifting for several years now has made the migration of Ducks and Geese later in the season and also should be changed by at least 6 weeks for waterfowl. I hope you honestly hear my voice as I am a hunter and not a politician with the interest of the future of these Gods creatures.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hi I will say I have never hunted the Central Flyway and probably never have the chance, BUT, I have read many articles over the years and I do understand that the small lakes and ponds which make up the "Prairie Potholes", are of almost immeasurable value to the waterfowl populations of the central flyway. They do need protection, they must be protected for the "health" of the many species of birds and animals which depend on them.

I am 59 years old and have been lucky enough to live in South Dakota pretty much my whole life. My Dad started me hunting with him when I was just a youngster and have loved it ever since. I really enjoy the outdoors and have taken countless numbers of people and introduced them to hunting and the outdoor experience in South Dakota. I would like to make a recommendation on the management of our farm ground in the Midwest. I think we have to start thinking out of the box to get the agricultural programs to coincide with the wildlife programs so we can start having a win win for everyone especially the game that lives on the land. The last seventeen years have been extremely wet in northeastern SD and we have lived up to our nick name of being the Pot Hole Region. The cattails and slough grass is growing wild in all the low lying areas along with the CRP acres that have covered a lot of the marginal farm land and the wildlife have done very well with all the new found habitat to live in. The CRP program started going out three or four years ago as the commodity prices went up and the fixed payment on the CRP acres stayed the same and land owners started taking their land out of the program and put it back into production. Now all of a sudden there is money available to put these acres back into grass and some farmers are taking advantage of it. This is great news for the sportsman and the wildlife that lives on the land. The PP (preventive plant program) is another one that could really benefit wildlife if the rules were changed just a little. When these acres are too wet to be planted in the spring these little bodies of water turn into great nesting areas for pheasant and ducks as well as homes for the deer in the area. By late summer these areas start to dry up and here comes the disc and these areas are gone and can't be used by wildlife for food and shelter for the coming winter. We have to start working together to maximize our assets so we can get the most benefits out of the land for the farmers as well as the sportsman and the wildlife. Thanks,

I am 80 years old and since I can remember have enjoyed nature and waterfowl with or without a gun. So my Grandchildren and son can have the same opportunity, I encourage you to designate the Prairie Pothole Region as a "Treasured Landscape".

To whom it may concern: As a farmer in Minnesota, I support making the prairie pothole region of MN, SD, ND a "treasured landscape". Having farmed for many years, I know it is hard to bring off a crop in poor soil. Most of these soils are dry and of poorer quality than the top producing areas and are best left as prairie or grazing land.

To Director of Interior My wife and I think that the greatest thing we can do for our grandchildren and their grandchildren is to help the wildlife, like birds, ducks, turkey, deer, elk, bear, etc. for the future. In order to do this, we must have save the little Habitat we have left. Please have the AGOI provide Habitat and the Prairie Pothole Regions in the USA is a great area to save.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Prairie Pothole Region is found in the northern Great Plains of North America. The region consists of grass-covered wetland habitats covered with few-to-many shallow depressions called either potholes or sloughs, and they were made 10,000 years ago as glaciers retreated. Prairie potholes are usually filled with water and are included in many habitat restoration projects. If we forget to protect the habitat of this region it would be like us letting Lake Superior dissolve and wither away; that also was a glacier that retreated. For the love of the animals & land . . . "Save the P.P. Region"! Appreciate all your time & efforts in the conservation today for tomorrows habitat. We only get one earth plant on her well. Thank you kindly.

Take action today for the PPR!

Save the Missouri Coteau and the Prairie Pothole areas. The Duck Factory of America. Saving the Great Lakes would be beneficial to our future, as well as the Mountains from strip mining and mountaintop removal. Too bad we can't save our whole planet from ourselves.

Please keep our nation strong with keeping the natural landscape that is irreplaceable for habitat that makes this a place for nature and man to exist in harmony.

Please help preserve this region for my grandkids and all future generations of thiers. thank you!

Please give the North American Prairie Pothole Region a HIGH PRIORITY for preservation of a unique habitat for Migratory Wildlife.

Please don't let our country destroy any more duck habitat. We are trashing this country. Thanks

Man will destroy all land for wildlife unless they set aside needed land for wildlife Wake up America....

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm writing you to ask you for your help in protecting and preserving what is left of our native Prairie landscape. I'm 65 yrs old and have been an active and avid outdoorsman and conservationist for well over 40 yrs, since I made my 1st excursion to the Prairies after I graduated college in 1968. I have visited the Prairies annually since then and have seen 1st hand the destruction and loss of so many thousands of acres of native grasslands and wetlands. We have so little precious left! Help me....help all of us who place such a high value on the importance of this landscape. Thank you so much!

Ladies and Gentlemen, Please add my name to that of fellow conservationists endorsing the designation of the Prairie Pothole Region as a "Treasured Landscape". As I watch my Louisiana coast disappear and degrade as a result of hurricanes and the recent oil spill, I feel the need, not only to save the "Coast" but all of the treasured landscapes which comprise our national heritage. Count me as a supporter of anything which will benefit the preservation of the prairie pothole region.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

IN MY OWN WORDS, PRAIRIES AND POTHOLES, WHO WANTS OR NEEDS 'EM! OPEN YOUR EYES! WHEN YOUR DRIVING DOWN COUNTRY ROADS, U.S.A., THEY ARE THE LAST VESTIGE OF THE WILDERNESS IN THE COUNTRY. THEY PROVIDE FILTERING MECHANISMS THAT CLEAN THE WATER THAT PROVIDES WATER FOR THE MILLIONS OF HOMES SURROUNDING THEM. FURTHER MORE THEY ARE THE BEST PROVIDERS FOR ALL OF THE U.S. WATERFOWL. THE PROCEEDS OF WATERFOWL LICENSES, GUNS, AMMO, CLOTHING, MOTELS, HOTELS, TRANSPORTATION, AND OTHER PERIPHERALS REACHES INTO THE MULTI-BILLIONS. AND THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL! IT BEHOOVES THE PRESENT POPULATION TO DO THEIR UTMOST TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THEM. THANK YOU.

I will make this short and easy. The Prairie Pothole Region is a very valuable piece of real estate that reproduces endless wildlife for our and other countries. I urge this administration to recognize the Prairie Pothole Region as a "Treasured Landscape". If lost it will never be recovered. Thank you for your kind consideration.

I feel the AGOI needs to focus on land restoration. Original habitats of land and water are critical. Public access to these lands are also crucial.

I am writing as a conservationist first and duck hunter second and am concerned greatly as to what's happening in the Prairie Pothole Region. This area needs preservation status help. When the area is destroyed it can't be brought back. The untold amounts of carbon released for a temporary gain is unacceptable. The harm to waterfowl that has called it home since the melting ice glaciers is a paramount concern. Please protect this region for all the future waterfowlers and conservationists. I thank you.....

I am asking that you do everything possible to save the remaining Pothole region in North and South Dakota. Once this area is lost, it is gone forever. Conserve what we have left before it is too late, as we are losing the battle right now. This should be a treasured landscape to preserve for our future generations. We don't need another bushel of corn or wheat; We need to protect what we have now.

I am a Ducks Unlimited member and believe that the prairie pothole region is one of our most important waterfowl breeding areas and needs to be conserved to the extent that we can.

Our wilderness lands must be protected and preserved, not emptied of the wild species and certainly NOT turned over to development in any way whether it be pipelines crossing the lands or mineral mining rights issued or taking the surface and/or ground waters, or any other kind of destruction that

PUH-LEEEZE, get ORVs under control and off public land. They are devastating national treasures.

I want to see: 1) More land protected as wilderness. 2) Reasonable restrictions on ORVs. They do tremendous damage to the environment

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We must be proactive in protecting and conserving our land oceans and wildlife - we hold it in trust for future generations. We must continue to protect our resources as well as expand the current protections. Recent events have emphasized the disastrous consequences from those who take natural resources with only financial profit as their goal. "Only after the last tree has been cut down Only after the last river has been poisoned Only after the last fish has been caught Only then will you find money cannot be eaten." ~ Cree Prophecy No man owns the earth or the sea or the wildlife. We must be the protectors the caretakers . We must cohabit with them with respect and stand for those things which have no voice. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

National parks refuges forests and public lands represent the heart of America. Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development mineral extraction pollution and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration. There is a tremendous need to do landscape-scale conservation to address critical issues facing ecosystem services wildlife conservation outdoor recreation and clean water. The initiative should include conservation of large connected landscapes to help build resilience. It must also include the protection of large watersheds and wetlands to mitigate the impacts of flood and drought.

Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We need real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land water and wildlife. Your active leadership is crucial to develop this conservation strategy for the 21st century. Our parks refuges national forests and public lands represent the best of America. They are home to our most treasured and historic places. Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development mineral extraction pollution and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration. I must assume that consideration of watershed state will be in your plan along with an interconnectiveness in lands so animals can 'roam' as nature ordained. Again it is SO important to listen to our scientists at this point in time instead of special interest groups. I saw Yellowstone when I was 28 and now at 62 look forward to taking my grandchildren one day. Places like this are my "church" and I want to pass these national heritage places on to future generations in a healthy state. For me a "no-brainer" responsibility. Thank you SO much for making this a priority with your leadership. Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to your reply.

All I have to do to see what lack of planning to protect our environment does is to look around the city of Hermantown with its unplanned unchecked development. It used to be a beautiful little rural area with many wild spaces and now it has ruined supposedly protected streams and buildings on wetlands which result in pollution and runoff. Don't let this happen to lands which can be saved before it is too late.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I encourage you to remove all mining in and around protected public lands. Also encourage reviewing protection of wild mustang horses as the current program is drastically under funded. I would also recommend employing native Americans to take part in protecting and maintaining our public lands and wildlife. We have left native Americans out of the equation for far too long. They are a vital part that has long been missing in our national park and lands policies. Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to your reply.

Buying more land and setting it aside to remain wild and undeveloped will be the greatest legacy you can leave for our country. We need wild lands undeveloped un-landscaped with no roads built so that nature can do what she does best - produce fresh health giving air for all of us to breathe and fresh health giving water for all of us to drink and bathe in. In these wild places creatures who are disappearing from our earth will have a safe place to live with all the gifts of Mother Earth that they were made to receive. Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to your reply. With very best wishes

Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development mineral extraction pollution and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration. Wilderness either is or it isn't. Pristine wilderness areas can never be replaced or restored. Once violated they are gone forever. Our parks refuges national forests and public lands too represent and protect the best of America. They are home to our most treasured and historic places. I am thrilled that you have launched this important process and I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance tools and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality. Thank you.

Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. And of course all this takes dollars albeit dollars well spent compared to waging war in places we do not belong etc. Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to your reply. Love and blessings dearing

Thank you! The America's Great Outdoors Initiative! Thus America is protecting our public lands from: poorly planned development mineral extraction pollution and the impacts of climate change. There has never been a more important time for a comprehensive approach to conserving our treasured landscapes. We need landscape-scale conservation to protect our ecosystem services wildlife conservation outdoor recreation and clean water. And now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change. We must include conservation of large connected landscapes to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and other threats. protection of large watersheds and their wetlands to mitigate the impacts of flood and drought that result from changing weather patterns. PLEASE!!! Make sure this effort has the guidance tools and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There can be no doubt that protecting our wild places should be a priority. We have all heard that what we do to one area of our landscape has direct impact on what happens to other areas and we must be good stewards of what God has given us. The question is how best to protect those areas while still allowing growth in the economy recreation and safety for our wild life that depend on these wild places? I don't have all of the answers but I would hope that your administration would look at the science first and the money last when making decisions about our wild places. Any plan without the direct teaching of our children of how important these wild places are and connecting them physically and emotionally is doomed to failure. Please consider my thoughts as you move forward with the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

We need to not develop land for malls or commercial real estate when there are empty or half empty malls in the same community. We need to keep track of how much land is going to concrete/asphalt and what percentage we want to preserve for food and enjoyment. In Illinois some of the best farmland in the Midwest is now under development. This is poor land management. Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We need real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land water and wildlife. Our parks refuges national forests and public lands represent the best of America. They are home to our most treasured and historic places. Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development mineral extraction pollution and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration. Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to your reply.

One of the most amazing things about our country is our national park system. Please ensure that our national parks are able to continue to provide a safe place for wildlife and humans for the next several years. One way to do this is to fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. That way everyone wins. Another way to do this is to preserve large areas of public lands and waters. This will secure the health of the environment ensure wildlife conservation maintain public access to parks and open spaces reduce the impacts of climate change and protect our cultural heritage. Strengthening the capacity for federal regional state and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife plants and rivers beyond park borders will help too. By improving opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active healthy outdoor activity that will help them lead long healthy lives. That will lead to a healthier happier America. I urge you to support all of these measures as only when they are enacted as a group will they be certain measures toward protecting our national parks.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Without writing a long draw out boaring letter I would like to voice just a few important issues. First I understand that we "all" have to take care of and respect our wildlands/outdoors. There are so many good issues that develope with wildland access including protection to our wildlands. On the other hand there seem to be a few people that harm the wildlands maybe from ignorance or just not caring. I do know that our country was and is here because of our freedoms and lands. We all need to find a happy medium such as permits to go in the wildlands after a class. Another example is to develope more jobs for enforcement toards the individuals not excluding corporations etc.that harm or destroy wildlands. My family including my four year old loves the out doors and I will not and could not amagine life without the wildlands and access. Many Thanks

I am certain we have saved all of the great places already please stop this land grab. I enjoy off road motorcycling on public lands

Dear Mr President and whom it may concern. We the people own our public lands. Please do not put a padlock on our ability to use and enjoy our property. We tend to be better stewerds of our lands than the government. (See numerous times in history when BLM or Dept of Forrestry has allowed clear cutting our land. We simply want to use and enjoy these beautiful areas with our family. And our families family...

Hello I use many open to the public lands to enjoy the outdoors with my family as my parents did with me. I have spent time helping to clean and clear public lands at my own expense and time as well. I will believe that we are all entitled to these areas and should be good stewards of them. To just close them outright serves no purpose that I can see. I belong to various off road and outdorr groups and none of these groups were asked to come to any meeting on this closure. Are you absolutely sure that we are all represented in this? Thank you for your time

I am an avid outdoorsman who loves taking my family camping fishing hiking mountain biking four wheeling in many different settings. I love the forests the deserts the oceans the mountains and so does my family. Please do not close any public land from the use of the public. Please keep the land open to transportation such as ATVs and 4wheel drive vehicles. I am an adopt a trail coordinator at my local OHV area and volunteer many hours a year for work projects and clean up days. Using the land responsibly is sustainable and is a righ of the citizens of the United States. Thank You for your time. Keep public lands open to the public.

I am shocked at the thought that you our President would lock us out of our own land. By an act of Congress all public land belongs to the people. You do not have the right to lock us out!!!

I object to spending ANY tax dollars locking the majority of the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations.

I oppose the closing of public lands on any level especially this over the top level that is being proposed here. As an American tax paying citizen I will do everything in my power to stop this ridiculous proposal.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our Government has no logical reason to take these additional public lands and restrict access to them. Governments job is to protect its citizens not futher restrict its citizens from land WE they own. Government employees do not own this land the people do. The people meaning all the people. Not the liberal/ progressive people that think man is the root of all evil. Yes we must be good to nature at all times however there comes point where government and others become so far beyond reality in the name of saving mommy earth that it's simply not rational or logical. Recreating in the outdoors is good for everyone whether it's hiking or biking or on a offroad vehicle. Do not restrict ORV enthusiasts even more. This will only place more stress on the very limited areas we have left. And we are not going to stop recreating because we have the freedom to do here in America.

Please do not close any more public land for OHV use. There aren't enough trails now.

President Obama As a life long Democrat and member of organized labor and I vote for the person best suited to insure my continued employment. With that said and as you understand better than anyone I'm sure many issues are not just D. or R. so I would like to ask your support to continue to allow me and many others the chance to enjoy the great outdoors in our favorite past time including off-road motorcycling and horse back riding. These activities are my families two favorite past times. We as a family have enjoyed countless hours together as well as spent 10's of thousands of dollars to enjoy our hobbies. The initial Wilderness Act envisioned about 20 million acres as suitable. Today we have over 120 million acres of Wilderness where public access is restricted. The majority of the public have been forced onto smaller and smaller areas outside of Wilderness. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors we do not need more Wilderness areas we need less! Thank you for your consideration.

Public lands belong to the people! Restricting access to public property is just not acceptable. The people who use and enjoy these lands regularly need to be included in any decision making process that will affect their rights to access them.

Public Lands should be Open for Public use. This includes: - Off Road Vehicles (limiting use to existing trails). This is the only way for Seniors and many others to explore our back country areas. - Mountain Biking (limiting use to existing trails). Biking makes it easier to explore larger areas. Do not designate these areas Wilderness Areas or Mounment Areas. Thank you

Which leads to another question: How much is enough? There is no end to those who profess to do good for others. It's an over-reaching of the public trust. Why are decisions made by law suits and not by "vote" of the general public? The law relating to use by the general public is being used like a hammer against the public interest. The law is no longer interested in dispensing justice and serving the public but more interested in preserving process and perogatives of the few. Please do what is right on this issue.

To whom it may concern I demand and expect you to accept public input on any decisions regarding public lands of this size and magnitude.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To Whom It May Concern: Actually I am the one this concerns. PLEASE stop taking away my freedoms my ability to enjoy the great outdoors and most of all my ability to make a living and feed my family. Just because you politicians do not ever have to worry about having an income with your cushy benefit packages and retirements does not mean that the rest of America doesn't. Have you not read the polls about how Americans now distrust politicians more than ever? It is because of your takeover of all of our freedoms and ability to work. Just Stop Now. Thank You

To Whom it may Concern: Stop taking away the peoples land it is not your right only the people of America have that right to choose! Stop making polices that affect the well being of this great county and the right to adventure to the lands that belong to the people not the Senate or House or even the president that think they are helping but more of disrupting the way of life for so many. This is a right for all Americans to choose and vote on. Thank You

We continue to give and you continue to take. It's about time you stop. We generate Millions of dollars a month to our failing economy and you want to cut out more. Shame on you!! STOP THE INSANITY>>

As a tax paying citizen why do I constantly battle the government to access land that belongs to the people? As an adult I take pride in being responsible and do no appreciate the government protecting me from myself. Last time I looked I am a tax paying born and bred USA all the way person. Please do not turn this great country into the Eastern Block that I grew up fearing! Knock off the land grabs. With more and more people the government wants to limit the areas for the public use? How backwards is that line of thinking? Work on birth control and emigration to limit the population size in the USA and we wouldn't be squabbling over land issues. Thank you for your time to review this.

As a veteran who has shed blood in foreign lands for our PUBLIC and our LANDS please do not make laws limiting one from the other.

I am not in favor of more wilderness areas. Please allow the public to use our public lands.

I am very much opposed to any and all closures of public land. It is the Publics right to use the land and it need's to remain open for use of all of the public. We do not subscribe to the Agenda 21 nor do we believe the Federal Government has the capacity to manage anything. I will inform My membership of this issue and I will ask them to contact their Representatives.

I disagree with the lock out of public use of Wilderness land. If you need more clarification on reasoning please feel free to ask.

I live in Wyoming for a reason. The freedom and wideopen space. It is mine. Quit limiting us as Americans. Go tackle a real issue like corrupt politicians. Try managing my money in a more positive way rather than trying to limit my freedom even more.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is wrong to close off places where families can go to get out of the city. If there is no place to take kids to play then they get into trouble. Leave the lands alone.

please do not close off public lands to off road vehicle use. my family and friends go camping together to use these areas to use our off road vehicles and enjoy the beauty of the outdoors as well as our friendship together. there are many many others out doing the same as us. by closing access you would be depriving us of our freedom to our recreation.

Please dont lock us out of our public as most people dont use them I for one use them frequently with my wife and two little girls. There is nothing more thrilling to me than exploring the forest with my family. Thanks for your time

Please keep our land open for our use. We are middle class tax payers and deserve to have some recreation land available for us. Not only are we hard working but we spend our money and don't just keep it bottled up in a trust fund. This creates jobs for people such as mechanics and parts suppliers dealers etc. We are stewards of the land and deserve to use it for recreation. Thank you

please stop big gov. from taking away our liberties. Everyday gov. grows larger and takes more and more of our money and freedoms and than uses that money to close places that we use responsible to recreate. Please do not vote for this expansion of gov.

Please stop closing land my family uses this as a way to be together.

please stop the closure of public land from the public.

Please stop the wilderness bill our children need MORE recreation not less. Wilderness blocks out all sorts of users there are better uses for the land. Be fair to all Americans Thanks

President Obama Please keep our public lands open as they are now. There's plenty of room for all of us to enjoy our separate outdoor activities without significantly taking away from one or another. Thanks for all you do.

Public access should be maintained for all reasons handicapped continued historic uses grazing fuel wood gathering emergency situations and mineral exploration. All lands existing accesses need to be saved there is a big push to close and lock up public access. By allowing historic use to remain will not hurt the environment and new accesses are not allowed with out proper environmental assessments and therefore protect out lands automatically which should be a main concern also. The push to the enviro community is to limit all off road travel and basically locks up this land and no one but the best shape will ever see which should be a crime and a concern to us all as we all are getting older and cannot hike into most of this desolate land. Thanks you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Public land belongs to all of us.

Public lands belong to everyone.

Stop closing and limiting our access to public lands!

Stop taking away public lands from the public. OHV use is a clean family event that is being shut down way too much as it is. Thank you.

Thank you for considering not to close off the public lands.

This is yet another "scheme" to have the federal government own and control land and it's population. Oregon is one of the largest federally owned states in the U.S. And with that ownership comes government control of all aspects of it's use logging recreation other natural resources etc. Talk about "land grabbers". I ride off road and am most responsible and protective of where I ride (along with 99% of the people who do the same) and there is no reason I should be restricted from the use of the land that I pay my hard earned taxes to "manage" (that's a whole other subject) and maintain. Special interest groups such as the Sierra Club deem it their responsibility to try and dictate to me how I live and play by trying to sneak legislation like this past the vast majority of the population. This really smacks of health care reform doesn't it.

this kind of land use is absurd! don't take away our rights as americans to ENJOY AMERICA!

This land is need for economic reasons as well as peace of mind to many families. Please leave the public lands open for public use.

This needs to be stopped. If its Public lands its should be open to the PUBLIC and people of walks. This is just wrong on so many accounts.

we must keep the outdoors open now and for futer generations to come we also must help with the adding of wildlife habit

Why does it always come down to this This is OUR LAND not yours why do we have to keep stopping these special interest groups. I pay taxis and this is ours QUIT IT!!!!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I find it incredible that the grossly expanding and wildly inefficient Federal government is once again planning to spend the funds they get from taxation of free working citizens to buy control over more private land and shut it down to use by these same citizens. The agencies managing our public lands have more than enough problems managing the lands currently under their care. Committing more funds for a government that is trillions of dollars in debt is unacceptable.

These lands need to be managed not hoarded and allowed to sit idle. These are our recreation lands.

To whom it may concern Please keep areas open so that young and old folks can go out and enjoy dirt bike riding-4 wheeling-mountain biking- this will keep young people busy and keep them out of trouble and great exercise for everyone. Please make more places in California for riding as my family has to drive at least 2 hours for recreation they just keep trying to take more and more away from people that enjoy the great outdoors Thanks

I am down with having open space and saving wildlife but as an avid Off Road Vehicle rider I have enjoyed many trips and campouts riding my dirtbike in designated ORV areas in forests national parks and deserts. PLEASE keep these areas open to the population that enjoys these outdoor activities!! Please don't do this! Thank you

I would like to retain the ATV riding areas currently available and not limit access to them as suggested.

If one is not an expert in motorized and mechanized recreation (Decisions are commonly made by humans that have no level of knowledge in the topic matter) Therefore those that do not recreate in a motorized or mechanized means should not be making decisions on a subject they have no interest in participating with. Our local county and city officials including our local state and federal representatives concur and abide by the above statement and always ask any user group "We'd like for you to feel willing and welcome in the "public policy" process to inform us if there may be any unintended consequences for the public or groups that use." Back door deals prove bad leadership. Chair -Recreation Resource Conservation Committee "Because recreation is a resource that deserves to be conserved."

Please do not designate any more public land as Wilderness lands. Leave public land open to the use of the general population of this country.

Please do not restrict me and others from enjoying off road vehicle activities we already don't have enough areas to enjoy we can't afford to lose access to any more. If anything we would like access to more land.

Please keep public lands accessible to the public and stop making it hard for the people of this country to access land. And make more land accessible.

The LAST thing we need is more regulations telling us where we can and cannot go- this country belongs to the people! It is your job to serve us...you seem to have forgotten that!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

HELL NO! NO more taking of PUBLIC land! ENOUGH! NO MAS! BACK OFF! The people have had "more than enough". This society MUST continue It needs content people to continue or it will FAIL just like so many societies before it!. Oh DidI mention NO MORE LAND CLOSURES? If you didn't get the message NO MORE LAND CLOSURES TO THE PUBLIC!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The President needs to stop trying to control all aspects of our society. I am sure that anyone who has paid any attention at all to Mr. Obamas socielest agenda can see that this is another way to control the energy and minerals of our great country. So he can redistribute the wealth. We would all just love to live in a perfect world like you try to get all of your followers to believe that you are trying to achieve and all that you really want is more power. Leave the west alone!

Land use issues are a local issue and should be handled that way. The US Forest Service is the proper way to manage the outdoors and should not be bypassed. More "Wilderness" is not the answer. Better education for future and present will help the ever increasing pressure on or forests more the closing them off for ever! Thank you Rick Cheney

Please save our Amerian recreation for our children and our childrens children. Its is our right as tax payers to have access to public lands for recretional purposes. Thankyou

I would plead with you not to close the public lands. We need more recreation for all of our people. This is our land and should be used by the American people. not shut down by a bunch of wacko enviros

keep our land open for all the public to use.

Where in the Constition does it say the Fed can own anything ? besides the grounds and property of Washington D.C. and military bases..... Don`t over step anymore.... The country belongs to the People and the States not the Fed.....

Please help keep access to public lands open to the public. We all deserve the right to enjoy these public assets.

Regarding closure of American Public and Private Land and Wildlands for recreational use: I am a fifty one year old American born and raised here. I was a Boy Scout in my younger years and as an American growing up in a wholesome family I was taught to respect our environment for today and for the future. I ride motorcycles on and off road. I hike and mountain bike on trails. I boat on waterways. I do all this in a responsible manner. This is one of my American Freedoms I cherish. Taking away and/or limiting public private and wild lands for this type of use is something I am completely against. If revenue and preservation are necessary then I propose the Government fine force to rebuild and/or repair and/or punish with monetary consequences the ones who abuse and violate responsible use of our nations wilderness public and private lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please don't close any MORE public land in Nevada. We have such few nice places now. The most beautiful places to live are desolate and owned by the BLM. We need the BLM to release more land to the public. Thx

This initiative is a travesty. Closing public land to the public stands counter to everything this great country is about. It's the stuff of dictators and kings. It's not surprising considering the current administration but this has been going on since long before the current president ever took office. Closing public land is akin to just taking it. Without access for all it may as well be on Mars. I get so tired of a well funded and vocal minority infringing on the rights of the public at large. It's time to stop. Fences should border only private property not public. If the Sierra Club and groups like them want to close off land they should have to buy it through public offering. They are as greedy and underhanded as any special interest group you can name Thank you for reading this and I hope it can actually do some good for the public rights.

To Whoever Is In Charge The public lands should remain open to the public not closed off with no public access. They belong to the American people. The government is only supposed to take care of them not own them or deny access for tax-paying American citizens.

As a citizen of the United States of America I neither need nor want government permission to utilize my birthright of access to public lands.....Government attempts to lock out lock up and otherwise eliminate personal useage of this public acreage is an abomination and a crime.....Those making the decisions to do this neither use nor appreciate the heratige passed down by our ancestors. All the government is actually doing is creating criminals out of citizens.....a good portion of the nation that is real is going to tell the administrators of this theft of rights to pound sand.....

Please do not close public lands and access to parts of this great country of ours. We should be free to enjoy this great nation as long as we respect it and practice tread lightly. Please remember the line "this land was made for you and me".

SAVE THE TRAILS

Our leaders need to include the two largest forms of recreation as a priority in this plan to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. That would be Off Highway Vehicle recreation and Mountain Biking. Both of which our family friends and neighbors are involved in. Just by taking the sample of residents in our neighborhood who participate in these activities it would seem that a large number of our population enjoys these 2 sources of family recreation. I object to the spending my tax dollars locking the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations for a select minority many of which do not even frequent the "wilderness".

THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO REMEMBER ITS OUR LAND AND THEY WORK FOR US. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BETTER BE CAREFULL OR THERE MAY BE ANOTHER REVOLUTION.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

this is all God's land please share accordingly and how our founding fathers envisioned.

I am writing to voice my opinion on these wildlands closures. Please refrain from closing more public lands. Me and my family have been using these lands for over 28 years. We spend 4 days a week riding motorcycles and driving jeeps around the Owyhee front in Idaho do not want to see our rights to these lands infringed upon. So please hear us loud and clear. Public lands need to remain public!

HELLO VERY SIMPLE STOP CLOSING DOWN THE LANDS ITS NOT THE ANSWER.

Public land should be kept open to ALL AMERICANS.

The President needs to include the largest forms of recreation as a priority in his plan to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. That would be Off Highway Vehicle recreation . More areas need to be opened to people who enjoy the most popular way to enjoy the outdoors.

I like the old motto of the US Forest Service "Land of Many Uses" Wilderness is simply KEEP OUT You are not welcome NO MORE WILDERNESS !!!! A wilderness STOPS access at its border. All roads and many trails are closed. Only a few are allowed to hike or horse in an area. We need MORE not less accessible recreation areas for our growing and aging population. So make lands available for the us to use. Currently the US Forest Service and BLM control Public Lands. They practice conservation "wise use". Both services evaluate and manage: access recreation forest thinning etc. Keep our Public Lands open for more than just a few.

I think these wise use people are no better than Tony Hayward who would risk the health of the environment and future of all people for one moment to destroy God's beauty by recklessly driving their motorcycles wherever they please. Please close all public lands to noisy polluting erosion causing vehicles. Thank you.

Please Keep the trails and public lands open the hunting and off road activities thank you

please keep out off road roadways open

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Secretary Salazar: Please help protect the freedoms of the citizens of the United States by allowing the continued access of existing public OHV areas. There are countless tax paying citizens and families who enjoy these areas and we would like you to help us maintain these rights. There are fewer and fewer opportunities for citizens to participate in many forms of recreational activities because of land closures. I completely understand that there are areas that OHV vehicles should not be allowed. We have many examples of that today and I am not asking for any new areas to be opened. On the contrary I support the areas that are already closed as they should be protected. However I would greatly appreciate your support in keeping the existing riding areas and trails that exist today open to the public. Please Stop the Closure of Public Lands and the Wildlands Project.

I attended the meeting at Franklin High School in Seattle on July 1. It was very interesting to listen to the comments and views from the people present in our group many of whom were leaders of the various organizations they represented. Although I am an ordinary member of some of those organizations I myself do not have any especially profound advice to give. However I would like to make one point which perhaps could be put in most of the categories suggested for comments: what works; the role of the federal government; tools I would like to point out the times that I have seen work done by the WPA (or whatever similar program) during the depression. Impressive buildings like Timberline Lodge on Mount Hood in Oregon. Or the amazing dioramas of ancient life at Mesa Verde in Colorado. I know that our national parks and trails and other units which make up our great outdoors have serious backlogs of funding and I would certainly support funding increases so that what should be done can be done. But the work that I have mentioned that was done by the WPA shows that we need to raise our sights. It is not just a matter of repairing roads and bridges or building accommodation units or whatever else funding is needed for as important as these things are. We should also be doing the extra amazing things that Americans are capable of doing following the lead of the WPA. Especially at this time when so many people are out of work (as at that time) let us find creative talent and people with the skills to bring exciting developments to our great outdoors. I am not an economist but my own inclinations are very much in favor of giving people work now when they need it.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To all parties involved in decision making processes concerning AOI and any other legislation potentially tied to it. This initiative is partly motivated by a need to enhance recreational opportunities on public lands. But increased recreation opportunities will not flow from a whisk of a pen in Washington D.C. Any successful recreation management policy must be accompanied by adequate budget staffing and above all management's priority to achieve critical on-the-ground goals. Federal agencies' allocation of budget staff and management effort should reflect the developing reality that outdoor recreation provides a greater good for more Americans than any other aspect of its multiple-use mandate. The time has come to make managed recreation the BLM and Forest Service's top priority. Prioritize all efforts on clearing the repair/maintenance/improvement backlog in the National Park Service before designating any new National Parks or other similar protective area designations. (The National Park Service alone estimates that it would need an extra \$9.5 billion to clear a backlog of repairs and improvements.) All too often "conservation" means reducing public access and recreational uses. The AGO Initiative should explore ways to enhance a diverse range of recreational uses including motorized and non-motorized recreational uses across federal state and private lands. Federal land managers too often limit or restrict public recreation activities. Federal land managers should focus on recreation friendly management plans that are not restrictive and embrace a wide range of diverse recreational uses including motorized and non-motorized recreation. The administration has prided itself in being open and transparent yet Representative Rob Bishop and Representative Doc Hastings have not yet received a response to their requests for documents. It will benefit the outreach function of this Initiative if the Department of the Interior would respond to H. Res. 1406. The new National Park Service management policy emphasis is on preservation of our National Parks. This limits land managers' options insofar as what recreation opportunities a Park may provide. The initiative should study a supplement to National Park management guidelines to emphasize providing a wide range of recreational uses for the visiting public. Similar supplemental guidance may be appropriate for the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The initiative and the public will benefit from a full understanding of the various public and private conservation efforts currently underway. Accurate information is critical for good decision making. Statements that state large areas of our nation's natural landscape have been lost to population growth and development or that a changing climate and new sources of pollution are affecting wildlife and watersheds must be put into an accurate context. The initiative must disclose how much land is being conserved. The initiative should work with the over 1600 privately run land trusts to find out how much land has been protected in recent years. The initiative should disclose how much land is conserved via federal conservation efforts such as the Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program. In addition it would help to disclose how much federal dollars are being spent on the various conservation efforts. Finally the initiative should disclose the conservation efforts underway via the Land and Resource Management Plans of units of the National Forest System the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service. Millions of American families enjoy motorized recreation. It often forms a bond between parents and their children as they experience the great outdoors together. The OHV community supports conservation efforts including support of the "travel limited to designated roads trails and areas" paradigm as outlined in the Forest Service travel management regulations and BLM's planning directives. The OHV

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

community also supports conservation through environmental review and analysis in route designation processes as well as ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the OHV infrastructure. The OHV community supports conservation efforts by contributing substantial funds to implement OHV management and volunteers tens of thousands of man hours in volunteer work projects. Much of this funding is made available to federal land managers via state OHV programs. These programs exist today because years ago motorized recreationists voluntarily "taxed ourselves" via state OHV registration programs. Some of these funds are used to supplement the agencies' law enforcement efforts. ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness. OHVs provide access to the Great Outdoors for Americans of all ages shapes and sizes. Thank you for your wise consideration on all the aspects of managing our public lands.

To whom it may concern Please keep areas open so that young and old folks can go out and enjoy dirt bike riding-4 wheeling-mountiain biking- this will keep young people busy and keep them out of trouble and great exercise for everyone. Please make more places in California for riding as my family has to drive at least 2 hours for recreation they just keep trying to take more and more away from people that enjoy the great outdoors Thanks

We must not allow the chance of more Three Mile Islands more mountaintop removal and pollution of pristine Appalachian streams more Gulf of Mexico wildlife holocausts to take place on our watch. That means enacting STRONG policies that real Democrats can support with pride -- no more letting single Republican senators in the name of bipartisanship take the teeth out of legislation necessary to protect our planet as they took the public option out of healthcare as they're taking the teeth out of necessary banking oversight legislation as they do to every kind of progressive legislation which the Republican negotiators routinely go on to vote against and Democrats like me are unhappy with the half-assed protections our citizens and planet are left with. Play hardball with the Ben Nelsons and Blanche Lincolns and work harder to get good legislation not just any old legislation. The people know the difference. So do the dolphins in the Gulf. Thank you for considering my comments.

Heal the bay. Clean the ocean. Stop people from throwing trash into the ocean. Support Heal The Bay in Santa Monica. PLEASE!

The San Gabriel Mountains provide open space and beauty to practically all of California. They must be protected for the benefit of all of us. We need to recognize the importance of wilderness for learning recreation and the preservation of humankind. Therefore it will be important to continue to study these areas and to pass on what is known to our communities young and old. Our future is irrevocably tied to the future of the wilderness areas so I urge you to do everything possible to expand these areas and to make them available for recreation--in every sense--for everyone. Thank you for your attention.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

What you need to do is to make the parks and wild lands we have left more profitable. You need to raise all the fees for the purchase of our national resources to 1940 standards (at least you can say you gave something to the huge conglomerates!). As for our shoreline make sure a fund is available for oil and other calamities is available for immediate disbursement - to put it simply you need to take this opportunity to make corporations understand that it is not just the never ending "corner cutting" to make the bonus check larger and take this profit and allow the government to do the job that the people as but the opposition party claims is big government. The people cannot have it both ways they cannot cry for the government's help; then call for less of it. Besides it was not the current political party that made this mess; yet I understand I guess why they do not want to "speak up" since their pockets are as "unclean" as the party claiming how much deficit the current power brokers are racking up.

As a California resident since 1971 I greatly appreciate our natural heritage. It is critical to our identity and it is under severe threat from development and other adverse impacts. In order to preserve what is left please include these priorities in the America's Great Outdoors initiative: (1) Protect wilderness and scenic rivers in the San Gabriel Mountains; the California Desert; and many other regions. (2) Work to conserve these areas on a large eco-system basis. For example please protect Berryessa-Snow Mountain. (3) Restore and improve watersheds and wildlife ecosystems which are under great threat from global warming. Specifically please restore the northern forests in the Sierra and the Klamath or the San Gabriel Mountains in Southern California. (4) Ensure full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Thank you.

California is a beautiful place. Please help preserve it for future generations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our public lands belong to all Americans and not just to the members of The Wilderness Society. I was a Professional Forester for 58 years now I am retired. I provided the Public with clean supplies of drinking water healthy air and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. I protected the forests from Insects Disease and Fire. And most of all I provided the Public with management that not only reduced Insects Disease and Fire that endangered the Forest Trees I created an Economy that maintained and built improvements for use by the Public. Unmanaged Forests cause not only Dead & Dying Trees but Dead & Dying Trees produce Carbon Dioxide. Managed Forest not only create a healthier climate but create values that create jobs that create an Economy that pays for the care and protection of Forests. Harvesting Dead & Dying Trees by Helicopter during the Winter can make the Forests more healthy but can produce this situation where there the Forests are profitable and create an economy that will produce jobs and profitable budgets. Why are Foresters prevented from practicing the Science of Forestry? I see stumps and downed trees in and about Camp Grounds and Recreational Areas. Why is their value being wasted? There is no evidence that supervised tree removal (Forest Management) causes significant Erosion increases the starting of Fires or destroys Forests. Our region hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty but these lands close to large population centers cannot be classified as wildness due to the presence of human beings. Investing in Forest Management in our region will permanently protect a large and varied natural landscape create economic opportunities for neighboring communities conserve the region's biodiversity and recover its wild species through habitat conservation and restoration. I urge you to implement the following priorities for my region: Conservation means proper use of the values of Forest Products. Proper Use or Conservation at a Large Scale of Large natural areas such as the Berryessa Snow Mountain region provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. Protect our Wildlands: Wild places are some of our healthiest and most intact lands if Forest Science is used to manage it. Wilderness Areas were created by Foresters due to their lack of access. Permanently protecting the Berryessa Snow Mountain region and defending against threats to our wildest places should be the highest priority as the administration looks to leave a legacy of protected places for the public to enjoy. National Forests create such areas while Parks and areas where Forest Management are not practiced create lost revenue. Create Economic Opportunities: Protected public lands can provide economic benefits to their surrounding communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding forest industries creating Forest Management in forested regions will thereby increase demand for food and lodging services and increase property values by protecting the area's natural amenities. Improving Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat: By investing in Forest Management of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region we will create jobs that are built around proper stewardship of our natural areas. This restoration will enhance wildlife habitat preserve critical water supplies and connect people to the land. Connect people with Nature: The Berryessa Snow Mountain region provides countless opportunities for connecting the communities of the Bay Area and the Central Valley with nature. Existing outreach programs for families and children will only be enhanced by permanent protection of this natural playground where recreation and outdoor education opportunities abound. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our public lands belong to all Americans and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water healthy air and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. Our region hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Investing in our region will permanently protect a large and varied natural landscape create economic opportunities for neighboring communities conserve the region's biodiversity and recover its wild species through habitat conservation and restoration. I urge you to implement the following priorities for my region:

Protect the proposed Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area: Located less than 100 miles from the Bay area and Sacramento the region stretching from Lake Berryessa to Snow Mountain is our outdoor wonderland. It gives us clean drinking water spectacular views and places to hike kayak and more. Local people have come together to support designating the Berryessa Snow Mountain region as a National Conservation Area so future generations can enjoy this natural treasure. The administration should protect this treasured area and other unique landscapes for future generations.

Conservation at a Large Scale: Large natural areas such as the Berryessa Snow Mountain region provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.

Create Economic Opportunities: Protected public lands can provide economic benefits to their surrounding communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding tourism-related industries boosting ecotourism in their region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services and increase property values by protecting the area's natural amenities.

Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat by investing in restoration of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region. This will create jobs that are built around proper stewardship of our natural areas. Thank you for considering my comments.

Please protect key landscapes on a large scale -- for the land for the people. And stop the US Forestry from spray Carbaryl to kill pine bark beetles. The beetles are part of the natural progression of a forest life. Carbaryl is a potential endocrine disruptor and is being found in water supplies across the state. Children are being subjected to this harmful chemical against their will. Stop the spraying of Carbaryl on ALL U.S. Forestry lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Public lands belong to all Americans providing us with supplies of clean drinking water healthy air and the experiencing of wildlife free-flowing waters and the earth. Investing in our region will permanently protect a large and varied natural landscape create economic opportunities for neighboring communities conserve the region's biodiversity and recover its wild species through habitat conservation and restoration. I urge you to implement the following for my region: Protect the proposed Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area which is less than 100 miles from the Bay area and Sacramento; it extends from Lake Berryessa to Snow Mountain and is one of our outdoor wonderlands. It gives us clean drinking water spectacular views and places to hike kayak and more. People in this area are coming together to support the designation of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region as a National Conservation Area. It is truly a natural treasure that should be protected for its water supply and for the enjoyment it brings to those who want to explore it now and by future generations. Conservation at a Large Scale: Large natural areas such as the Berryessa Snow Mountain region provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and protection from climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. Permanently protecting wildlands such as those in the Berryessa Snow Mountain region should be a priority and looked upon as an important legacy of this administration. Protected public lands can provide economic benefits to surrounding communities diversifying these economies by expanding tourism-related industries boosting ecotourism in the region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services. Investing in restoration of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region we will create jobs that are built around proper stewardship of our natural areas. This restoration will enhance wildlife habitat preserve critical water supplies and connect people to the land. The importance of reconnecting or staying connected with nature cannot be overstated. The Berryessa Snow Mountain region provides countless opportunities for connecting the communities of the Bay Area and the Central Valley with nature. Existing outreach programs for families and children will only be enhanced by permanent protection of this natural playground where recreation and outdoor education opportunities abound. Thank you all. May God bless you all as you consider all the comments you receive about the future of conservation and may you make the most ethical and considerate of decisions.

Stop the privatization of our lands our military and our government!

Bravo for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. But you have to implement an integrated national strategy to protect our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive. I am thrilled that you have launched this important process and I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance tools and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality. Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to your reply.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Oh how we need the America's Great Outdoors Initiative and Your active leadership to developing this conservation strategy for the 21st century. Our parks refuges national forests and public lands represent belong to us -- the people. Protecting them from poorly planned development mineral extraction pollution and the impacts of climate change should be a TOP priority for the Obama Administration. We need: landscape-scale conservation wildlife conservation outdoor recreation clean water impacts of global changes outlined/acted upon by a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places. We must cherish and protect these legacies for future generations. Please help to insure this effort has the guidance tools and resources necessary to make the initiative's goals a reality.

On a recent visit to the U.S. I was pleasantly surprised by the wealth of flora and fauna that I saw on my travels. I hope that this movement to the Obama administration will keep the natural beauty of America preserved for future generations to enjoy. Thank you.

Please do all you can to help protect our great outdoors!

There has never been a more important time for a comprehensive approach to conserving our treasured landscapes. There is a tremendous need to do landscape-scale conservation to address critical issues facing ecosystem services wildlife conservation outdoor recreation and clean water. In addition now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change. To assist fish wildlife natural resources and human communities in adapting to climate change this initiative must include the conservation of large connected landscapes to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and other threats. It must also include the protection of large watersheds and their wetlands to mitigate the impacts of flood and drought that result from changing weather patterns. Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development mineral extraction pollution and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As you gather comments on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative please keep in mind that our parks national forests and public lands are the last key places for a diversity of plant and wildlife species to thrive. Because these are the very aspects that make these lands so inviting I hope you will seriously consider the following in your planning: - the uses allowed should steward these resources and not be allowed to despoil them. Specifically the use of all terrain vehicles of any kind should be carefully analyzed and only allowed in very specified areas that can be adequately enforced. - uses should enhance or at least sustain the environmental services (preventing soil erosion viable habitat preventing water and air pollution inappropriate mineral extraction) these special places provide us without charge. - innovation will be required. This may require changing to some degree the way we have been doing things i.e. continuing to provide endless opportunities for us at the expense of other species and resources. - more than ever we need to steward these places due to the impacts of climate change - your active leadership is crucial to develop this conservation strategy for the 21st century. - this initiative must include the conservation of large connected landscapes to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and other threats. It must also include the protection of large watersheds and their wetlands to mitigate the impacts of flood and drought that result from changing weather patterns. - if we take pride in our treasured landscapes we must all learn to bond with these landscapes and help our youth to do likewise. Thank you for launching this important process and I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance tools and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality.

I am privileged to live simply in a cabin on a wild Texas river. The river gives us food and water. The trees and plants cleanse the air we breathe and offer us food and medicine which we share with other animals. India China Russia all are racing to exploit and devour every square inch of their land. For generations we have replaced the great North American Continent with concreted cities that are now failing and overuse of agriculture. This is a time of global transition. It is time to pull back change our lifestyles of meaningless overconsumption and work towards a new economy based on new principles rather than trying to revive an obsolete and destructive system in complete disconnect with nature. Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We need real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land water and wildlife. Our parks refuges national forests and public lands represent the best of America. Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development mineral extraction pollution and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration. This initiative must include the conservation of large connected land tracts and the protection of large watersheds and their wetlands. Thank you for making an effort to change our national and human priorities. We will stand by you. The environment is the opposition's weakest point and the economy only an excuse for greed. If all else fails in this increasingly endangered world we will still have our priceless land and water and therefore life. Oil rights may be privately owned but not water rights.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I greatly appreciate that you have launched the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We definitely need new ideas and dedicated resources to protect our land water and wildlife. Your active leadership is crucial to develop this conservation strategy for the 21st century. Our parks refuges national forests and public lands are such an important part of our country (and to me personally as well -I have made a number of memorable trips to various parks with my son)-- they are truly national treasures and critical to the environmental health of the country. We must protect our public lands from poorly planned development mineral extraction pollution and the impacts of climate change --and I hope this will be a priority for the Obama Administration. This is a critical time for a comprehensive approach to conserving our landscapes that includes landscape-scale conservation that protects ecosystem services wildlife outdoor recreation and clean water. To address the impacts of global warming on fish wildlife natural resources and human communities this initiative must include the conservation of large connected landscapes to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and other threats. It must also include the protection of large watersheds and their wetlands to mitigate the impacts of flood and drought that result from changing weather patterns. We have a responsibility to the next generations - to leave them the beauties of our country in tact and healthy. Climate change pollution and poorly planned development have stressed our wildlife our waters and our lands and we must act now to conserve the ecosystems and wonderfully diverse wildlife they support. I commend you for launching this important effort and urge you to make sure it has the leadership tools and resources necessary to realize the initiative's goals. Thank you for considering my comments on this issue that is very important to me.

Please help protect the nature among other aspects the wildlife of the United States. Please try to ensure that hunting seasons for example aren't made too long and that there will be some sort of system in place so that the animals which have been shot and are being brought out of their habitat are not of an endangered species or other animal on which hunting is prohibited. Besides the hunting I believe the use of pesticides must be kept to a minimum. Poisonous substances found inside of pesticides can be fatal to the health of wildlife. As for the beautiful landscapes found throughout the country please try to limit actions involving destruction of certain parts of nature. I for one don't believe forests for instance need to be destroyed to put up say a shopping mall. The joy brought by the forest is in my opinion worth much more than that brought by such a mall. This was just an example I understand that there are more instances where nature is demolished for purposes supposed to help humans get more money. Once again please try to limit such instances if it is within your power to do so. I thank you dearly for your time and for your previously successful efforts to help some of the world's wildlife.

Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. I want the government to outlaw the slaughter of wovles and other mammals on public lands. We have wisely afforded protection to marine mammals. It is time to enact similar legislation on behalf of mammals on public lands. Predators such as wolves are good for the environment and help retain ecological balance. You all need to stand up to the ranching and cattle interests and tell them their insistence on killing these fine mammals is wrong and must stop. Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to your reply.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Please please protect the animals and help our wonderful planet. Thank you.

Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. This is a crucial time to conserve what's left of our treasured landscapes. We must do everything possible to be sure that our goals become reality. Thank you.

As a fellow Coloradoan I appreciate your efforts and hope you continue to support our clean watersheds and common interests.

I also thank you for your efforts and dedication to the preservation of our natural resources. Take care.

I am a TU leader and avid outdoors woman. Hunting and fishing are a way of life for me and my family here in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Conservation is also a part of our daily lives and core beliefs. I truly believe our country needs to get kids outdoors...the research supporting this is there for various reasons but no research or book can explain this heritage and connection to the land that provides so much of to us.

I am very excited about the prospects of the impact this program can have on our natural resources and the future of the outdoors for generations to come. Please pursue these suggestions and work with great organizations like TU to make these a reality.

Research and develop methods to extract clean hydro-electric power without degrading the environment and destroying aquatic life that is necessary to maintaining a robust wild fishery. We can not nor should we depend only on wind and solar energy collectors as the pathway to a carbonless future. There are dams that support cold water fisheries (trout) that do not affect natural spawning areas. The Northfork and Red Rivers in Arkansas are such such examples. There are many places around the world that employ fish ladders at dam locations that allow spawning to take place naturally.

Asking you to protect our wild life and wild places is an exercise in futility you need to resign and get somebody in there who cares.

It would also be a benefit to our nations watersheds if the Dept. of the Interior Fish and Wildlife would take over management of our rivers. In Michigan the oversight of game farms was taken over by the DNRE from the Agriculture Dept. This was done to better control the spread of disease. Ag Dept. oversight was not working. Our nations fresh water resources need to be managed as resources not as commodities. There is more to management of these resources than paving roads parking lots and the construction of toilets.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing as a member of Trout Unlimited (TU) to share what our North Bay (San Francisco Bay) Chapter has been doing to promote this cause for the past 7 years. Following a conservation speaker at one of our meetings 7 years ago several of us were in discussion when someone observed "We all have gray hair! Where's our next generation of conservationists and environmentally concerned citizens going to be coming from?" After brainstorming this question for a bit and mindful of the fact that fly fishermen are generally excellent stewards of the environment we decided we'd better start teaching young people how to fly fish and "hook" them with an interest in nature. That first year we oriented 28 youth (ages 8-18) in all the aspects of fly fishing; casting knots and rigging reading the waters and entomology knots etc. This past year we had grown to 124 participants and now include the parents or guardians who learn FF skills so that they can coach and support their young people. In short we've been doing OUR job in helping young people get outdoors but we'd certainly appreciate some support from AGO.

I am writing to offer support for community-based strategies and activities that can help make America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative a success. I am a Life member of Trout Unlimited (TU). In addition I am a Life Member of the North American Fishing Club a member of the Federation of Fly Fishers Secretary of the Board of Directors of Potomac Riverkeeper and a member of two watershed organizations in West Virginia where my wife and I have a second home. For the latter two organizations I am heavily involved in stream monitoring as a WV-certified monitor and various other activities related to conserving protecting and restoring the two watersheds. My experience has shown me that a community-based approach involving working partnerships with appropriate local regional and national organizations is a viable way to connect people with the outdoors and conservation efforts. I am pleased to see this theme echoed in the President's memo on the AGO Initiative. Unhealthy streams and rivers cannot support healthy populations of fish and wildlife or provide clean water for drinking and recreation. Thus it is essential that we not only sustain today's conservation gains but also work towards further gains. I believe that this can be done by engaging the next generation of environmental stewards through educational programs and outdoor activities. Each of the organizations that I mention above are involved in such efforts in various ways. Working together we can develop a strategy that achieves the goals of the AGO Initiative. Building on the projects and programs of Trout Unlimited and the other organizations will help implement I thank you for your efforts and look forward to working with you as it develops.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You have got to be kidding!?! I am writing as a member of Trout Unlimited (TU) to protest your plan to implement the "America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative". We do not need the federal government to spend any additional non-existent dollars on these proposals. The country is broke and as responsible citizens we continue to gladly rely on private donations rather than see irresponsible fiscal themes echoed in the President's memo on the AGO Initiative. It is essential that we sustain today's conservation gains by engaging the next generation of environmental stewards to voluntarily contribute to our educational programs and outdoor activities and additionally discourage them from becoming increasingly dependent on big government. We will pledge our own funds to preserve our own selfish interests thank you. As conservatives we privately engage the next generation of environmental stewards and sustain our conservation legacy. For example TU has worked to educate students about water quality and freshwater ecology. Building on the projects and programs mentioned above will help us to privately implement our activities. Please use any available federal funds should they ever become available to serve the truly poor thank you. It would be a travesty to waste money to directly support the lifestyles of the well-heeled members of Trout Unlimited.

It is not enough to protect individual blocks of habitat; we must reconnect them to surrounding areas. For example, dam removal on the Penobscot River in Maine will reconnect hundreds of miles of habitat. Where habitat is impaired, such as the Driftless area of Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin, we must restore it. For example, TU works with programs like Cooperative Watershed Restoration, National Fish Habitat Action Plan and the Farm Bill to improve in-stream and riparian habitats.

Now, if you could also stop the senseless slaughter of the Alaskan wolves and the aerial hunts that are decimating their populations, THAT would be wonderful.

In view of the record number of months we have exceeded previous heat indices this initiative goes towards preserving open land and helping to restore nature's balance and combat global warming.

Vote to protect our natural lands.

It is time that the government do more than patchwork protection. An overall plan that addresses all the concerns of the entire ecosystem is overdue. Please, help protect the habitat and the plants and animals that depend upon a stable environment. I applaud your efforts.

Some areas should be simply closed to all non-native species intrusion. alternatively restricted areas that may contain hazardous animals such as wolves, bears, coyotes etc might be accessed via an elevated quiet monorail. This type of concept might be also applied to africa restricted lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In respect, can you please pass all our senate bills to protect all horses, including our companion and mustangs. We need to stop horse auctions in the USA, this is where beginning of the slaughter starts. and then the horror when they arrive in Mexico and Canada.....!!! PLEASE STOP THE SLAUGHTER! Can you imagine not having horses in the wild and the history that is on that range, that have been going on for decades....The BLM and various other lobbyist and other organizations don't get it, it seems like our horses, wildlife, ocean and other beautiful creatures are targeted for extinctions, let's fight to stop the BLM, I thought they were there to protect, not slaughter! I would love to be invited to the BLM and meet with these associates, it astounds me that they are the individuals that give the law or ya on life for our wonderful wildlife, horses, etc.....They need to be re-educated or taken out of their positions....(Creed is a bad disease and it infects educated people that think they know what is right) we need our wildlife and our horses, their here for a purpose, just like everything else. There is a balance in our ecosystems on this wonderful planet, and we putting a lot of instability to it, not to mention the BP disaster, in other words, we're destroying our planet and life that keeps it healthy. Yes, our wildlife, horses, ocean life, trees, and yes ALL OF US~etc. keeps our planet healthy. In respect, we are Americans and we don't eat our companions, such as as horses and dogs....please stop the slaughter now. I'm here to help in anyway to protect our wildlife, land, and water and especially to protect our horses of all breeds!

I realize that there is a war going on and our economy is at an all time low (and your administration is dealing with these issues), but the importance of preserving our wildlife must also be addressed.

Also curb Carbon emissions and global warming

Please don't let this effort be hijacked by those who are influenced by special interests instead of working for what is right for our country, our posterity, and our planet.

Please, please let's STOP the cruelty to animals. We must become a caring people!

These protected lands are the best part of America. And all that's left of a once beautiful land. Please consider this. They are a national treasure and one that future generations deserve to enjoy and experience.

Help us to protect our beautiful land and it's inhabitants.

PLEASE MR. PRESIDENT, DO ALL YOU CAN TO SAVE OUR LAND, OUR ANIMALS AND FISH FROM LAND TAKEOVERS AND DESTRUCTION.

Thank you for active participation and please continue to what is best for our environment and our country.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our Country needs these wild places, they are a refuge for all of us to get away and relax and enjoy nature. The wildlife needs these places also or they will no longer exist. There are Park workers who have dedicated their lives for the love of the wilderness and to help teach others why and how to take care of them. Please help keep these places for everyone now and into the future.

Please make a Prairie 'State National Park in the Flint Hills east of Alma, Kansas. Blessing on you all. LOVE. MARGE.

SAVE OUR WILD HORSES!

The United States needs real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife.

The Initiative is an opportunity to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife -- or continue to cave in to the special interests that have been ravaging these places with impunity. Which will it be? Our parks, refuges, national forests, and public lands are home to our most treasured and historic places, to endangered species that are critical to biodiversity, are the last places where urban children can experience the balance and beauty of the natural world.

We need to put filters in the water so fish can live and animals can have fresh water. There should be a cleaning crew to clean up any litter in the parks.

I wish to say that more land has to be set aside, we are being destructive in trying to keep the economy going. Using farmland for new development, dumb!

It takes a nation of people with forethought and intelligence to implement protection for our future generations, and you have been proven to be a leader conscious of this effort and its importance. I know that you, as our President, will take particular care and put forth extra effort for this country which has been through so much this year. My entire family and I thank you for your efforts.

If Mr. Salazar isn't up to the job, then please let someone who is knowledgeable handle this task for him. We are looking forward to this wonderful transformation to keep our treasured lands and their awesome wildlife safe for generation to come.

Your position of power to make a difference is a great responsibility,, I realize, but this is so important that it cannot be ignored. There has never been a more important time for a comprehensive approach to conserving our treasured landscapes - and we may never have this opportunity again.

Lets update the mineral management. Control ORV's. They play havoc to the animals

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Any industrial activities on public lands should be leased at a market rate and not leased cheaply with poor oversight.

It is my opinion that the first step should be the elimination of permitting hunting within State, Federal and County parks and lands around the country. By restricting hunting to private land you can make safe the public lands for all to enjoy.

Dear Senators and Representatives, Together, we can keep our Earth beautiful - and alive - by ever more actively preserving our home. Thank you for staying committed!

They are home to our most treasured and historic places and they belong to all of the American people. They should never be exploited for the gain of business of any kind.

I do not want to live in a land where the waters are soaked in oil, and there is no wildlife. This is an urgent situation and needs immediate action. I cannot believe this is happening to America! Man and money comes first here and that needs to definately change.

Please save our precious natural resources.

PLEASE ADOPT A MANAGEMENT STRATEGY THAT WILL PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE ECOSYSTEMS AND THE SPECIES THAT DEPEND ON THEM! PLEASE GET THE BEST PEOPLE POSSIBLE TO DO THIS AND DO NOT INVOLVE SALAZAR!!! HE IS INCOMPETENT, AND THE PUBLIC IS VERY AWARE OF THIS! YOU SHOULD REPLACE HIM WITH AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS BOTH THE BACKGROUND AND THE PASSION TO TO DO THE JOB!

We must conserve our natural resources and our wildlife NOW for future generations. Enact some laws that CANNOT be so easily changed or amended by those who do not value our beautiful land.

Put a cap on the pollution each company can make. No more offshore drilling or drilling inland where nature would be disrupted seriously, no more killing of animals. Treat the land with respect.

I like this initiative. I like supporting our park system while encouraging people to get back outside. In fact, conservation of our resources is one of the most important functions of government. Progressives have just given up on too many fights. We worked hard to give this administration a Congress that it could work with to get things done. Please WORK HARD, and DON'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER in protecting America's wild, and not so wild, places.

Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development, mineral extraction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration; and I remain confident that the administration understands the will of most American citizens on this issue, and intends to do the will of the people. If there is any way in which I, as a citizen, can help to protect and defend our environment, please let me know.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Another very important part of the strategy to preserve the great outdoors is to reduce the human population. I and many others believe the human population is already above the Earth's carrying capacity, and the amount of resources that people in the USA consume exacerbates the problem. We can live sustainably in harmony with natural areas only by reducing our population size and the impact we have on natural areas. Provide incentives for dramatically and immediately reducing the human population in the USA and on the planet.

We need real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife, ESPECIALLY FROM THE ENCROACHMENT OF OFF THE ROAD, RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ENERGY-GREEDY COMPANIES.

In my rural hometown, poorly planned development by our town council and planning boards is destroying wetlands, aquifers and other water sources, forests, our rural landscape, and our beloved CT River. We've tried hard here in town to stop this onslaught against the environment, but unfortunately the developers own most of the folks in town government. A federal response to this issue, in the form of strong and enforced regulations and laws, would be a big help to towns like mine. I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality.

Our children need contact with nature and the US has an amazing abundance of wild places. We need to keep them safe.

Our wild places, our water and our native wildlife are all in need of protection.

The importance of planting as many trees as possible as well as protecting the trees we have needs to also be considered.

We need to take care of our beautiful wildlife areas for future generations of Americans!

We must somehow get entire populace to understand that Nature's Law's are not negotiable, and that each of us is responsible for saving our natural environment.

PLEASE DO MUCH, MUCH MORE TO PROTECT OUR WILDLIFE. Our Wildlife need REAL SANCTUARIES where hunting is NOT allowed.

Our wild spaces are beautiful, and so are the creatures that live there. Please restore the wild buffalo and the wild mustangs to our great outdoors, and refrain from harassing them, running them to death, sending them to slaughter, and fencing them from returning them to their land. They are our national heritage!!!

We need to protect what is left of the wilderness.... Please do what you can. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I stand with E.O Wilson. There should be no more development of the few remaining wild lands.

The best way to protect our outdoor spaces is to start protecting what we already have from climate change...get busy!

As an example of the broader scale planning needed, national parks, national monuments, wildlife refuges and similar public lands must have adequate buffers from development around them to maintain their qualities. Where possible geographically these lands should be linked by corridors.

To date, many of my donations to the Defenders of Wildlife have been emergency measures to help protect our endangered species; I had hope YOUR administration would be the administration that worked tirelessly to save these beautiful animals. I think it is still possible for your administration to leave a legacy of responsible stewardship and careful management. These resources, if not protected, are in danger of being lost -- forever.

Our wild Mustangs have been under attack by the BLM for years now. They continue to eliminate them shrinking the size of herds that have become too small to sustain. WHY? The BLM should be making sure that those herds are protected but instead they are rounding them up and sending them to be slaughtered. This is not what the public wants to hear about and so this dirty secret continues. Please stop the rounding up of these majestic animals and allow them to roam free on our public lands and quit catering to the ranching community, we all own those lands and those mustangs have every right to roam on them free like they have for years. This subject should be added to the effort to ensure these lands are left as they should be for the mustangs to continue to live on as their ancestors did for hundreds of years. They are the symbol of what this country stands for, Freedom and strength, nothing sends the message like they do!!

First and foremost we need to save and protect all wildlife that still exists. We have destroyed enough. No more time for killing.

We need to preserve our great land with its diverse natural resources and animal life. Please continue to work for their preservation.

The ONLY thing that really matters when all's said and done is that our PLANET, our NATURAL home/earth based glories, must be protected against all threats..

I personally feel that these areas should be thought of and managed on a regional basis, looking at the ecosystems that span states as the unit for preservation, not just the individual sites.

We need real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife, so that future generations will still be able to experience the great natural places in our land. In my lifetime, across the country, I've seen great forests shrink away, felled to make way for housing and commercial developments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Time has come to take the Environment and Wildlife Seriously, and Act Accordingly. The Quality of our lives is being affected by the ongoing Neglect!

Save what's left of our beautiful country please! So much has been lost or destroyed by greed and the lack of interest of government. Save our wildlife and natural resources!

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE DEMANDING THAT POLICY MAKERS MAKE THE CONSERVING, PROTECTING AND FUNDING ENVIRONMENTAL CARETAKING A PRIORITY NOW! NO MORE WATERED DOWN CRAP THAT ALLOWS CORPORATE DEVASTATION: LIKE BP...DUH!

PLEASE KEEP THE AVERAGE CITIZEN WHO USES THE PARKS FOR RECREATION AND SOLITUDE IN MIND FIRST, AND NOT CORPORATE INTERESTS. THE HEALTH OF OUR WILDLIFE IS A DIRECT LINK TO THE HEALTH OF OURSELVES. HOW WE TREAT OUR RESOURCES REFLECTS ON WHO WE ARE AS A PEOPLE.

When I look at the destruction in Colorado precipitated by the Bush administration's reckless policies in regard to gas and oil drilling I realize how critical it is that your administration counter with strong protective measures. I believe in you folks.

I hope consideration will be given to reformation of mining practices in public lands. Mining companies are allowed to destroy too much wilderness area, pay too little for mining rights, and are not required to clean up the aftermath.

Please set free the 30,000 mustangs BLM rounded up and plans to euthanize. We want our wild horses to roam free. Please use the round up funds to create protected public lands for the mustangs. Also let's inoculate the bison so they are not shot by ranchers when they roam from the boundary of Yellowstone Park. Let the ranchers call the Park rangers to herd the buffalo back. Let's stop the killing, killing, killing of our wildlife and begin to protect and revere it.

Here's what I think: More large areas need to be designated as "Wilderness," and maintained in (or returned to) a roadless state. Wildlife and forests need unbroken stretches to flourish. Any public access should be limited to pack-in/pack-out.

Where I live, farmland, natural landscapes and wildlife have been replaced by strip malls - half of which have no tenants and many of them close down for lack of business. Last week, we saw a hawk in our backyard. I am pleased to have attracted wildlife to my gardens, but hawks have been displaced from their natural habitat and don't belong in inhabited areas! You have the power to do this. Please keep your word to reduce our dependence on oil, to clean up our national reserves, stop poaching and stop poisoning our land! Big business has no right to put their money ahead of principle - and you shouldn't accept that.

But it really is FEDERAL leadership that is required. Turning decision making over to states that often have very different agendas, usually doesn't work. We need to remember that these lands belong to all Americans, not to special interests within any particular state.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We must implement a cohesive strategy for protecting this country's great outdoors and the wildlife that depend on them for survival. In this country we have magnificent outdoor areas that we must protect and develop.

The greatest pressure on public lands comes from commercial desires to mine, timber, drill for oil on these properties, as well as recreational activities such as ATV and Snowmobile use. All of these activities except possibly controlled timbering, is inappropriate in National Parks. In national forests some activity which is well controlled, supervised may be OK. But the priorities are the preservation of habitat for wildlife, providing a quiet environment in nature, not a public amusement park or ATV/snowmobile course.

PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development, mineral extraction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change MUST be a key priority for the Obama Administration. PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive TODAY while you are thinking about it. Just do it for the health of Americans. PERMANENTLY PROTECT our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive

Your active leadership is crucial to developing this conservation strategy for the 21st century. Without such explicit leadership from you, the bureaucracies and agencies could lapse into Bush-era management disasters. Protection and preservation of our wilderness in its pristine condition can and will ameliorate the effects of climate change. If we help the Earth to survive, the Earth will help us survive.

That is why I believe the first step to achieving our goals in protecting the environment would be to replace Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar with someone who actually cares about the environment and doesn't wish to carry on Bush era policies and appease ranchers and special interests.

This is an opportunity to show us that you have our best interests in mind and are not willing to compromise our resources as the Bush administration did. I have been a staunch supporter of your administration and hope that you will continue to lead with these promising efforts in the forefront.

Dear Legislators, Every dollar towards conservation puts somebody to work and preserves our natural resources at the same time. Please resist the urge to turn every acre of the US into a corporate playground versus a treasure to be enjoyed by every citizen and "Mother Nature" as well.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am 73 years old and as I begin the last leg of my life on earth, I wish to see more clearly the needs for the future. I was born in Wyoming and have seen a dramatic change in the exploitation of wild places. An example of this is the need to expand the greater Yellowstone to the whole ecosystem and not straight line boundaries. National forest land should be included in the national park and additional lands purchased to capture the essence of what is need to be preserved.

The protection of all of the U.S.'s wildlife and providing them with ample pristine habitat and water to increase in numbers and thrive has never been more urgent. Our wolves, buffalo, wild horses, burrows, big cats, prairie dogs, and many more magnificent national treasures need your protection and strong support.

Please do not just think of your own political life and it's continuation by garnering the masses support but think instead of your opportunity to leave a legacy to the American nation and step up and PROTECT our natural resources. After all they aren't making mountains, streams, rivers, salmon, trout, wolves you name it ANYMORE.

TEACHING GUIDES TO EDUCATE THE VISITORS ABOUT THE WILDLIFE IS GREATLY DESIRABLE AS WELL AS TELLING THEM ABOUT THE IMPORTANT SITES & WHAT THEY OFFER& HOW THEY ARE PROTECTED!! LEARNED MUCH WHILE I WAS THERE WITH THE KIDS FROM OUR SCHOOL& SO DID THEY! WE ALSO DID CROSS COUNTRY SKIING WITH GUIDES&THIS WAS WONDERFUL! FOR KIDS WHO HARDLY EVER SEE NATURES BEAUTY UP CLOSE THIS IS AN INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCE! & CITY KIDS RELAX&ENJOY! VISITS WITH A GUIDE FOR AT-RISK KIDS IS REWARDING, INSPIRING,& ENLIGHTENING!

Good morning! I am writing to ask you to please do all that you can to stop the big polluters and to support a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of corporate negligence and the resultant global climate change that has caused. For more information, see the note from the Defenders of Wildlife below. Thank you!

IN ADDITION TO THE ESSENTIAL MESSAGE BELOW, PLEASE CONSIDER ELEVATING OUR NATIONAL CONVERSATION WITH ALL REFERENCES TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR PLANET EARTH. FIRST OF ALL.....STOP JUST TALKING ABOUT HUMANS!!!!!! ANIMALS ARE SUFFERING UNPEAKABLE CRUELITIES!!!! SECONDLY....ELEVATE RESPECT FOR, UNDERSTANDING OF AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE VITAL INTERRELATIONSHIP OF ALL LIVING BEINGS AT EVERY, SINGLE OPPORTUNITY!!!!!!

NOW THAT A LONG, EXPENSIVE & DRAWN OUT LEGAL BATTLE HAS RETURNED THE GRAY WOLF TO ITS RIGHTFUL STATUS AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES (SADLY AFTER HUNDREDS WERE MURDERED), IT IS TIME THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT & THE DEPT. OF INTERIOR & ESPECIALLY SEC. SALAZAR PROPERLY PROTECT THE WILDLIFE ON THESE PUBLIC LANDS AS WELL! PLEASE REMOVE SEC. SALAZAR AND THE INFLUENCE OF HUNTING & RANCHING SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS & MAKE SURE DECISIONS MADE IN THIS AREA ARE CORRECT AND UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF QUALIFIED SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As an independent voter who worked to elect you in North Carolina, I have been deeply disappointed in Ken Salazar - who is far too cosy with influential ranching interests in Montana and Idaho - and has supported their ongoing assault on the grey wolves of Yellowstone, and the last free ranging buffalo in that area. He has no credibility in the environmental community, and has damaged your reputation. Therefore, one of your first actions in the initiative should be to replace him with someone who understands the irreplaceable value of our wildlife, its habitat and the environment, and who will not be beholden to wealthy lobbyists attempting to subvert the will of the taxpaying public.

It's time that we make serious decisions to save our great outdoor spaces. We need an integrated national strategy to establish protected areas and to include whole ecosystems to protect the links allowing the whole to survive. I look forward to hearing what the Initiative proposes and I hope that you will push for dramatic action and results in order to leave a lasting legacy from this generation for the future. Grand steps now will deliver even more impressive results in the years to come. Piecemeal action will only serve to highlight our shortsighted outlook and stand as a testament to a lack of vision.

Below is the message drafted by Defenders of Wildlife Action which I endorse; however, I have a few ideas when it come to protecting and PRESERVING our public lands. 1. It is important that we not only protect but that we also PRESERVE our remaining natural ares by providing MORE FUNDING for MANAGEMENT of these nautral areas to help retain their integrity and health. Without the proper financial support to manage the land (i.e. prescribed burns, mowing, removal of invasive species) exotic and invasive species will take over the few remaining natural areas which are home to a variety of native species which are being threatened. 2. We need to support and fund PERMANENT protection (i.e. funding for permanent conservation easements) on PRIVATE LAND. In Iowa about 97% of the land is privately owned. When 15-20 private land conservation programs expire, often the tax payers' investment into the land over those 15-20 years is LOST (i.e. CRP ground returned to cropland). 3. Protect wild areas from development and the public. For example, set aside a portion of parks that is not open to the public. Let the land be truly wild!

In the words of President Theodore Roosevelt in 1916; "Defenders of the short-sighted men who in their greed and selfishness will, if permitted, rob our country of half its charm by their reckless extermination of all useful and beautiful wild things sometimes seek to champion them by saying the 'the game belongs to the people.' So it does; and not merely to the people now alive, but to the unborn people. The 'greatest good for the greatest number' applies to the number within the womb of time, compared to which those now alive form but an insignificant fraction. Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wild life and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method." Pres. Theodore Roosevelt foreshadowed the current issue of America's eco-system and yet we have not learned or listened from the past. Time is of the essence to listen and act. Action must speak louder than words.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am pleased to forward the following letter prepared by Defenders of Wildlife. I believe the only strategies that will truly protect wilderness and our environment in general must be quite radical ones. All -- all, all, all -- hunting should be banned. Even if all one cares about is human safety, re-instating prohibitions on killing the gentlest and most helpless forms of life constitutes a strong protection by re-introducing greater reticence toward violence directed at fellow humans. Since humanity is simply incompatible with the continued viability of the planet, not to mention incapable of leaving any weaker beings in peace, people should be kept to their residential areas and not allowed to traipse into wilderness areas. What do we get from allowing everybody to go anywhere? Tremendously destructive forest fires, or people who intrude on suffering animals' dwindling habitat, resulting in [for instance, bear] attacks, which then result in the murder of the desperate animal[s] involved. Senseless. We only pollute, destroy, infringe. Let's leave the pristine places alone so they and their inhabitants can exist without the hideous suffering we always and ever inflict. I hope you find them to be of some use in your very important decision-making.

Loving & protecting the outdoors is a huge need now more than ever as we slowly pull away from the antural world and launch into technology. But, as a volunteer docent for a threatened shore bird the Western Snowy Plover in Santa Barbara at Coal Oil Point, I want to give you a great way to preserve the parks and get American's working. HIRE people to be docents to the parks, armed with the stories of the land, the animals and the plants to make the visitors experience that much more rich. I see the recognition in people's faces when I discuss the reason we have docents on the Snowy Plover nesting site and how the docents are making it possible to keep the beach open to the public while keeping the Plovers proliferation momentum going forward. The Snowy Plover Docent Program is a model for how to make a species protection program workable and fun at the same time. It will celebrate it's tenth year in 2011. The strides the species has taken in those ten years is documented. I welcome you to take a look at the program (<http://coaloilpoint.ucnrs.org/SnowyPloverProgram.html>) and get in touch with me should you want to explore how to implement something like this in our national parks.

In addition, now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change, pollution, mineral extraction, population pressure and poorly planned development. This initiative must include the conservation of large, connected landscapes to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and other threats. We must act now to conserve the majestic landscapes and diverse wildlife they support.

I am pleased with your Initiative. We really need to do landscape-scale conservation to address critical issues facing ecosystem services, wildlife conservation, outdoor recreation and clean water. Thank you for all that you are doing for our country, our wildlife and our environment.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a critical time for our society. With economic and employment difficulties, it would be easy to forget the importance of our environment and the creatures that share the earth with us. We need to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife. We all share a responsibility to leave the next generation healthier and better connected to the natural world and your active leadership is crucial to develop a conservation strategy for the 21st century. Our parks, refuges, national forests, and public lands are the best of America. Taking a comprehensive approach to conserving our treasured landscapes and protecting our public lands from poorly planned development, mineral extraction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change and animal eradication (wolves, etc) should be a key priority for this Administration. On a national level, we need to address critical issues facing ecosystem services, wildlife conservation, outdoor recreation and clean water. It is important that you have launched this important process and I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality.

Your active leadership is crucial to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife. At the same time, there are multiple pressures facing these lands. To safeguard wildlife and wild places, it is critical to resist these pressures. As lobbyists urge drilling and pipelines, or vehicle access to wild spaces, your leadership will be needed to keep these spaces wild. As we and wildlife face the harmful impacts of global climate change, landscape-scale conservation will be needed more than ever, to create and maintain wildlife corridors and refuges. The protection of watersheds and wetlands will be equally important as demands on our waters increase and climate change causes floods and droughts.

Dear President Obama, Thank you for caring about conservation and the environment. I love wildlife and wild lands and am pleased about you launching the Initiative. We need to protect our land, wildlife and water for all Americans and for future generations. Your active leadership is critical to making this happen. Now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguarding wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of development and global climate change. I very much appreciate your caring about these issues and your participation in helping protect our environmental heritage.

All Americans should take pride in our treasured landscapes and share a responsibility to leave the next generation healthier and better connected to the natural world. I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife, as well as our Nations Wild and Free Roaming Horses & Burros too. There is a tremendous need to do landscape-scale conservation to address critical issues facing ecosystem services, wildlife, & wild free-roaming horse & burro conservation, outdoor recreation and clean water. In addition, now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife, our wild horses and burros, and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change. To assist fish, wildlife, wild horses and burros, natural resources and human communities in adapting to climate change, this initiative must include the conservation of large, connected landscapes to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and other threats. A changing climate, pollution, and poorly planned development have put a growing strain on our wildlife, our wild horses and burros, our waters and our lands, and we must act now to conserve the majestic landscapes and diverse wildlife they support.

We need innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife. Your active leadership is crucial.

It must also include the protection of large watersheds and their wetlands to mitigate the impacts of flood and drought resulting from changing weather patterns. I am thrilled you have launched this important process and I encourage you to ensure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality.

I believe one of the most important things that our government needs to do is to protect our natural environment and to preserve our natural wonders and the animals within our great nation. Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development, mineral extraction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration and all future administrations.. We need a comprehensive approach to conserving our treasured landscapes and the cooperation of all branches of government. Clean water is a priority. Without care for our waters (fresh and salt water) we will be in trouble. There is a tremendous need to do landscape-scale conservation to address critical issues facing ecosystem services, wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation. We want our children and grandchildren to enjoy our wildlife and wild places. We need good scientific input to aid in this effort.

Excluding the Gulf and other shoreline areas from offshore drilling for gas and oil would go a long way toward the goals of your policy.

friends of mine have just returned from 4 weeks in your wonderful National Parks, including Yellowstone, and sent me pictures and descriptions of the beautiful Blue Ridge and other spectacular places. At the same time, the tragedy with the bear attacks was reported in Australia on the main TV news services. Is there not some way you can deal with this without killing a bear which, seen from downaunder, was living naturally and caring for its young. Anyway, on the positive side, I urge the USA, as world leaders, to employ real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect your land, water, and wildlife.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are thrilled that you have launched this important process and we strongly encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality. One way to gain the needed manpower and combat our massive unemployment problem would be for President Obama to reinstall the C.C.C. & W.P.A. programs that President Roosevelt used to great success in the 1930's. Thank you for considering our comments. we look forward to your reply.

It may well be that I will have memories of the South Dakota Badlands, of the Black Hills, and Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks to treasure and might not again have the time or resources to make another visit there or to another park, forest, or other public land. I am, nonetheless, very pleased that you have launched this important process and I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality. The benefits will belong to many.

This is so essential to our future. This is a perfect way to add jobs and training. We need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change. Please make a concerted effort to protect our outdoor spaces. Thank you

I personally would rather not see politics playing any kind of role in protecting the land, water and animals. We should do it because it is right. We should do it because we are the caretakers of it all- not the owners. There is so little respect in this country for the land, water, environment, air, animals- each other for that matter. If we respected, there would be no aerial gunning down of wolves. We would not be killing each other and abusing cats and dogs at the alarming rate we do. We would not allow people's homes and farms to be ripped out from under them just because a state wants to run a road through. Nor would we sit blindly by while a city closes businesses and tears down houses in order to build a city center or some such ridiculousness. Don't get me wrong, I want to see this initiative work. I am just fearful it is just another layer of bandades on top of an already huge one. You know who should really be involved in this initiative? Native Americans. There is no one else better for teaching about respecting the land and the mother (Earth).

The very environmental fabric that supports our ecosystem is being seriously depleted. Our open space and wildlife habitat is rapidly disappearing. Along with it our opportunity for outdoor recreation, sustainable wildlife populations and clean watersheds is also vanishing. Your program, Initiative is much needed and appreciated..

We MUST HAVE real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife.

In addition to protecting our public lands, we must restore the Gulf of Mexico and the coastal regions that have been damaged and degraded by the BP oil spill. That region must not be forgotten.

I look forward for your actions [! words alone never was enough to achive anything]

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Stand up to the NRA, forbid firearms in all National Parks!

YOU have the power to make all this happen. If you want Americans to continue to be proud of our beautiful country and all of its outdoor beauty, as well as preserve the wildlife that lives in it, I urge you to implement this program as soon as possible. After the Gulf oil catastrophe, we need to renew our faith in you to take care of these precious resources.

PLEASE IMMEDIATELY PUT AN END TO THE USE OF DESTRUCTIVE MOTORIZED VEHICLES, SUCH AS QUADS, DIRT BIKES, MOTORCYCLES, ETC. ON OUR PUBLIC LANDS. WE, AS CONSERVATORS OF THIS NATURAL BEAUTY AND WILDERNESS, MUST PRESERVE THIS LAND, NO ONLY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, BUT THE THE WILDLIFE THAT LIVE THERE.

We really really need real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife.

To have areas set aside only for human use is counter-intuitive. Wildlife is the wild areas. We need to protect it all.

Please stop the hunting of wolves.

WE need JOBS to preserve the health of our country and environment. One function of jobs would be to launch the Initiative. I am thrilled that you have launched this important process and I encourage you to PROVIDE THE JOBS and the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality.

Many, many thanks for launching the Initiative! We need this sort of real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife. Your continuing active leadership is crucial for developing a sound, vigorous, conservation strategy for the 21st century. They set aside our most magnificent, treasured, and historic places. There has never been a more important time for a comprehensive approach to conserving our cherished landscapes. Pressures to "use" them as "resources" -- e.g. -- to exploit them for financial gain -- rise with the economic downturn. Too many of us are too fat, glued to video games and The Mall. What better way to get us to improve our personal lives, by promoting a vital and healthy interest in the NATURAL WORLD? We take pride in these treasured landscapes and share a responsibility to leave the next generation healthier and better connected to the natural world.

This has been too long neglected. Our parks, refuges, national forests, and public lands represent the best of America, and in some cases, the best in the world.. We have seen too much of this in the recent past. Without a plan, these environments are likely to be grossly exploited, and in the end, will lose the character for which they were preserved in the first place. During my life I have been fortunate to visit many of our National Parks and wildlands, and I am thrilled that you have launched this important process. I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I write to urge you to formulate legislation to protect wildlife and its surroundings.

To assist Our WILD HORSES, and wildlife of all kinds, natural resources and human communities in adapting to climate change, this initiative must include the conservation of large, connected landscapes to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and other threats.

We must address critical issues facing ecosystem services, wildlife conservation, outdoor recreation and clean water.

Just as our zoos have formed the AZA to regulate and set standards for all its members to enhance and protect their collections, and to establish conservation programs for animals in the wild, we must expand that approach to protect our lands

Without important initiatives like this one, our future generations will not get to see the beauty of the natural life in this country. A changing climate, pollution, and poorly planned development have put a growing strain on our wildlife, our waters, our lands, and our own lives as Americans, and we must act now to conserve the majestic landscapes and diverse wildlife they support.

Protecting our public lands and wildlife from poorly planned development, mineral extraction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration. There has never been a more important time for a comprehensive approach to conserving our treasured landscapes and the wildlife that lives there. I hope this marks a change in policy from your Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, who are so consistently hostile to wildlife conservation that they could easily have worked for President George W. Bush. So far, I have been very disappointed at your lack of commitment - or even interest - in preserving wildlife. I hope this is a real change I can believe in on your part.

It's high time an Administration did this. Your active leadership is crucial to develop this conservation strategy for the 21st century, especially after the devastation rained on the environment & EPA by the Bush Administration. I call them eco-thugs. That includes eliminating "mountain top removal" as a mining technique! We Traditional Lakota take pride in our treasured landscapes and share a responsibility to leave the next 7 generations healthier and better connected to the natural world.

Innovation and dedicated resources are needed to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife. NOW is the time for a comprehensive approach to conserving our treasured landscapes. Corporate destruction of public lands continues until this step is taken. Thank you for this beginning. I hope you will honor us with your support and action, when necessary, to complete this formidable task.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

They are home to our most treasured and historic places and our wild and free mustangs. In addition, now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change and human interference and abuse i.e. the cruel roundups of our wild mustangs from their ancestral homes, causing death and loss of freedom for no justifiable reason. Please protect what Americans hold dear.

I am encouraged that you launched the Initiative. Innovation & dedication are needed now more than ever to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife.& active leadership as well as persistence is crucial to develop this conservation in this volatile time when so many many species of animals are becoming extinct. Our parks, refuges, national forests, and public lands represent the best of N. America. Protecting our public lands from poorly planned development, mineral extraction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change should be a key priority for the Obama Administration as well as Canadian and Mexican leaders. After all, nature does not recognize boundaries! Tremendous effort is needed to do landscape-scale conservation to address critical issues facing ecosystem services, wildlife conservation, outdoor recreation and clean water.

It is absolutely essential to protect our land and water and the wildlife that depend on them. We need real innovation and dedicated resources to preserve and protect fragile ecosystems. I may never get to the far north to see a polar bear and its natural habitat, but it is important to me that we not destroy them. National Parks and other public lands are an authentic American idea. There has never been a more important time for a comprehensive approach to conserving our treasured landscapes and the animals they support. Clean water will be worth going to war over in the not too far distant future. We need not to contaminate our aquifers and ruin our surface waters or our people will suffer. Now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change.

These actions are so important now and we need to protect our land, water and wildlife. Your active leadership is crucial to develop this conservation strategy.

They have been built up over the years through the administrations of several presidents. With growth in population and most people living in cities, With many species facing extinction because of climate changes and human activities, Now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change.

I am writing to express my gratitude for your launching the Initiative. As a Coloradan who lives in the high mountain country, I absolutely know that we need dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife. Prior to this, I have been extremely disappointed in Secretary Salazar's actions (and inaction) on crucial environmental issues. I hope that this marks a change in the Obama administration's actions in this area.

We need real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land, water and wildlife.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Getting rid of lobbyists for ranchers and outfitters near Yellowstone would also help. Hunting wolves near the Park is a current and ongoing controversy, especially now that wolves have been granted protection again.

consider "use fee" for industries that despOIL our environment.

Undoubtedly you will be challenged on the size of the conservation area and the scope of what needs to be done. change is hard. However I encourage you to stand strong in the face of opposition and do the right thing for the environment and the people of the world.

Dear President Obama, My very personal heartfelt request is to please do what you are able to do now, it is critical, you have the power to make great changes, changes that will hopefully wake up mankind, We truly are all ONE in this Universe. May we all HONOR, LOVE and RESPECT one another. Please, what you choose now, will COME FULL CIRCLE. Thank you for LISTENING TO MY PERSONAL MESSAGE of LOVE

I look forward to seeing the Great Outdoors Initiative implemented & fully realized.

Why not restart the CCC program and put 1/2 a million people back to work improving our national parks? Thus creating jobs for construction workers that are laid off

It is critical for the last, truly beautiful wild places that we still have to be kept "EXACTLY" as they are. Our wildlife must be protected, no matter what. We as Americans must stand together on this, to save our last wild places.

If we start to protect the wild places in a really visible way perhaps other areas of our society...urban sprall, poor planning by municipalities in general will have a true role model.

It saddens me that we must take extra measures to protect the last remnants of nature. We think our technology is improving our world, but it's also leaving it handicapped. Please do everything you can so that these special places won't fade into history as well.

CONTRARY TO WHAT CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF OUR POPULATION SEEM TO THINK, MONEY IS NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN EVERY DEBATE. WE HAVE LITTLE TIME TO GET THIS RIGHT. TAKE POWER AWAY FROM CORPORATIONS WHENEVER POSSIBLE, AND SERVE THE ACTUAL PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY FROM OUR PROGRESSIVE PERSPECTIVE. ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES, AND WE WON. LET'S DO RIGHT BY THE ENVIRONMENT SO WE ACTUALLY HAVE A PLANET TO LIVE ON. GREEN ENERGY, CLEAN AIR AND WATER!

Ande please don't allow exploitation of tar sands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We urgently need to protect our wild places for coming generations, for our health, for our peace of mind. These are public places for all Americans, and must be protected from private interests that would commercialize and destroy them for the short term gain a very few.

I am encouraged that we may now have an administration that can look at the long term goals of preserving our lands, our wilderness, our wildlife and those things that make America uniquely beautiful. The last administration was prone to selling to the highest bidder. Once the forests or the wolves or the manatees or any of the remaining species are gone, they are gone forever. The damages done by us now will have repercussions for generations to come.

I totally agree with the above. We can have no drilling, mining, wild 4 wheeling, regular people pollution and corporation pollution to the waterways - need strictly enforced rules. Another consideration is where to 4 wheel & snow mobile. Some people 4 wheel/snowmobile in a responsible way to travel one state to another (in Canada) to enjoy the outdoors..In USA we have no maintained cross country trail with police maintaining law & order. This is needed. Then we have the extreme wreckless people who have no regard to maintain the environment or protect the animals. They need a contained policed area like race tracks have so they cannot tear up the environment. 4 wheeling should be only in designated areas on well kept policed areas. The 4 wheel/snow mobile people should pay for the upkeep of the trails, if you 4 wheel/snowmobile you must be licensed & in good standing with a club who is approved by the environmental agency. People should be licensed thru an environmental agency & be in good standing - & take classes first as in Md. requiring hunters to take classes prior to being licensed to hunt. No Grandfather clauses - even farmres & their kids should go to classes & then licened.. Thank you

In addition to the natural world, the built environments and roads must be maintained. Professional and trained staff must also be considered.

A clean Air Act is crucial at this time.

We have waited eight years for an administration to take steps to protect our wild lands and wildlife rather than systematically dismantling protection for them - this is one reason we voted for you - don't disappoint us, and don't lose what may be the last chance to protect our natural treasures.

All the public lands including BLM lands should be protected as well as the wildlife they support which are often threatened by short sighted extractive industries, should be considered our most valuable fortune not to be polluted, or cut up.

PLEASE...implement an integrated national strategy to protect our great outdoor spaces -- and the wildlife that depend on them to survive!

Since the Gulf Oil Spill disaster, over 3500 sea creatures have been reported killed. That is a crime against GOD! Therefore, all precautions must be implemented to keep our environments safe.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You have the authority and the moral responsibility to do this. Please do. Thank you.

As a resident of the Gulf Coast I strongly urge you to take all the action necessary and beyond that to ensure the future of wildlife in our great nation.

The first thing I would like to see as part of this initiative is to put a ban on the killing of our wildlife, such as wolves and prairie dogs, and have the BLM stop the cruel roundup of the wild horses and burros. Then let's start working out a plan where humans and wildlife can coexist. Wildlife is an important aspect of our natural resources and they need to be protected instead of being annihilated.

The future of these matters is in our hands and we must act now to preserve and protect our environment and natural resources.

Ps. We must save more of the remaining virgin forests for the future.

Please take good care of yourself on the campaign trail for November's elections. The Republican Party has the philosophy of "it's okay to lay waste to everything for the sake of immediate profits and long term consequences and contingent expenses be damned." Their strategy must be turned back on them! Address Conservation on a Large Scale areas especially old growth forests Connect people with the benefits of Nature for suburban and urban dwellers Hammer the Republicans and their wasteful selfish narrowminded bigoted policies everyday with every facet of your Administration! Thank you.

Maybe one century we'll have leadership that does what's right and not what big business/greed tells them to do.

Protect our remaining wilderness including our oceans and coastlines Improve Wildlife Habitat Protect and improve our watersheds and drinking water

Mr. President it is time to stand up against the polluters special interests and Republicans standing in the way of conservation!

New and growing threats overdevelopment pollution and a changing climate demand a smarter sciencebased approach to protecting wild areas wildlife rivers and lakes and cultural and historic sites that connect us to nature to each other and to our shared past. Each generation has the opportunity the responsibility to protect our natural heritage for the next generation. Thank you for all you do for America's wilderness and public lands!

Provide Increased Educational Opportunities

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We can not take our outdoor spaces for granted. I live in the Adirondack Park. It is a state park with beautiful mountains lakes rivers ponds and vast acres of forests filled with wildlife. The United States has so much of these wonders with the US Govt.as care takers. These wonders have been around for thousands maybe millions of years. These lands need to be available for generations to come. Miningthe lumbering of forests the needless killing of wildlife such as the wild horse wolves and the American Bison need to be better controlled or even stopped. The govt. needs to explore/fund alternative fuel sources. The BP oil " spill " in the Gulf of Mexico is proof of this yet more plans for offshore drilling and drilling in the Arctic on on the table. Mining for coal and other minerals are destroying rivers mountains and families loose loved ones because of the deaths incurred while mining.

Industrialization has ravaged the land and waters. The only way to save species of all sorts educate the public and provide for a percentage of clean water air and healthy ecosystems is to A) enforce environmental laws and B) protect what remains of the beauty and health of nature and wilderness in Parks Preserves wildlife sanctuaries roadless wilderness and fully protected natural areas. With these two tools we can maintain an America the Beautiful. Please provide Protected areas of all kinds. It is a matter of public health and safety.

Protect our beaches and ensure coastal access to the general public

I would also like you to look into the Wildlife Services who are allowing the wolves and their pups to be destroyed by air land and poisoning in their den even in the areas where the wolves are protected by law.

Outside of fighting global warming I CANNOT think of ANYTHING more important that making sure that future generations have the beautiful and priceless treasures that are our wilderness areas! You and the heads of your agencies NEED to understand and VALUE these lands AS MUCH as we do! I had high hopes that a new administration would see how tremendously important an issue this was. The American people THINK and BELIEVE so. YOU and YOUR administration MUST join us and make sure we DO NOT lose any of our parks wildlife refuges historic sites and ALL the other wilderness areas in OUR country.

This note mentions the Next generation but I'm working toward having these wild and wonderful areas still in place and wellprotected for innumerable generations to come. What a legacy to leave America !

I am very much in favor of maintaining and increasing the wilderness areas in the U.S.

Thank you for your service to our country... We want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

SINCE YOU BECAME PRESIDENT MORE WOLVES HAVE BEEN KILLED THEN IN THE ENTIRE 8 YEARS OF BUSH !Yes the states are allowing this but you can take action to put an end to this. And you can easily stop all killing of wolves on all types of federal land period. Also your Sec. of the Interior is destroying the wild horse herds of America. RESTORE PROTECTION AND STOP ROUNDING UP THE WILD HORSES NOW. These are my top priorities plus the list below. Dare to be bold and make hope a reality instead of a hollow slogan.

I believe you are a good man and that you want this too. You are a good president. I know you have many pressing issues. This one is important for our future and our childrens future as well.

Do much more to Restore and protect endangered species

Americans have lost so much in the past 10 years homes jobs retirement security privacy rights and are being "fee'd" to the poorhouse. Local governments are also suffering. At least let us have the comfort and serenity we derive from visiting the wild places we've supported all these years. There is more than enough money in the country to support these efforts among the notsufficiently taxerd wealthy. They consume more resources & cause more pollution yet pay a negligible portion of their wealth in tax.

Specific to my home region please support our current Wild Olympics campaign to designate new wilderness areas add critical areas to Olympic National Park and designate several rivers as "wild and scenic." www.wildolympics.org.

I frequently enjoy the SnoqualmieMt Baker National Forest. But it suffers from a drawback typical of western federal lands. 150 years ago railroads were given federal land in a checkerboard pattern alternating with retained federal land. The net effect today is that habitat is broken up by clearcut private "squares" and animal movements from place to place are made more hazardous. Please make every effort to buy up the private squares to create a richer habitat for wildlife and a greater forest cover to better control climate change. Most of our national parks and wilderness areas suffer from commercial expansion right up to their boundaries. That commercial activity in far too many cases severely diminishes the enjoyment of their unique character. To preserve these special places we need buffer zones into which commercial activity is strictly controlled. In many cases neighboring commercial uses especially grazing on other federal lands should be completely eliminated.

Protect our public lands with more wilderness designations Provide Administrative leadership in the area of wilderness designation

As a grandmother of 7 precious children I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. I have enjoyed these all my life and it saddens me to think that my lovely grandchildren may not have the same opportunities! Adopt new energy plans that will reduce carbon output and save our planet!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As our population grows and life grows more stressful we need more than ever quiet place in nature in which to recharge and to get back in touch with what is really important in life. I live in a densely populated urban area yet am fortunate to have access to a beautiful park and botanic garden. One visit and one notices an immediate change in people smiles relaxed walking and chatting often families or friends together. We need to protect and expand these natural areas in order to protect our sanity and perspective on life. When they are lost they cannot be recreated. The biodiversity of our wild areas also needs protecting. Ecosystems are fragile and we depend on them for our survival.

America's outdoors is a very important part of our national heritage and everything possible should be done to preserve it for future generations.

You can't forget about monuments birth places forts battlefields and other "scrapbook" sites.

In addition we need to look at business practices on a small and large scale. Hold all businesses including the largest of corporations accountable and fully responsible for how they affect the environment and the community. If the environment is negatively impacted by any business venture we need to embrace the philosophy of handing off the environment in honoring all generations seven generations forward. This may be quite painful to reframe our damaging ways but must be on the table. We have destroyed the Gulf we have destroyed or sold some of our most beautiful virgin lands and we continue to allow phenomenal polluting. This must change clean energy and responsible development.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Conservation needs to embrace a wide variety of areas including not only public lands far from civilization but near cities as well. It needs to include historic and prehistoric as well as "natural" resources. Within this realm wild horses need protection from the agencies charged to protect them the BLM the U.S. Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife etc. The National Academy of Sciences needs to be in the position to advise the Department of Interior as well as the Department of Agriculture in these matters. Unfortunately these departments seem to be only answerable to big business mega international corporations. Family farmers and ranchers are losing their way of life because of this abuse. Americans in general are losing their national heritage. Navajos have radioactive dust in their homes. Condors are being poisoned by lead bullets in the dead animals they feed upon. The Sheldon Antelope Range in northwestern Nevada is planning to remove all wild horses from its boundaries when these animals have been present in that landscape for hundreds of years. against the ravages of human beings both in terms of largescale removal of precious minerals by foreign interests that do little for the people of the United States. To be sure mining has its place but not at the wanton destruction of nature. ATV's should be licensed and riders found creating their own new pathways heavily fined. Wild horses should be considered native wildlife. As someone who watches them constantly I can tell you that they take the path of least resistance when they are seriously on the move they use human's dirt roads. The High Rock Canyon wilderness in northern Nevada is about to be destroyed by the Ruby Pipeline project one that should have avoided wild areas and followed for a bit more money pathways already blazed for such purposes. The Bureau of Land Management is ignoring the greater needs of the American People for the needs of a few. We don't want small islands of wilderness protected for future Americans we want to retain the larger areas we have now! but not by attempting to remove invasive species through poisoning. We do have serious problems with introduced species but attempts in the past has proved futile and only further damages the environment. The Yellowstone project of reintroducing wolves is an excellent example of how to improve wildlife habitat including waterways. Another way is to expand the use of highway overcrossings and undercrossings for wildlife to do away with the island effect for both plant and animal species. Unfortunately my state has done very little in this regard but continuing to make funding available through the Department of Transportation is starting to have an effect. One way to connect people to nature is through more transparency. The Bureau of Land Management is playing a shell game trying to prevent the American People from accessing their activities with both wild horses and family ranchers. I am involved with a wild horse ecotourism project that is doing a great deal to even local people. And yet at the same time the BLM and others Please but provide oversight using the National Academy of Sciences.

I want wildlife and wild spaces to thrive and be protected. Habitat protection is even more critical in an era of climate change. Provide access for nondestructive recreation such as hiking and wildlife watching.

Let us work to protect and enhance our natural wildlife preserves.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We should leave our children something on this Earth besides deadly polluted wastelands. Corporate America doesn't care if humanity joins the ongoing Great Extinction this year or next but I think putative future generations should have some say in this matter. Makes sense doesn't it?

Limit exploitative utilization of National Forests such as harvesting and mining EXPAND and areas Establish NO BUILD NO DEVELOPMENT guidelines for more government lands

It is extremely critical that every decision made considers the effects on the sustainability of humans on earth. This means our priorities must change from economic growth and a society based on violent competitive and forceful control of resources (war) to economic sustainability with controlled population environmental protections and minimal impact on our natural resources (peace).

Please conserve large landscapes that include our most pristine wildlands working forest and ranch lands private lands and the connections across these large areas. Large natural areas provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. Wildlands represent some of our healthiest and most intact lands. Please use all tools available to protect our public lands including recommending new wilderness and national parks designating national monuments and expanding National Wildlife Refuges. Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. Please prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands making restoration a national priority. By restoring our forests we can spur economic growth by providing needed jobs and improve recreation opportunities. Please create new national programs that help connect people especially our youth with nature. Today youth especially people of color are underrepresented on our public lands and it is important that new policies and programs are developed to encourage more youth participation including nature education or recreation programs and a revived civilian conservation corps. No matter where they live all children deserve the opportunity to learn about and experience the wildlands that belong to all Americans. Recreation is a great way for people to experience nature and help develop a strong conservation ethic. Please ensure access is increased for all Americans. Please support fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas protect lands around lakes rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails or provide key wildlife linkage areas.

Please start a 21st Century CCC and put our young men to real work building instead of only giving the option of war.

Please bring An end to efforts to Wipe out the wolves by so called government agencies who are striving to drive them to extinction.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We must protect the public lands that exist now and create more of these special places east of the Mississippi River for citizens residing there to visit and enjoy.

Hello part of our ongoing efforts at a sustainable lifestyle must include setting aside large areas that cannot be industrialized. To imagine a world in which every canyon is dammed for power and every forest is a potential timber or toilet paper harvest is to imagine a hell on earth.

Your own children need you to protect the earth.

Nature unaltered by humanity is essential to our health and well being. We are stewards of the Earth bound to preserve and pass on to future generations what amounts to a birthright.

Preserving and expanding our shared outdoor spaces is important to me. Right now my daughter and her husband are in Glacier National Park enjoying a back packing trip. I want the park and more like it to be here for our grandchildren.

It's up to us to protect the environment and the habitat of the wildlife as if not us who will protect it? We must forge ahead before its too late.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors the way I have. The wilderness experiences I enjoyed as a child and as an adult have helped to shape me and have afforded me understanding of the importance and magnificence of wild places.

We are lucky enough to live on a varied and beautiful continent. We should strive to maintain it's natural beauty so future generations of humans can enjoy it.

Protecting BIODIVERSITY the critical key to healthy environment must be at the forefront of planning and caring for our nation's and the world's health. We want the next SEVEN generations to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why we are asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand

Also Please put Wolves back on the endangered species list and try to make Alsaka outlaw hunting wolves from Helicopters. And please take the canadian goose off it is no where near endangered (If it isn't off the list already). Do what you can for the Polar bears! PLEASE.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Outsourcing singlehandedly degrades the care and the land: Turning over the management of national lands to private companies has radically changed the priorities for those lands. The result is damage and lack of upkeep. From protecting and enhancing to profit and loss this simple change has brought a profound disrepair. This single practice has been responsible for degradation of property and slow but steady limiting access though fee increases and elimination of discounts for the elderly and disabled. Disrepair and slovenly care is evident in privately managed parks. The companies hire people who are underpaid and whose goal of free rent and small amount of work is in direct opposition of any ideals to protect and enhance places for which they are responsible. Care and conscientious administration and funding is the basic responsibility with which our government is charged. Commercialization of the management of our parks and forests has nothing to do with preserving these areas for the American people. Further I would urge full funding for repairs upkeep and to make these areas available to the public instead of threatening to close because of lack of funds. Our public lands are being trashed through persistent underfunding and commercialization. One other point I recently revisited Emerald Bay California State Park Cascade Falls in Lake Tahoe California. I was saddened by the devastation from tree removal supposedly in the name of safety. The area has been denuded and looks urban. One of the most beautiful places on earth and ruined by thoughtless tree cutting. Further the so often noise of large maintenance vehicles loud saws and other (cleaning clearing) machinery was like a construction zone instead of a natural area. I realize this is a State park and not national but funding comes also from Federal sources for State lands and continued Federal cutbacks affect State funding.

Provide major conservation enhancements and initiatives Protect American wilderness areas through increased access and education

I don't believe there is a better legacy we can leave our children than conscientious stewardship of our land. We are so blessed in the U.S. with natural beauty and open spaces. Let's keep that blessing intact!

This is so important. We need to take huge steps. There are also many opportunities for new jobs by creating greener cars sources of cleaner energy etc. Thank you for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy

Protect all our wilderness areas and protect them from pollution Develop programs to connect children and adults with Nature

I love the Beautiful wonders of America we have to preserve them for future generations.

Enjoying the outdoors has always been an important part of my life. Wilderness is a unique treasure that needs to be protected.

I deeply appreciate the legacy of natural wilderness preservation bequeath to me by former generations and our issue should expect no less from us.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are already too many people. Let's save all the wilderness and wildlife we can and concentrate on curbing the human species.

PS Wilderness and time spent in the natural world has been the cornerstone of my adult life. It brings me joy shared friendship inspiration and peace of mind. It is in my humble opinion a necessary antidote to the stress of the modern world and a source of creativity and dreams. Please all that you can to protect our existing wild places plants and animals and oceans. Our future on Earth depends on it. Also more to encourage the younger generation especially the minority ethnic groups is needed. Without there love of the natural world they will not care to preserve it.

It is indeed your leadership upon which we must count upon and I feel that this is our last and lasting opportunity before we risk losing all.

We seriously need to protect our land sea and air for our future generations.

It takes a healthy earth to provide us a healthy home. We must not neglect our environment despite the other challenges we are faced with.

Try and do the right thing. So many of us are very disappointed in what has happened the last two years.

I am an older man and am saddened by the damage continually being done to the world of wildlife and wildernes. I have grandchildren and great grandchildren and I want their generation to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors the way I have..

1. in unending public works employment 2. in unending public information outreach Thank you for your potential leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy

These are the last places that contain the "circle of life". We can't afford not to protect them.

I have just returned from Glacier National Park. These precious areas need protection and improvement of habitat water and conservation education and implementation as a priority if they are to continue.

I just think we are going tro have and change the direction humanity is heading I hope you see pthe value of protecting the wilderness

Wilderness and the wildlife that depend upon wild habitat are very important to me. I want to be able to enjoy the knowledge that animals are no longer suffering for the lack of habitat water and food. I want to be able to see beautiful wildlife living in a natural environment rather than in a zoo in a cage. Keeping watersheds national parks and wild habitat are all important to me.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Future generations will judge us by the decisions we make today. We must learn to be better stewards of this country and this planet if we want them to judge us favorably.

There is no room for compromise Mr. President. Talk of compromising on how much to preserve of the remaining five percent of old growth forests for instance is ludicrous. We want ALL of our remaining natural places preserved; no dispensation may be made for ANY extractive industry. None!

Provide Increased OHV Access and Recreational Opportunities

This week as we remember the disaster caused by Hurricane Katrina let's be especially vigilant in protecting our wetlands and natural forests. Let's protect our children from the errors made during our generation and give them an opportunity to experience our natural wonders.

Not only do I want the next generation to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too but I would also like to remind you that science has no idea of the possible negative cumulative environmental effects of human development on the natural world which is after all our life support system here on overburdened planet Earth. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites.

Please let us stop thinking humans are in charge of the earth. This is God's gift to us. Let us enjoy it rather than change it because so far humans have ruined so much.

I'm a physician living in the nearwilderness of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Even here the forest is regularly threatened by motor vehicle enthusiasts who "need" trails every mile. Industrialists who believe forest is only beautiful when being clearcut and stripmined and right wingers on a jihad to end the concept of public property. Starting in our schools Stop increasing the cost of access to public lands with endless "user fees"

In this Year of Biodiversity I urge you to give special attention to the preservation of animal and plant wildlife; ecological balance is important not only for our enjoyment but also for our food supply and health.

I have grand children.I plead for them.

The earth its lands water air and resources must be held in common for all life. Chopping it up and selling it spoiling it melting it contaminated its air soils and waters is a crime against humanity and the dignity and miracle of all life. We are at a turning point. Without radical bold unrelenting commitment to turning things around NOW we are LOST. Irrecoverably lost. Neither your grandchildren or mine will enjoy the amazing miracle of becoming truly human. Thank you I hope for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As I am sure you will agree it is critically important to preserve the places we enjoy now for future generations. Overdevelopment has caused numerous issues (loss of natural habitat wildlife losing homes flooding etc.) and now is the time to stop it.

Please do not turn this conservation issue into a business forum for outdoor recreation corporations (as you have done with health insurance corporations with health care reform oil spill recovery with BP in charge investment reform with Wall Street corporation's CEO's in your cabinet etc.) It seems George Bush senior and the Republicans of years past like Pres. Nixon were better for the environment than you have been. Maybe an oil spill at one of the beaches you like to body surf at in Hawaii would open your eyes? I'll have to see some action and leadership before I thank you for shaping a bold conservation strategy

Please take every step needed to conserve and preserve these natural habitats and the creatures that live within them. Among other problems involved in reducing these areas as we reduce the natural habitats animals have nowhere to go . . . except to populated areas. The earth's future and that of our children and their children rest(s) on your decisions and actions today. Please keep nature natural?

The decisions we make now will affect our world for generations to come.

Do a massive funding of renewable energy sources

It is imperative that we protect our natural resources by protecting America's wilderness watersheds and wildlife habitats so our future generations will be able to enjoy.

Protect Ecosystems for people and wildlife especially the young.

Our children deserve it.

The people of the United States deserve their wilderness and it is your responsibility to insure that they have it at a reasonable cost. Hopefully you will listen to the people on this issue better than you have on others. Disappointed for the first time in the President .

I live on a natural mineral lake wa state. can you tell me any protection for MINERAL LAKES? I cannot find! needs to be. thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would like to encourage the establishment of more urban green space a mix of preserves and recreational. Further I would like to see large swaths of habitat (prairie forest coastal and ocean) set aside for the sole purpose of ecosystem preservation and biodiversity rather than current mentality of stockpiling resources for future need. Please recognize that these landscapes have intrinsic value outside of what we can extract from them and should be preserved in their pristine state free from oil and gas wells. I would like to see the establishment of nature corridors connecting these swaths so that these precious habitats are not "islands" among urban sprawl. Also I would like to see some enforcement and reduction of agriculture runoff as a means to improve water quality and prevent over nutrification of these aquatic environments. Additionally address the issue of chemicals entering and contaminating these environments through improper wastewater treatment.

For the close to 50 years of my life I have always enjoyed the incredible beauty that exists on our country. Places like Yosemite Grand Tetons Yellowstone Devils Tower Glacier Bay and the Everglades are just a few places that have truly changed my life and that I now look forward to sharing with my children as they grow older. What a tragedy it would be if they could only read about what it use to be.

I Voted for change. If I wanted the world paved over I would have voted for the right wingers.

Its also a PROVEN FACT that when we destroyed our wetlands we screwed up the enviroment making hurricanes more destructive. We have got to return the wetlands to nature and protect adnd make more parks and natural reservesOur country is TOO MONEY ORIENTED AND ARE KILLING THE POOR PEOPLE!!

I want there to be wildlife left in the wild.

Please consider the future generations that will inherit this planet. I lose a lot of sleep worrying that there won't be anything left for my young son to enjoy as an adult. We have a great opportunity to change the way we do things now to set an example for our children. I'm teaching my son to conserve water and electricity and appreciate the wildlife around him. Please help me spread this message.

All these abovementioned points will lead to future generations teaching their children how to search for and watch Monarch butterfly eggs grow and turn into beautiful creatures that they can release just as I have taught my children. They will be able to know the beauty of a small stream and learning to fish with their Dad even if you don't catch anything but a good time and conversation with Dad. Walking in the woods learning about trees and animals before they become extinct the trees and the animals.... Thank you for taking the time to read this as well as for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

I've had the privilege of visiting and enjoying our National and State Parks and want future generations to have that same opportunity.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Certainly you understand that if our world is not protected and cherished mankind cannot survive.

I have taught my children and hope to teach my grandchildren to enjoy and appreciate the various american parks and wilderness areas. Recent trends have cast a shadow over future generations ability to do the same. With the problems the country faces now perhaps you and our elected representatives and create a jobs program which will put Americans back to work and preserve/ expand our heritage at the same time.

Once our wild places are gone they are gone forever. Please work to conserve one of the great defining aspects of this country in the face of urban sprawl and climate change. To be most effective plan conservation at a large scale that'll address keeping watersheds and wildlife habitat intact. That will provide the most opportunity for current and future populations of Americans to enjoy and connect with nature. That makes us human.

Conservation means more than wetlands and virginal lands that have not been touched. It also means the beauty we have around us. I live in Kansas a state that is considered a wasteland. Far from that however it's beauty is within the peaceful rolling hills once farmland now becoming malls apartment complexes and housing developments while inner city buildings rot. We need to stop this waste. Money needs to go to rebuilding sites and not always into the creation of new sites that take away precious habitat from the states natural wildlife. For a state like ours this is probably most important. Our rains are feast or famine. It's little known but Kansas is one of the great migratory paths of birds. In fact there are two paths. One for Eastern birds and one for western birds. Birdwatching is a great hobby for many who live in this state. Only recently have we begun to look at this as a natural resource. This needs to be preserved in view of how energy plans for the country are developed. I do want to thank you for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy It's great to finally have someone who seems to get it.

It is imperative as a nation to respect protect and conserve all national and worldly treasures for all to enjoy and share.

Mr President since you grew up in Hawaii you know and understand the legacy we have in our shared outdoors. We were provided that by earlier generations and we must preserve that for future generations.

Please don't let the "know nothings" in Congress block this important environmental legislation.

Thank you for all you do to protect land in the United States through conservation measures. If we had the same philosophy as the early Native Americans regarding the use and protection of "the land" what a wonderful place this would be for all generations now and for those to come.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You are quickly losing my vote with your lack of leadership with progressive environmental measures. Your Secretary of the Interior Salazar has consistently earned my distrust and my belief that he is in the back pocket of big business when it comes to protecting our wilderness. I have been a life long Democrat and it would break my heart to have to bypass you in the 2012 election. But if my trust is not earned back if you don't begin to show real leadership in this and many matters I will be forced to vote for someone else.

Do it before it's too late!

Summer camping and rafting in Idaho what could be better? Knowing that I and future generations can do this again and again. And that each time we will find wildlife and clean air and water.

In spite of the current economic situation and other serious issues facing this country I still place environmental protection and animal welfare uppermost in my concerns.

There are many National Parks that have been special places for vacations natural history learning experiences and spiritual retreats for me and my family. Not just the great ones like Yellowstone and Glacier but smaller saves spaces too. It's so important to save these special places for the future.

Look to your better angels and you will see that this initiative would make a global economical and humanitarian impact like no other in history. Consider the impact should we protect and employ many to guide and handle increased tourism in the US. We might be trailblazers again in the world. If not for this reason consider this request for our future generations.

FULLY FUND the US Forest Service and National Parks Service to maintain road maintenance control burns proper wildlife management (relocation and restoration not unnecessary harrasment/slaughter of bison wolves mustangs etc.) Restrict corporate use of public lands to environmentally safe usages only; grazing is okay OVERgrazing and grazing in areas supporting endangered species is not okay; strip mining oil drilling oil shale (not even worth the effort) and oil pipelines through environmentally critical areas should not even be considered!!

Unless I am mistaken one of the campaign premises which got the Democrats elected is their protection of the wilderness and the environment. This should be a far cry from the actions taken by the Republicans. I hope you are taking this matter seriously and giving it top priority.

You PROMISED us CHANGE! Protecting the environment from the greedy hands of the corrupt big business is certainly change from the past regime and the GOP in general. Please think of our future and do what is best for the people. Thank you for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy

We need stronger protections for all of our Wetlands. Have we not learned a terrible lesson from Hurrican Katrina?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We and particularly you are called to be stewards of the earth. It is time past time to take the long view for our future. The shortsighted actions we have taken so far and the path we are on must be changed for the sake of our children their children and all the creatures on this planet.

Dear Mr. President We have to take steps now to head off the prediction that our Earth will support life for only another one thousand years made by one of humanity's greatest scientist Stephen Hawking. This is not just a problem for our children and grandchildren but for all the world's creatures and environments. This initiative is only an iota of what needs to be done. Please.

dear mr president as an old woman retired after 50 years as a fulltime lawyer i wish you to know and understand that the natural resources and wildlife are every bit as important as present day jobs or economy. if we kill them off there will be no future for the next generations. expediency must never take priority over ethics and the long haul. thank you

I propose that we use preservation land to back our currency to replace gold. This will ensure that it is properly valued and that it remains protected regardless of the ballance of power in washington.

Protecting our great outdoors will improve our health and lift our spirits.

As I was growing up my family took me as often as possible to enjoy the great outdoors. We hiked the Appalachian trail. Did white water river rafting in many states. Camped and swam in our wilds. Keep the water mining of Natural Oil out of our protected lands.

Although some of the negative actions and destruction enabled and abetted by the previous administration has been stopped there is much more to be done to save and restore wild scenic special places that should be a legacy to future generations as well as an enjoyment for all of us now even those who have not yet had the opportunity to experience these special places.

personally i am strongly against any new nuclear power plants. look at the ongoing crisis of Chernobl. i just don't think humans are responsible or farsighted enough to mess with nuclear. Chernobl is ignored !

Like millions of others my life and values have been deeply affected by my experiences growing up in an urban environment but with many treasured visits to our National and State Park Systems. As we urbanize we need the counterbalance of these preserved locations to stay in touch with something greater than ourselves. Lose the parks and the human race becomes more selfish. We have too much of that already. Please support the parks and our natural heritage at every opportunity. Help make us a better people.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama & company As a young active college student America's public lands are essential for me as a place of escape beauty and wilderness. Someone (who I've since forgotten) said it best when he noted that an American looking for beauty need not look outside his own country. Let's keep that truth alive and preserve our parks and public lands.

I am a recently retired American who has loved nature and the outdoors since early childhood. Memories include: huckleberry picking on dusty trails Priest Lake Idaho; exploring cliff dwellings in New Mexico and Arizona; wilderness hikes in the Sierras the Pacific Northwest the Southwest (as well as in Costa Rica and Peru); hundreds of hikes in state and national parks of California where I lived for over 30 years. Newly moved to Arizona my dashboard is already piled with City State and National Park receipts; I visit these areas several times a week often with my age 6 grandchild who already loves hiking climbing and camping and knows a lot of natural history. I find peace and perhaps wisdom through my frequent visits to protected wilderness areas. It becomes clear that each of us is part of an apparently infinite variety of plant and animal life earth and that this amazing creation earth life must be treasured and protected. We human beings don't have the right to destroy it through waste pollution and wanton development.

Control and heavily fine environmental polluters at all levels and locales

All of the above are excellent goals and should be pursued but ABOVE ALL ELSE protect all our current and possible wilderness from development mining and drilling.

More than that it is the obligation of today's generation to pass on the legacy of 'America the Beautiful.' We cannot afford to squander our natural resources or to deplete or ancient forests just to appease corporate interests.

Don't forget the wetlands and swamps. I think the government doesn't have any right to sell off any of our public lands we should be conserving more land.

Make conservation and protection and love for our planet a vital part of the education of our children.

Varied development is threatening our wild lands all over the country. We need to continue to protect our wild places for people and wildlife.

I have firsthand heard people from other countries comment how surprised and delighted they are with the openness and variety we have in the United States. They are amazed at places like Yellowstone National Park where they can see nature and an array of wildlife. Even though they may have seen pictures of the Grand Canyon seeing it in person is aweinspiring. We are so fortunate to have such a majestic country with so many diverse regions. Each needs to be protected and preserved for future generations. We cannot sit back and wait for someone else to take the initiative. Five years ten years from now may be too late. Could you have predicted the Gulf oil disaster before it happened?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I voted a straight Democratic ticket the last election in part because of the impression true mostly that Democrats are more willing to safeguard our environment and deal with issues of climate change.

Allow protected wildlife to stay protected

Most importantly to me please protect the Arctic waters and lands from oil drilling. There is no clean oil/gas harvesting.

Protect our waters and land from oil drilling.

I never had an opportunity to visit our great parks til I was in my 50's; but I knew all my life that they were worth saving for all humanity. Not just to be leased to ranchers or for oil drilling. Thank you !

You also need to stop Monsanto from killing and distorting the natural wild plants and also our food plants with their toxic chemicals and GMO practices.

Everyone complains about global warming. Wilderness areas protect against it. Why would you want to cut funding for what we have. I would think you would increase it as well as add too.

scenic rivers and historic sites all within a larger framework that urgently addresses climate change. 1. Address Climate Change at a large scale and look at all other issues as they relate to climate change considerations. 2. Conservation of and access to public lands.

Initating a "CCC" type of organization would also provide necessary jobs and allow those workers a personal involvement with our natural spaces.

Restore Moratorium on Offshore Oil Drilling!

This is about species survival our species. If we don't protect the environment habitat critical to the survival of innumerable plant and animal species will disappear. If enough of these species go extinct eventually so will we.

There is only so much land lets use it wisely!

Future generations should be allowed to enjoy America's great outdoors.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I look forward to seeing your immediate steps to help conserve and protect our most precious elements of life.

Please continue on in the tradition of Teddy Roosevelt by safeguarding the outdoor space that is still left and restoring those areas such as wetlands that are so vital to our environment health!

Please make wilderness new parks and monuments and restoration of wetlands and wildlife habitat the cornerstone of America's Great Outdoors. New and growing threats of overdevelopment pollution and a changing climate demand a smarter sciencebased approach to protecting wild areas wildlife rivers and lakes and cultural and historic sites that connect us to nature to each other and to our shared past.

I want my future children & grandchildren to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Not only are these things essential to life on planet earth but they are beautiful and a great educational tool in which we can learn about & discover for years and years to come. Plants and animals were here first; why are we so concerned with getting rid of these things when they are a crucial part of this world...?

All my favorite family memories from childhood and continuing into my adult life involve being outdoors. Camping hiking cooking over the campfire are all memories entwined with the feeling of closeness in my family and in the community. We must protect our outdoor areas and keep them GREAT so that future generations have the opportunities to make their memories as well.

Here in western Washington State Mason County especially we need more public access parks on the waterfront. We are surrounded by water. South Puget Sound and Hood Canal have a few limited access parks. But there are several lakes rivers and many smaller creeks with very little or no public access at all. On a hot day it is so frustrating to be surrounded by all this beauty and not be able to enjoy the cool water unless you are rich and OWN the access.

I will appreciate your taking steps to conserve and protect our land and wildlife and as much of our great outdoors in . Thank you

The Special Interests have been having their way for decades now which has brought incredible pressure upon the natural resources open spaces and natural living creatures of this land. It's time for the Pendulum to swing in the other direction! Teddy Roosevelt one of our greatest Presidents knew and understood this. It's time to fight back in the spirit of TR once again. It's time to say NO to the special interests for the sake of our children if nothing else.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Take immediate action to stop global warming which is destroying many habitats for wildlife. It's important to me that my grandchildren and their children to come have the opportunity to enjoy the many wonderous and beautiful places and the wildlife that inhabit them that I was fortunate to enjoy as a child. It breaks my heart that they are so rapidly slipping away from us. Our wilderness must be protected in order that the earth can repair herself. By fully funding land and water conservation fund perhaps the generations to come will be able to enjoy those things. Thank you for your consideration in protecting our wilderness and wildlife. When I was growing up my family spent summers and took small trips throughout the year to the Great Smokey Mountains. We enjoyed the rivers and lakes and all the amazing wildlife we encountered there. Today due to many factors much of that has changed and it saddens me greatly.

Dear Mr. President and Officials Having traveled most of my young adult years I can tell you what it is like to have seen Yellowstone National Park. Learning from the Rangers about the wildlife there and how to Respect these areas. I have seen Alaska and I cannot tell you how i felt when i saw my first Salmon fish. I was taken in by people who were Locals and they gave me tours of their area. They Loved where they lived and also respected the open space that we are so Blessed to enjoy to date. Mr. President and Officials What are YOU going to leave the next generation for them to see? That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand You have the power to Tax companies to help fund what is needed.

A bold conservation strategy for the 21st century is of serious importance. Many people think the purpose of conservation is for pleasure and enjoyment of the outdoors. I feel and science is backing me up on this it is critical to the survival of the human race along with all the creatures we share this earth with. I lead weekly nature walks for children and adults. The wonder a respect I see in their faces reaffirms my commitment every week. We need the outdoors for our well being as well as our survival. Educating people on the importance of a clean healthy balanced world is vital to the future of conservation. Giving people a place to connect to nature close to their home and throughout the country will benefit all of us. Please make public land protection and expansion a cornerstone of our countries policy.

Surely you have many decisions to make that effect our environment economy (appointing Elizabeth Warren is the right and timely step to take NOW!) citizen health and more. Protecting our outofdoors is essential.

Parks in small towns also must be considered for development. In most cases parks and park activities in small towns attract businesses new residents and tourists helping to improve the economy of the town. Parks in small towns are big assets for the town and the nation. Your involvement in this is wonderful.

If we do not allocate funding to protecting these areas they will go away. We need these wonderful outdoor areas to not only preserve natural environment but to give a balance to the built human environment that we have spread all over the U.S. landscape. Without the therapeutic benefits of outdoor recreation we are destroying a natural legacy that is older than the United States itself.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Living beside the Rocky Mtns. reminds me daily how important it is to preserve these Natural lands for our children..Please support efforts to protect/increase & improve our Natural Resources.

The wonders of nature that we enjoy do not belong to us. They belong to all the species that evolved within an ecosystem. They must be preserved to enable all of us to continue to live sustainably and for the mutual benefit of us all.

We have just endured one of the worst administrations in U.S. history with regard to environmental quality and protection. Because of their 8 year reign we are far behind in protecting and preserving our natural areas and resources. The Gulf of Mexico has just fallen victim to the laxity of government regulations/protections and exploitive practices of big business. You must take aggressive action to counter the abuses of the past and the paid lobbyists whose only desire is to enrich their employers at public expense.

I spent some of the happiest days of my childhood in Sequoia National Park and the Kern River Canyon. I want my grandchildren to have the same opportunity to create beautiful memories of America's wild places.

Above is the petition text the way the Wilderness Society sent it to me. They ask us to "personalize the message" so here goes: America will NOT have a future to enjoy if action isn't taken very shortly to remove that oil underneath the Gulf of Mexico's surface it should be very easy to find as it's 26 miles long and 600 feet thick in places. This oil plume that BP denies the existence of will stop the gulf current and eventually stall the current which heads to England/Europe along our eastern seaboard this will affect the whole planet eventually sending us into an ice age. Be our HERO and send pumping ships and oil tankers to the plume run long hoses down to the plume and pump it up to the tankers on the surface. I find that you campaigned to be then "People President" but have made many promises that haven't been kept or worse have done the exact opposite. IF you can show the public that ALL of the oil has been removed then I'm sure the country will vote for you again in 2012. This can be accomplished by that promised "transparency" that has disappeared and by allowing the media full access to the pumping and also the beach cleanup. BP's action in covering up the oiled beaches with fresh sand and the denial of media access to public land stank of a conspiracy to deny the truth. And the oil cleanup "pie chart" we were shown was an insult to our intelligence. Abraham Lincoln who you admire greatly and told us you patterned yourself after was mainly admired for his HONESTY.

Make the connection between conservation and climate

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

"You can never be too careful" when it comes to taking care of our planet since all life forms depend upon it. We need to practice good stewardship. Never being too careful it is better to err on the side of caution and protecting our environment. It is spiritually bankrupt to depend on fossil fuels especially oil. The lust for oil has caused more harm than good wasted more resources and human life and we should invest more in alternative energy. I can't vote for any politician that doesn't share these views.

For our life health and future America the beautiful lets keep it that way.

I grew up loving and enjoying the outdoors. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. The time for compromise on wilderness issues was 50 years ago Mr President. We are in the unfortunate circumstance of fighting desperately to protect the last 5% of old growth pine forest the last 10% of our western rivers. We cannot relax our support for habitat protections in the ESA. We need more Wild & Scenic Rivers designations. You must seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I add here the text of other comments I have submitted but have so far received no acknowledgment. My comments are based on my professional knowledge training and experience that spans over four decades. I have a Ph.D. in chemistry that allowed me to pursue 30 years of biomedical research drug discovery and medicinal chemistry at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda where I ended my time as a section chief in 1999. I then became Professor and Chair of Chemistry at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff where I served for eight years. During that time I was also appointed a Full Investigator at the University of Arizona Cancer Center and also appointed as Professor of Medicine at the University of Arizona Medical School. I have published over 200 scientific papers edited four books on drug discovery and medicine been granted several patents and was the cofounding scientist of a startup company. My concern expressed here is about the dependence of the drug discovery process on products of the natural world. Fully half of the medicines in use today arose from plant microorganism or animals. In the case of anticancer therapeutics that number approaches 70% or more. The 1990's saw big pharma turn away from natural product drug discovery efforts in favor of what appeared to be less expensive more productive means of discovery. The tough lesson learned is that our science is not advanced enough for that and a path is being beaten back to the natural world as a source of novel medicines as well as clues on what artificial molecules could be of medical use. While the challenges poised by common infectious diseases metabolic and genetic diseases and cancer are mind numbing we must also bear in mind the growing threat of emerging infectious diseases bacterial resistance to antibiotics and bioterrorism. We will never run out of the need for novel medicinals. However even though we are faced with medical problems as great as any in history we willnilly continue to impoverish the natural cornucopia that has given the best medicine in history. I refer here to the present humaninduced extinction crisis. I hope you have had time to read the writing of Harvard biologist E. O. Wilson as well as such preeminent authorities as Stuart Pimm Michael Soulé John Terborgh to name a few. I trust you are familiar with the findings of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and related scientific organizations. The message from all these sources is the same. We are destroying the fabric of life on this planet. Humans are causing extinctions at a rate approaching that at the end of the age of dinosaurs (Cretaceous) the one initiated by a massive asteroid impact. And perhaps we are going to compete with the one at the end of the Permian (250 million yrs ago) when life itself nearly disappeared from Earth. We also KNOW that at least 20% of mammals 30% of amphibians and 12% of birds 30% of flowering plants 20% of reptiles 40% of freshwater fishes and 70% of freshwater mussels and 20% of ferns currently are threatened with extinction. And that's just a few examples. The scientific fact is that humans use over 40% of the primary productivity of this planet! That is 40% of the products of photosynthesis every year go to human use directly or indirectly. We are only one species out of millions and we depend on all the others for our food clean water clean air pollination medicines wood and fiber recreation and many more services. I argue here from just the single perspective of a biomedical scientist. As we willnilly extinguish species we also willnilly destroy the future of a host of medicines for the American people and indeed the people of this Earth. Imagine the repercussions if someone had caused the extinction of the Pacific Yew tree before we discovered Taxol which has given breast and ovarian cancer patients hope. Or what if the

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Rosy Periwinkle of Madagascar had been doomed to extinction before we discovered the anticancer drugs contained therein. Vinblastine and vincristine have totally revolutionized the treatment of childhood cancer turning a nearly certain death sentence into a almost certain survival to lead a full productive life. Even the lowly and ancient horseshoe crab contributes mightily to our nation's health by making possible the detection of highly toxic bacterial toxins in medicines made for injection. Presently the greatest threat to species loss is the appropriation of habitat by humans. The most effective way to counter this is through habitat preservation and more specifically through the setting aside of large tracts of wildlands places where the forces of nature are dominant and humans have but a minor influence. I subscribe to a definition put forth some time ago: "[wilderness] is the ultimate source of health terrestrial and human." That encompasses all the values encapsulated by the Wilderness Act in a short simple phrase. It recognizes that for wilderness to remain "untrammelled" it must also serve as a Noah's Ark in an age when least 20% of mammals 30% of amphibians and 12% of birds 30% of flowering plants 20% of reptiles 40% of freshwater fishes and 70% of freshwater mussels and 20% of ferns and many more are threatened with extinction. Fortunately we have a mechanism for accomplishing this aim: the National Wilderness Preservation System. However just over 2.5% on the lands in the lower 48 states is protected as wilderness. Much more is of wilderness quality. Your administration needs to work diligently with Congress to place many more lands under Wilderness status. Such designation is also of benefit to humans in terms of nonmotorized recreation watershed protection wildlife fisheries carbon sequestration and rural economies. I suggest that your Presidential Legacy should involve the designation of at least 50000000 new acres of wilderness. And baring the ability of Congress to act quickly enough you should reach into your administrative toolkit to protect these lands by regulations and Executive Orders (e.g. National Monuments). Mr. President conservation biologists will tell you that in order to ensure species longterm survival these wilderness "cores" must be connected by means of wildlife corridors. You should order that Federal Agencies adopt policies to establish such corridors immediately and then your administration should work to have these embodied as the law of the land. Furthermore since many of our key core wilderness areas are beset with potential destructive private "inholdings" you should seek funding to buy out as many of these as possible. This does not have to add to the administrative burden of your Presidency. There already exists a very effective nonprofit The Wilderness Land Trust (www.wildernesslandtrust.org) that pursues this goal. They just need some additional funding to make it happen. In the interest of full disclosure I proudly serve on the Board of Directors of that organization. And I must make a special plea for my home region of Southwest Oregon called KlamathSiskiyou Bioregion. It is in the northernmost part of the California Floristic Province one of the Earth's 25 Biodiversity "Hotspots." These "hotspots" are biogeographic regions with a significant reservoir of biological diversity that are under intense threat from humans. Together they contain about 60% of the Earth's known species. The California Floristic Province is a zone of Mediterraneantype climate and with high levels of plant endemism characteristic of such regions. The KlamathSiskiyou region bridges the coastal mountain ranges of California and Oregon and is home to the most diverse temperate coniferous tree community in the world. Here in the KlamathSiskiyou Ecoregion we are blessed since almost 63% of the landbase is in federal ownership thereby providing a huge

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

opportunity for forward thinking biodiversity preservation actions. This ecoregion has been regarded as an area of global botanical significance by the World Conservation Union (IUCN 1992) a proposed "World Heritage Site" and UNESCO "Biosphere Reserve" a global "center of plant diversity" and a "Global 200" ecoregion by the World Wildlife Fund. The area is however being severely threatened and degraded by both federal and private actions. 1. There exist here low levels of protection (12%) compared to other temperate conifer ecoregions in the United States. 2. Extensive habitat fragmentation is common with more than 30000 miles of roads in the ecoregion. Moreover intensive logging has replaced biodiversityrich oldgrowth forests with sterile tree plantations at a rate of about 50000 acres per year since the 1970s. 3. There are 154 terrestrial species here with state or federal conservation status. This is largely a result of habitat fragmentation and degradation. 4. There have been five extirpations: grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*) gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) and big horn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*). 5. Over half of the ecoregion's 877 watersheds show extensive degradation and are in rapid decline. This is caused by road building logging barriers to fish passage livestock grazing fire suppression overallocation of instream flows and water quality problems contribute to poor watershed health 6. Exotic species here are akin to a "biological wildfire. Most notably the endemic Port Orford cedar (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) has been devastated by an exotic rootrot fungus (*Phytophthora lateralis*) that is threatening the functional role of this cedar as a keystone species of riparian areas. 7. Finally there is a decline of endemics and globally imperiled communities. Once these species are gone or once they reach a "living dead" population level and once these ecosystem begin to unwind we will lose more than the imagination could ever fathom. Not only will miracles like Taxol disappear but an all but invisible vital support and subsidy source will greatly decrease the economic and wellbeing status of every American. This is a national security issue of paramount importance to address. Fortunately we have many of the tools already at hand to rescue much of this biological and ecological wonder that supports us as humans. I refer to the Antiquities Act and the Wilderness Act. One of the priorities in my specific region would include the designation of a million acre Siskiyou Crest National Monument. With a single designation you could protect the wondrous biodiversity of this key biogeographic region provide a destination for recreationists of many kinds stimulate local economies and provide a biological corridor for genetic flow and climate change adaptation. A second priority encompasses what we here call the Siskiyou Wild Rivers National Salmon and Botanical Area. This would establish robust cohesive protections for the forests and watersheds of five Wild & Scenic Rivers on public lands. To conserve them commercial logging mining and offroad vehicle use will be restricted. Roadless areas will be protected as Wilderness and nine candidate rivers will be given Wild & Scenic River status. A key piece of this would be protection of southwest Oregon's Rogue River and the neighboring forests. You must nudge Congress in the right direction here for the benefit of America. Enormous opportunities await you administration if you are willing to chart a robust and healthy future for natural world which framed America and led her to be the envy of the world. For us for our children and onto the Seventh Generation I implore you to act on behalf of all the species of this beautiful Earth. We here who care about the future stand ready to inform your administration about the needs of people and nature in our ecoregion.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Give us a chance. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your American Great Outdoors Initiative.

You have an important opportunity to transform conservation for the 21st century and leave a natural heritage legacy in this country for future generations to enjoy. Our wild lands parks forests and historic sites are invaluable treasures which must be protected. Thank you.

Find ways to tax pollutions sources so that the cost and damage of pollution is passed on to the generators so the true cost is recognized by all consumers.

I voted for our current president because of the lack of accountability of government. I WANT REAL CHANGE. I expect government agencies to act in the best interests of the majority of Americans middle class working citizens. Preserving our wilderness areas/wildlife habitat IS DEFINITELY in the best interests of we the people. It's our heritage. It belongs to the citizens of the United States. It's not to be bought and sold for the profitability of a few select individuals. I abhor the role government agencies have taken in poisoning/decimating wildlife for the benefit of cattlemen and Big Agra (or Big Oil or Big Lumber or Mining). You know what I'm talking about. I detest my tax dollars being spent by government agencies that DO NOT REPRESENT ME MY WILL MY IDEALS MY MORALS OR MY BEST INTERESTS! Cyanide and Compound 1080 and M44s and aerial gunning and leg traps and bullets.....Attitudes trickle down from the top. That's why so many people will NEVER forgive the Bush administration for the damage done to our environment our economy and our integrity as a nation. Get the corporate mindset out of Washington DC NOW! Get rid of the lobbyists! When is it going to change? Why can't the "Environmental Protection Agency" protect anything but corporate profits???? There's some real sarcasm in the name of that agency. We the people have lost all patience. Government by corporations has literally brought this country to its knees anyone can see that. I know the propaganda put out in the mainstream media hoping to keep Americans from focusing on the REAL issues. There's no accountability in media either and there should be. We as a nation can be no better than the worst among us and their worst actions. We must lead by example NO MORE PREEMPTIVE STRIKES! No more war! Protect our environment! Give real government incentives for clean renewable energy technology! Promote TRUE organic farming promote cruelty free natural sustainable farming methods and FAMILY FARMS. SMALL LOCAL FARMS. No instead our government continues to go in the WRONG direction. Promote truthful reporting in the media and punish spin and propaganda. Get Big Chemical Big Pharma Big Agra Big Media Big Defense Big Oil and all the rest of these corporate profit mongers out of the governing equation. As a nation we are on the edge of a precipice. We have run out of time. We cannot be a world power without the ideals of a world power. We must recover them now or forever hold a lower rank!

public lands as well as for the sake of wildlife itself please consider these priorities for America's Great

Now is the time to strengthen America's natural heritage legacy!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our nation and the world economy faces a difficult time. But during the last depression it was public conservation spending that helped pull us out of it. And the legacy Roosevelt left by wilderness and park spending is enriching our nation today.

I am writing to ask you to do all you can to protect and preserve America's national parks wilderness areas monuments historic sites forests rivers and trails. I have a personal interest especially in The Ozark National Scenic Riverways which includes some of the most beautiful springs and streams in America and is home to several endangered species found nowhere else on earth. and wildlife Restore damaged Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat through Education

Our future generations deserve to have the benefits of our beautiful outdoors to enjoy the same as it used to be in the past. Please keep greed from destroying it any further.

The beauty of our country is disappearing "progress" has long since become regression as speculative building commercial development pollution etc. eat away at the heart of this land. Without immediate decisive action we will wake up one day in just a few years to discover a concrete country paved and fenced off from sea to shining sea. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild

Connect people but NOT ATV's with Nature

If you do this right you can also create jobs.

Your commitment to Wilderness and Wildlife is the main reason you got my vote.

Thank you for your leadership in attempting to restore sound conservation and environmental policies to our country. Much remains to be done. Specifically it is absolutely vital to make preservation of wilderness establishment of new parks and monuments and restoration of wetlands and wildlife habitat the cornerstone of America's Great Outdoors. New and growing threats specifically overdevelopment pollution and a changing climate demand a focused approach to preserving and protecting the wild areas wildlife rivers and lakes and cultural and historic sites that connect us to nature to each other and to our shared history. I beg you to make these your highest conservation priorities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I remember the heartbreak I felt when Bush's regime violated much of our public lands and placed immediate profit over longterm social enjoyment of the lands we have for the public. I would like to tell my children that all the lands that have been disregarded and ravaged in the past eight years are now brought back under government protection so that thier children and generations to come can enjoy the experience of being in the woods the desert or the mountains and connect with nature once again on the most basic immediate level. Everyone should have that opportunity. Please protect our nations parks and fund the ability to conserve more for generations to come.

And PLEASE don't take our county forest preserves away.

The nation must preserve it's natural environment and serve the sacred trust inherited from previous generations. protect air & water quality everywhere Improve Watersheds and protect Wildlife Habitat Build renewable power generation plants and retire fossil fuel power plants convert all existing coal plants to clean coal plants with carbon sequestration and construct energy storage systems to give the electrical power distribution system a backbone that empowers distributed power generation on a robust scale.

America's great outdoors is a wonderful legacy of our democracy and part of our shared experience as a nation.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too and you as the leader of our country have the power to make certain that happens. Here in California for example development and conservation are in constant contest against one another. With your help work toward restoring the Eastern Sierras' Mono Lake toward historical water levels and preventing development around can continue. Outdoors. The America we love cannot survive without them:

I have long enjoyed visiting our National Parks across the country and want to preserve support and expand these opportunities for the future.

Don't cave to corporate pressure to extract more natural resources from public lands. Expand conservation efforts.

In addition I want to preserve wild areas for native plants and animals. We need to protect and preserve these areas. Humans are not the only living being on this planet and it is time we started thinking about all living creatures. We need to stop building instead we should rebuild areas that are dilapidated. We need new cleaner sources of energy instead of depleting our earth of all its natural resources. I know it is expensive to make these changes but the our future the earth's future depends on it.

Now more than ever we need to keep our green lands intact!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

.I would like to make sure that our national parks are made accessible and affordable for visitation by low income inner city children and adults. Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities

These are our most valuable resources and must be preserved. These resources are our heritage.

I have greatly enjoyed the largely unfettered access to the great outdoor areas since my settling here in 1965. The many wilderness experiences in Colorado and elsewhere have made a lasting impression on me and my preferred means of relaxation in the outdoors. For example this weekend we are headed to the Wildcat Hills of Nebraska for horseback riding on a friend's ranch. Also my wife is US Forrest Service volunteer for the Poudre Wilderness Volunteers in Larimer and Weld counties.

Living in Michigan near the recent 1000000gallon oil spill I'm acutely aware of the preciousness of our surroundings and all of its inhabitants.

I grew up visiting our national parks with my parents people of the "Greatest Generation." I want my grandchildren to have those same opportunities and more. Please take every action needed to protect and enhance the parks and monuments that preserve our heritage and culture. Also STOP the "let it burn" philosophy that became popular within the national forest service. Please don't let forest fires burn up Yellowstone or any other national treasure again in the name of misplaced trust in the "natural processes."

I understand that in this political climate that allocating money for these things may be challenging but timing is very important and we should make this time something that will be recognized as a point at which we really did something to make these opportunities for recreation and protection a reality.

This planet and especially the beautiful areas of it this continent need to be protected conserved and kept free from development. We have and continue to destroy so much of it...

We have a Moral Responsibility & Obligation to leave the Earth in a Healthier State for Future Generations.

I think it is essential to protect the wilderness. I think God manifests himself through wilderness and we have much to learn from it. We should respect it and not deplete it. Help us to do that .

Cities need carbon credits so they can do the right thing to protect openspace.

Oil dependency pollution and urban sprawl have contributed to encroachment and resulting destruction of our wilderness areas not to mention funding cuts and the repealing of laws that once helped protect them. Once they're gone they're gone. Encourage the development of green energy sources

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up near the natural wonders of the Everglades. I worry now that my daughter might never experience the beauty of the Southern Florida wilderness let alone my grandchildren or greatgrandchildren.

One great concern of mine is the generation of electricity from solar power plants. Solar is just one of the componets that will allow this country to lessen our dependence of fossil fuels. My concern is the solar power generating facilities that use water. Water is one of our countries most precious resources. Using our water resources in the generation of solar power will put extreme pressure on our water resources. Please do not allow Federal monies for this purpose. Droughts are still a reality in many parts of the country that have great potential for solar power. Lessening the threats to our wildlands is important. Conserving them is extremely important especially our water resources.

Whenever I feel disturbed distracted and overwhelmed by my daily routine and have need to be restored I find what I lack in the great outdoors. Being in nature whether walking running biking swimming or simply sitting reminds me of the beauty around and inside me. I spent last weekend hiking and camping on the Appalachian trail in Harriman State Park. As evening approached I sat on a rock by a clear mountain lake and marveled at how lucky I am to be able to enjoy such a simple and unfortunately vanishing pleasure.

These precious places are not simply tourist attractions but help to preserve our world our environment our lives.

We must conserve and preserve our wilderness. There is so little left. Conservation of our publiclyowned open spaces is a winwin situation. All Americans benefit. The more we lose open spacethe more we allow industrial concerns to degrade our publiclyowned land the more we lose as a nation.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors and not have to clean up after our mess. Increase funding to protect federally protected wildlife from overzealous state governments

If have been to many beautiful parks and wild life area around the country. It was very moving for me to get to see these places. I walked through many of them and I would be very disappointed to see there areas disappear. Just camping in local parks has been a great experience. Listening tp the wild life at night and see them at twilight. I am an early riser so I watch them throught the window of the trailer so I don't dissturb them. Having people dig drill and build new homes in these places would be an injustice to future generations Please do everything in your power to stop the cruelty to our land.

Make sure you remember to be that great American that you are and get this back on the table of refusal to budge. it indicates a leadership that carries over time and party affiliation. Thanks President Obama. Kick some ass and get us back on track. I still believe you are the right man for the job.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need your help to keep our world beautiful and clean..I love the space around me in Coco. as well as Kansas when it is kept with clean water and space..Thanks Pam Darnell

Provide adequate funding for restoration and law enforcement on public lands

We need to support adequate funding for our National and State Parks Systems and the National Park Service. And we need complete streets more and better pedestrian and bike interconnecting our residential communities and linking them to shopping recreational and employment centers and multimodal transportation centers.

I want our future generations to enjoy America's great outdoors too. I raised my daughter from infancy to love and respect all that we call our great outdoors. As a result she is now working on her Masters degree in Outdoor Education so that all of the children's lives that she touches will have a greater appreciation for all that the "great outdoors" encompasses. Without your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century our future generations will not have the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate what many currently take for granted. Thank you in advance for your decision to create a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

Perhaps one of the greatest mistakes of our time is putting biomass incinerators on the renewable energy list. The co2 and particulate pollution from incinerators are not acceptable.

Most of the great parks are overcrowded illustrating the need for nature in our lives to repair our souls in this hectic world. These places are sanctuaries that reflect the beauty of our planet and are irreplaceable in this rapidly expanding civilization. We simply need to do a better job of protecting them and creating more for future generations before it is too late. We don't need to mine every mineral log every forest and carve every access road in this brief generation.

Luther Standing Bear once said "Man's heart away from nature becomes hard; [the Lakota] knew that lack of respect for growing living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too." So I ask that you please consider the following. It's not only for nature's sake but mankind's own sake. We need to protect these natural places before future generations have nothing left.

for the 21st century even if the military industrial complex is running our country at this time you can do something that will benefit your very own family particularly your two fine girls who deserve a fighting chance in our environment. I never could understand how the real rulers don't seem to care about their own families when it comes to the environment. Is the money and power that important when one jeopardizes their very own?! I realize the executive branch no longer leads the nation but the least you can do is make it as difficult as possible for those who do. Thanks very much for doing something to help the situation!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

And a resident of the Great Lakes region of the U.S. I feel the Great Lakes need special protection from oil drilling industrial pollution and sewage as the major source of fresh water for millions of citizens. and the Great Lakes

It is imperative that we preserve America's remaining outdoor spaces into the future especially with an eye on preserving the natural habitat for wildlife. Our own survival and that of our fellow creatures depends on this.

Dear President Obama: We are aware that you have had enormous challenges as our president to correct an absolute mess. I want to thank you and your staff personally for looking into this and to thank you for all you have done already for our country in so many ways.

End these stupid wars and spend the money repairing the mess this country is in. Don't ever bail out Wall Street again bail out the working class instead. Picture what would happen if you gave the money to the working class bills paid off no one thrown out of their houses no more you owe xxx dollars to xxx scams anymore. Best of all shred the credit cards.

I want the next generation and generations beyond to have the opportunity to enjoy America's great outdoors. America is a large and unique land from lush forests to deserts to mountains to plains...the diversity of our wilderness is aweinspiring and is a huge part of what makes our country great. As our lives become more technological and urban or suburban our link to the land and the wilderness grows weaker. We need the people of America and our government to remember the land before it is too late. I was born in Utah a truly majestic state with mile after mile of wilderness. As my life has marched on away from the place of my birth I am always amazed at the strong tie and I have to the wilderness of my youth. It makes up the fabric of the person I am today. I hope that my children can feel the same connection to their place of birth California and that over the years we can all enjoy the lands that resonate so deeply within our beings.

Preserve pristine nature and prevent contamination through genetically engineered species. Recognize that animals and nature should be treated as the valuable resources that they are Eliminate pesticides herbicides and fungicides

ensuring that ecosystems do not become fragmented "islands." Ensure that wildlife corridors are part of the park system. that are in keeping with the peaceful experience of the landscape that the great majority of park goers are seeking.

On a personal note if we do not take care to ensure the healthy conditions of beautiful planet Earth now we may not get another chance. The recent disastrous oil spill will take its toll on Earth and future generations for many years to come. If we don't reach out to preserve the wild and historical magnificence we have left in America it will slip uncontrollably out of our hands forever.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think of Teddy Roosevelt often these days. When he was a kid he used to think the Great Seal of the United States was actually a seal one that ate fish. I wonder what he would think of his wild places today the ones he loved so much. Please do everything in your power to save and protect our remaining wilderness areas. It's so disturbing to see what we've done to our wild areas in my lifetime alone I hate to reflect on it. When I was a kid the rains resulted in an amazing explosion of frogs everywhere on a biblical scale. Big ones little ones smooth ones bumpy ones frogs the size of my pinkie nail hopping all over the place like crazy super balls dropped from the sky. It was a sight to behold. Wish my kids could see it but it's gone. Vanished. Just a memory in my mind's eye. Today frogs are disappearing faster than a popsicle in Palm Springs. I used to watch baby horny toads (what silly scientists call the Texas Horned Lizard) frolic by the hundreds at my bare feet; I'd scoop them up by the handful. Now they're endangered. I used to watch pronghorn antelope bound gracefully beside our family car on the freeway at 50 miles per hour now my kids think I'm making this up. The creek and wetlands where I caught pollywogs and powderblue damsel flies is now a cement drainage ditch. There's still a lot to save. But we must act now before it's all gone. I want my children to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Obama carpe diem! Hurry. Seize this moment to create to expand to better protect America's shared outdoor spaces. Wilderness whispers words of wisdom: let it be. Monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites all these must be protected. My ____ should always be able to enjoy our public lands. Please consider these priorities for America's Great ____ Thank you Mr. President. It's a new day in this brave new world. Help us and help Congress shape a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

I am thankful for the foresight of past generations that set aside Wilderness State and National park lands for us to enjoy. These are one of the largest assets and treasures in our country. I spend most every weekend hiking snowshoeing and biking in my backyard paradise the Wasatch Mountains of Utah. My favorite vacation is to backpack and reconnect with nature. I feel lucky to live so close to many wild places that can make this a reality. I never tire of exploring the outdoors enjoying wildlife and the remoteness. I notice every year more and more Americans are discovering the outdoors and these paradise settings are getting crowded. Further those lands not protected are often challenged with access issues development and grazing/mining/drilling interests. It is with real concern that I write to you to ask that you help to ensure that future generations will always benefit and enjoy our public lands please consider these priorities for America's Great ____

"In wildness is preservation of the world" is a statement truer now than when first written which is why our society needs to diligently conserve and protect our natural heritage.

I think it should be at least a felony to introduce a foreign species into any ecology.

I currently enjoy bicycle trails. We need more for recreation and for kids to get to school safely. Please continue to support RailtoTrails.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Above all make sure to decrease pollution through enforcement of existing regulations which should be protecting our environment thus protecting the public's health and wellbeing. Continue to fight for an increase in renewable energy which will help as well.

This is IMPORTANT! And now is the time to act because soon it will be too late and our irreplaceable wildlands wildlife wilderness and entire natural heritage will be destroyed and gone forever. Please prove that all of us who voted for leadership and change did not make a dreadful mistake that leader and break with past pollution exploitation and destruction. Take a stand for conservation and preservation.

My parents' generation is remembered as The Greatest Generation; my generation will surely be remembered as The Irresponsible Generation. For decades our government has put the interests of the few superrich ahead of the best interests of the US. The horrendous proof is all around us today. Please Mr. President for the sake of your daughters of my daughter of all of America's children help enforce a sense of responsibility and priorities on our legislators. Please stop the efforts to leave a legacy of The Most Reckless Generation.

On a more personal and local note I call your attention to Sterling Forest in New York just an hour's drive from New York City. This area had been an outdoor enthusiast's paradise under private management a decade ago but since relegated to the perversely limited vision of the Palisades Park Commission of NY & NJ it has become a wilderness museum "Look but don't touch" with all former activities circumscribed or banned. Please do not let this become the norm for government administration of our wilderness lands.

Our government needs to stop selling off public lands and/or leasing them to oil and gas companies. These lands need to be preserved and protected from pollution so that they can be enjoyed not only by people today but for generations to come.

I know times are tough to find funding but think long term like Teddy Roosevelt.

I am counting on you to protect our nation's great natural resources.

You have the power to keep the beauty of our great outdoors intact for all generations to come. So please create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Please ponder as priorities the following list bearing in mind that our great outdoors are not only for recreation they are for the mental and physical good health of all. Thank you for being a leader. Please lead now in one of the most important aspects of the century.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My father's family left the coal mines in Pa. to homestead in Wisconsin. My father taught me to love and respect Nature. I have been able to pass that view to my daughter. It is my hope that she may have the same chance if there are any unspoiled wilderness areas left. Hunting and fishing have always been a part of my life so I understand at a personal level the delicate balance of Nature. I have seen in my lifetime the effect of the destruction of wetlands and loss of habitat. I urge you to save what little wilderness is left and not put profit before posterity.

When children families have parks wildernessplaces of peace it has been shown the crime is less....People need places to rest reflect appreciate our world...The bang for the \$Buck is better if we do not have violence in our streets communities & towns... The \$price for parks/wilderness is off set by what we do not have to repair by violence. All children should have a place/chance to play & appreciate beauty. If the only consideration is co\$t.....Consider the value in peace less valalism more beautiful America AND** HEALTHIER ENVIORMENT(trees etc). As you know the republicians want to cut funds for parks etc...soon after that crime rises (not seeing the connection to value).....Children have no place to run off energy so possible distruction occurs. The republicians have their own "private" parks then want tax paying citizens to have less....This is not The Good America that promotes giving less to children/citizens than what the wealthy have. Cannot put a value on healing powers of Nature to all. I trust you'll do the prudent/just thingtrue meaning of "Conserve" in this case:)cb.

Please do everything in your power to protect and preserve our wildlife and resources.

Provide Increased Access but protect against inappropriate use such as offroad vehicles and snow mobiles

IT IS SO VERY IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE AS MUCH OPEN SPACE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS AS WE CAN. I CANNOT IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT OUR BEAUTIFUL NATIONAL PARKS OUR MAGNIFICENT WATERWAYS AND OUR RICH ANIMAL HERITAGE. WE MUST MANAGE THESE CAREFULLY TO MAINTAIN THEIR HEALTH AND SAFETY.

help us all to become better citizens of our beautiful country. ; those quiet places where we can soak up peace away from the clang of our daily life! before all our wildlife disappears in this century! ... Mother Nature is the ultimate healer. * Please protect our beautiful parks forests and trails from those who run roughshod with mobile/sports vehicles! ...don't whitewash your promises.

I am ashamed of what is happening in our wonderful country. Only you can correct the direction now being pursued. Are you courageous enough to listen to the people who voted you in??? I hope so!!!!

Franklin D. Roosevelt said "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself".

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We believe that our country is at a crucial fork in the road. The fork that should be taken is to protect and build on the parks monuments forests seashores etc that have already been set up.

This is the foundation of the American spirit and is critical to the next generation. The experiences had at these site form the spirit that is the motivating core of Great Americans. Part of being a visionary is to address OUR outdoors on a significantly large scale.

I feel that you are doing the best you can what with the limited assistance you get from the people around you especially the republicans. Keep up the good works and remember your promises to the people while you were running those were GOOD THOUGHTS..

Twice I have had the experience of exploring and being a part of the northern Minnesota Boundary Waters. My experience in the pristine lakes where we could drink the same water on which we were canoeing provided personal and professional growth for me. My heart is heavy with continuing news of the devastation of not only wilderness areas but other more urban lands in this country. And I am saddened to know that conservation is not apparently one of your considered priorities. Our children and grandchildren deserve to have a planet that can still be seen as the little blue dot in the universe...not a dullhued orb.

In the face of rising population and its everspreading development as well as its desperation for extractive energy sources the importance of conserving natural landscapes for future generations has never been greater. Failure to hold a strong commitment to this value will eventually alter the character of our nation's great outdoors irreparably and with it the character of our citizenry who will have fewer and fewer places to experience the restorative value of the natural world. Even now that experience is foreign to some especially in urban areas. Electronic technology has also begun to diminish our youth's interest in connecting with that natural world which portends a perilous loss to the American psyche. Furthermore in order to not exacerbate the existing polarity between environmentalists and their opponents I urge you to be realistic about the scope of envisioned projects. Some megalandscape multimillionacre complexes envisioned by wellmeaning groups while admirable in idealism will only panic those threatened by these prospects (e.g. ranchers) and will galvanize all sectors of opposition. It is strong enough already. Conservation projects must be viable apropos existing stakeholder interests not decreed as government fiat with winners and losers. This is challenging to say the least; but respectful and patient collaboration is essential to longterm success.

During the Bush takeover of America we suffered tremendously environmentally economically and strategically in the world and at home. PLEASE make a difference and bring America back to where it used to be!!

Our parks and forest will be plundered by those who don't care or those who find a way to make a profit from them. Our children and their children deserve to have these places available to them to enjoy and love the way I and many others have during our lifetimes. Please save these wonderful places. We deserve them.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You've stood so strong for the right things even in the face of the obstructionist Party of No. Thank you for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy

Now is the time to take action to protect our great outdoors. Our wilderness National Parks natural habitats and nature's natural beauty must be preserved in a time when development is encroaching on us all.

It is imperative that we protect national parks forests preserves monuments and add to that more wilderness areas parks monuments forests and wetlands. The very life (both animal and human) that are protected in these places is threatened unless we take action to both protect what we have and extend it. National Parks need buffer large buffer areas to stop encroaching growth and to protect what is in them animal life forests woodlands watersheds etc. We need these things to and to preserve the life sustaining things that they provide to us as humans water supply clean air sanctuary for our souls. You must fully fund the Land and Water Conservation fund increase funding for all of our national treasures and make additional funding available to state and local governments for the outdoor and open areas they protect such as state forests parks wet lands and woodlands. Thank you for your time

Protecting the outdoors is a major priority and I want the administration to do everything possible including adequate funding to protect our great outdoors.

Save our wildlife particularly those at risk; Ask for the current Secretary of the Interior's (Ken Salazar (sp)) resignation. Appoint someone who really cares about saving public lands and wildlife for the public and future generations.

engage public and private corporations to assist in conservation in their regions. Consider tax advantages if necessary. for us and for our children. Really seek out alternative energy sources and develop them for use. No more drilling!! let's not have any more species face extinction because we neglected these important areas. engage children teenagers and young adults with innovative electronic campaigns. Engage adults thru electronic and print media. Make it cool to be outdoors! help the states maintain and fund their outdoor recreational areas. so America keeps the wilderness it already has and can return important overdeveloped areas back to the wild.

As an avid outdoorsman and user of our public lands I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. The Monongahela National Forest here in WV has just designated several new wilderness areas that will benefit generation to come. However we need this type of vision across the board in all our public lands management. Many roadless areas across our great country are prime for wilderness designation but they languish due to petty political concerns.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I participated in the listening session Poughkeepsie NY and wanted to repeat concerns I voiced there. The job cuts taken by the New York State DEC have resulted in lack of enforcement of environmental conservation law which causes destruction of wetlands and degradation of water quality. Furthermore cumulative impacts of development on a watershed level are not being considered causing additional degradation.

In order for the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors we need leadership that values a strong conservation agenda. Let this be another example for the CHANGE we voted for.

Mother Earth does not belong to us. We belong to her. She is in critical condition and "Yes We Can" do something about it. Hopefully before it is too late. My focus is on 'clean water for all living things'. That does not include putting an UNapproved prescription drug considered a toxicant by the FDA in our drinking water. We drink only about 1% of that. Just think where does the rest of it go?

I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces wilderness areas natural monuments large wildlife refuges where wildlife is TOTALLY PROTECTED FROM HUNTERS parks forests trails WILD and scenic rivers and historic sites.

Your administration often talks of positive change from the policies of the Bush administration. There are few better areas to make such change in and few that need it more than wilderness conservation.

With or without you in the White House this is a critical moment in our history. As I'm sure you're aware there is more at stake than being the first African American being elected to the White House. The environment globally is at a sensitive turning point some things eg endangered species have already gone beyond recovery or restoration. But as the leader of this country you can create the conditions which will protect & preserve our great & irreplaceable natural resources. In the tradition of First Ladies i.e. Lady Bird Johnson Eleanor Roosevelt this is a cause that Michelle Obama could shepherd in some way. What a great legacy this would be!

Our future generations deserve the chance to experience our National parks system as my family has had the opportunity to do for many generations. Personally I would like to see Point Lobos on central California's coast and the Pajaro River State Park also on California's central coast as well as the many State Parks at Big Sur California added to the list of National and State parks that should be preserved for the future. I'm sure it's a difficult decision on your part given our Nation's current economic condition on what parks will stay open and which ones will need to be closed due to a lack of State and Federal funding. I hope that funds will be found to keep all of our National and State Parks open.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am aware of funds for conservation projects being slashed and budgets for our National Parks being cut. This leads to a detrimental change for our great wild lands. We have to do better to conserve these valuable and unique landscapes for our next generation and for our dwindling and endangered wildlife.

This means no "deals" with oil companies.

Your administration has already proven leadership in medical care and at least addressing the Wall Street mess within the limits of obstructive industry interests and Republican obstructionism. Supporting conservation efforts is part and parcel of defending the environment energy conservation and global warming action. Thank you for your continued intelligent leadership.

I worry that my grandchildren will not have a healthy environment and a clean outdoors with space to roam. Please be a leader. Forget politics. Protect the future. Thanks for all you do!

All of the following criteria are vitally important to your agenda. By adding one important element to the necessary actions would have a profound impact on the other necessary steps And that element would be to lower the immigrant numbers for the U.S.A. Sheer over population is a root cause of all social economic and environmental issues.

Every summer my family and I choose a national park to visit. This year we visited Zion National Park Grand Canyon and Antelope Canyon. In past years we've been to Yosemite Glacier National Park Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. They have all been amazing places and our children have learned to hike and appreciate nature and wildlife. Of course it was sad to see Glacier National Parks glaciers swiftly disappearing pollution in Yosemite and Grand Canyon but that's what happens after 8 years of an administration who didn't care about preserving our national treasures. I hope Mr. Obama will be a different president who doesn't sell off our parks and reserves to the highest bidder but treasures them as much as our founding fathers who established them as national treasures for future generations like my family.

We need to work at this together but it needs to start at the top. If we do not work to keep what is left of this world it will not be here for our children and theirs to enjoy. It is our responsibility to improve not destroy our planet including the global warming issue.

I care deeply about the outdoors and am appalled by and ashamed of the damage to the environment perpetuated by big business that has been allowed to continue even after the Bush administration left power.

Once lost they can never be replaced. This is the heritage we should leave the next generations not a desolate landscape ruined by oil spills and pollution. Please protect our natural wilderness and national parks.

Address conservation issues especially water and mountain tops (mountain top removal for mining is a tragic thing for our world!) including National Forests; Protect our National Parks

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Natural unspoiled pieces of earth are one of the greatest reminders of the joy of living. I want my children and their children to continue having the opportunity to benefit from contact with the beauty of our outdoor world.

Please bring all energy producers back in line with the clean air and water act as this is turning out to be a huge blunder and detrimental to our parks and environment in general.

The lands around the parks must also have some protection. In some areas for example: Washington Coastal parks and both Mt Rainer and The Olympic Rain Forest park in Washington State the trees have been clear cut right up to the parks boundaries causing huge blow downs in the parks. With only 2% of all old growth forests still standing world wide we need to protect these ecosystems. I loved Roosevelt's Conservation Core it gave people jobs self respect skills and respect for nature and changed some peoples lives forever who were employed in this movement. I think this is a positive way to make the above bullet points happen and get our youth outdoors.

If nothing else this will help provide jobs in this country jobs that only people can do onsite and not outsourced. You have the chance to correct the last irresponsible Administration's mistakes sir as well as indicate you have kept faith with the people who hired you.

aggressively address Exotic Invasives

The two words that I stress are BOLD and CONSERVATION. As our population continues to grow and that old innate exploitation gene in human nature remains with us it will not be easy for you to prioritize Conservation. That is the reason you will need to be both bold and adamant that the priorities listed above remain as one of the hallmark's of this Administration's legacy to the people of the United States.

Longrange planning is as important as shortrange planning in responsible government. We want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Fully fund the development of alternative responsible energy development

Please don't let corporations dictate what our next generation will be able to enjoy. We must have responsible leadership if we are going to maintain responsible conservation! Just say no to corporate greed.

I VOTED FOR YOU BECAUSE YOU PLEDGED TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT! WELL HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO FULFILL YOUR PROMISE!!!

But more important than enjoyment is the knowledge people need to have about the natural world and how it works. Without this they simply don't understand the importance of our legislators making wise decisions on issues that affect the physical world.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Educate more people about the importance of Nature Protect our water sources Restrict new roads being built in America's most pristine outdoor spaces Thank you for your consideration!!

And how about making BP fully responsible for cleaning up their mess in the Gulf???? How about some REAL oversight??

Adequately fund our National Parks; Carefully site new renewable energy projects

This is not the time to cut back on funds in this important area.

We should revive the CCC and WPA and create jobs for outofwork Americans cleaning up & restoring our national parks wildenress areas and refuges natural & national monuments and our endangered watersheds. Now is the time to seize the intiative to protect our natilnal heritage for our children and grandchildren and all future generations of Americans and visitors from around the world. We need to act on a bold and grand scale. Please do all you can to move us in this direction.

Have the Forest Service absolutely supervise contracted loggers so that absolutely no clear cutting occurs. We must have selective timbering and avoid the timbering of certain healthy old growth trees.

There needs to be a complete overhaul in the Dept of Agriculture & Wildlife as well as so many other departments. The inhumane and crule practices of culling wolves wild horses and so many other wildlife is unnecessary and barbaric! This country must save the wild lands and it's wild life! Nature (and our Higher PowerGod) provides it's own way of managing the wild. It's the greed of mankind in and out of government that destroy the gift of this earth and it's creatures. Start to use the brains God hopfully gave you and do the right thing!

Reminder: This is one of the main reasons why we elected you.

We are loosing to much of our countries wilderness to development. We have to step back and think of the consequences. It doesn't just affect people but the wildlife that is involved. We need to make sure there are plenty of wilderness for these animals to survive and be protected.

This work is absolutely critical to our survival. We must act now or our natural world will be lost. We can't keep taking from nature and expect anything other than total destruction. Thank you very much for your time.

Please keep your promise and be the best Environmental President EVER!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Preserve our farmland and rural heritage Slow Suburban sprawl Promote housing and business growth in our cities

(get rid of snowmobiles and ATVs) Hire quality guides who can educate visitors at all sites Crack down on people who continue to abuse these lands

Please help us to protect our precious natural resources from the ravages of greed and indifference. Our future generations are depending on us.

I would like for us to remember the importance of the natural world and the ethics of sharing. Address Conservation at a very large Scale and from many points especially energy

For over 15 years the only vacation that was affordable was being able to visit the National Parks and enjoy the history and beauty they have to offer. I took my daughters one summer to every National Park in Utah another year we did Northern California. We had a wonderful time being together and the girls learned about what it was like in the parks that made them unique. The vast range of visitors we encountered was also educational as so many came from foreign lands to see the breath taking beauty. I cannot stress how important it is for myself and future generations to be able to enjoy the simple beauty and restfulness found in our pristine outdoor lands. The protection is so desperately necessary because once the land has been compromised to any type of development then it is lost forever. We would have so many healthier citizens if they all were to take time to walk in an open field park beach or open space. Being able to enjoy such an experience is so worth while and cannot be found sitting in front of a boob tube. Do the right thing and give future generations this heritage.

Develop and educate people about the value of a broad conservation strategy Enforce land use laws that protect the environment Set aside to protect more of our vulnerable ecosystems

Mother Earth must be respected and protected. We must give back through a series of steps which must include conservation of public lands.

It is critically important that we also remain a model for the rest of the world as it relates to proper treatment of flora and fauna and the amazing ways that they contribute to our planet.

Now more than ever (given the recent catastrophe in the Gulf) the people of the US need to see Nature in all its magnificence unspoiled and safe from future "development".

I would like to see our public policies reflect sincere respect for our natural world. We are blessed in this country with some of the most beautiful landscapes on earth.

These need to be funded ASAP!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Also please consider becoming a spokesperson for lessening the depositing of garbage in the worlds oceans.

As a child exploring the great outdoors experiencing nature and traveling to numerous national parks was a huge part of our family recreation and vacation plans. I feel that it is critically important that we protect our wild and open spaces not only for the health and enjoyment of future generations but for the health of our planet.

It is IMPERATIVE that we protect our beautiful world. We must always remember that this magnificent world is not a gift from our parents but a loan from our grandchildren.

Pleas preserve the parks for un ure generations. They are our precious heretage

You know how important the outdoors is to the wellbeing of people and that it should be accessible to us all. You also know that there is no putting back the natural world we destroy. Just this week I was out on the Paddlewheel boat on the Fox River in St. Charles IL looking at the forest alongside it and heard that the WPA built some of the shelters along the way and that the parks were designated in the years of the Great Depression. Please leave this kind of a legacy that is lasting and powerful for three generations down the line!

Personally as I expressed in the subject line our happiest times as a family were spent in some of the national parks. We will all never forget visiting the Grand Canyon Canyon de Chelley Big Bend and several others. These ARE a national treasure and must be preserved.

As the human population grows we encroach on the land that belongs not only to us but also the animals that live there. We need to protect as much wilderness and public land as possible to avoid losing any more species and to ensure that we have this beautiful land to enjoy in the future.

Our family has enjoyed many family vacations in our camper in the great outdoors. We enjoy hiking rafting and sight seeing. Please protect and expand our natural resources so that we can share them with our grandchildren someday!!

Stop the dumping of carcinogenic chemicals in the Gulf of Mexico Task the Congress with developing a plan to restore the Gulf Coast wetlands

First stop mortgaging America's National Parks to foreign interests to cover the exalating federal debt exacerbated by proliferating stimulous programs. This is an unbelievably incompetent strategy that is outraging American citizens. Losing ownership of public lands to corporate interests for ravaging resrouces is not the legacy you want to leave behind is it?

I am disabled and I would like to see more wheelchair accessible trails in parks and wildlife refuges.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I believe we have an obligation to the next generation to ensure they can enjoy America's great outdoors. Increase wetlands and seashore conservation

I believe its Ecuador that has given the environment its own rights. We should do the same. Also know that I think the Environment is the most important thing that we need to take care of.

The indigenous people of this country understood the implications of not protecting nature hundreds of years ago. We are only now beginning to discover the truth of their teachings. We must act as stewards of the natural world because it does not belong to us. Our children are inheriting polluted water and land. They deserve better than that. The future of all people depends on the preservation of trees habitats and especially water. As a parent of two autistic children once I moved them to a place next to conservation lands I saw the changes and improvements in their nervous systems. Nature heals. We come from nature; our bodies are nature not concrete skyscrapers. We need the natural world as much as the natural world needs our increased sensitivity to it's value and protection. The indigenous people of this country should also be given some of these lands back in their possession since it was theirs in the first place and they will maintain it in ways that promote deep stewardship and spiritual awareness. As you know the indigenous people of our country are very motivated to teach us how to walk more gently on this earth.

by actively supporting global conservation and clean energy initiatives as long as they are consistent with sustainable use and the needs of wildlife

PLEASE take BOLD ACTION to PROTECT OUR GREAT OUTDOORS FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS. PLEASE MAKE IT A HIGH PRIORITY to CREATE EXPAND and BETTER PROTECT AMERICA'S PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACES INCLUDING WILDERNESS MONUMENTS WILDLIFE REFUGES PARKS FORESTS TRAILS WILD & SCENIC RIVERS & HISTORIC SITES.

Without enough wilderness the survival of the human race will be endangered by damaged ecosystems and global warming.

I know that you have many problems on your plate not least the economy But I believe that longterm goals like preserving America's wild spaces must not yield to shortterm political expediency. I also believe that conservation can help our economy if we have the courage to use federal funds to create conservation jobs.

Our planet is all we truly have. We have run roughshod all over it like monsters. It's time we TAKE CARE OF OUR ENVIRONEMNT.

I truly believe there should be some type of law in place to stop every inch of open land in every town from being destroyed. When wildlife has to be killed because THEY are over populated it makes me sick.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is a Native American proverb that states "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors we borrow it from our children." I for one would like to be able to repay that loan with interest so my grandchildren and their children can enjoy the same trails creeks and national parks that I grew up with and quite frankly what makes this a beautiful country to live in. "It is not enough understanding the wilderness the point is to defend and protect it." ~ Edward Abbey~

We not only need to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites so that people can "enjoy" them but we need to preserve what we have left and repair the damage we've so mindlessly done so that we can survive!!

Now is the time to protect and improve our great Nation's greatest treasures: our beautiful land. Every community in America needs to join forces in making conservation a vital part of it's lifestyle. From farm lands that are better used as wildlife habitat to backyards and city parks there needs to be a paradigm shift towards preserving wildlife habitat everywhere. : More than ever as business sees financial gain in the last remaining wilderness areas and recreational use threatens what we already have it's time to take a strong stand and commitment to protecting these valuable resources for now and generations to come both for their unsurpassed beauty as well as their role in global warming and species survival. : Water is a resource that is increasingly being threatened by our way of life and the very filtering system that Nature has put in place is in danger of being paved over. We need watersheds protected and replaced and strong protections in place to help our water supply be clean and viable. Wildlife depends on these areas for survival and their health is an indication of our health. : Our youth need to connect to Nature to know and feel the renewal that comes from being in the great outdoors. There are studies that show the need for Nature experiences for the vital development of the human mind and compassion. We need to foster Nature spaces in our communities to help us be better human beings. : This is a vital step in the plan to protect our great Natural resources.

I would like to express my desire to reverse the current policies that are allowing the destruction in the Appalachian Region. Between Mountain Top Removal Mining and the Marcellus Shale drilling we are losing an incredible amount of the natural landscape. When you add in the total destruction of many streams rivers and lakes which will never recover we are witnessing an inland version of the Gulf of Mexico disaster. There are already towns cities and rural citizens that must rely on "Water Buffalo" tankers for their fresh water supply. This is supposed to be a developed country but you would never know it due to the total acquiescence made to the fossil fuel cabal. The concept of "Clean Coal" and Marcellus Shale drilling done without destroying the environment is inane at best and criminal at worst. Please end the practice of being complicit with these criminals and put into place laws and regulations which will allow the preservation and restoration of our natural environment.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a member of the Audubon Society I have a great interest in the outdoors. I think every person needs to connect with nature in some way. We do not have the right to destroy it for future generations.

once it is gone that's it! Don't just permit developing to take place have your own staff spend time doing this WITHOUT GUNS

The national and global problems of pollution and climate change need large scale solutions. Conserving national parks and open space is a first step in mitigating the harmful effects of these problems Our country's wild spaces are our most valuable assets. However they are most valuable when they are kept wild and free from development. Wildlife and water play a critical role in the health of our ecosystem and our people. Clean water is easier to access in place that are undeveloped and undisturbed and wildlife plays a key role in keeping our resources in balance. Modifying any element in a ecosystem can have unpredictable and disastrous affects. The best way to preserve our wildlife and wild places is too give conservation groups proper resources and authority. They need to be able to look to the interest of the land and water first without influence from business or trade groups.

Above all this means curbing the destruction of our outdoor spaces by socalled "motorized recreation" (legalized vandalism actually) and halting all coal oil gas and minerals extraction in wilderness and park areas.

This is your chance to Make A Difference. Once these lands are gone they will not come back. Please save them for us and the wildlife. We speak for those who cannot. When we take care of our earth we take care of ourselves. Thank you.

As a society we need to understand there is more to this life than just making money and developing the few places that are wild. We need to look at what we have created and stop and ask is this truly good or are we destroying our basis of life. We poison streams and the land by what we are doing. The laws are in place to protect the land but we find ways to get around them. Stop the underhand wheeling and dealing and be honest. Do what you say and follow through with protecting the land.

Please ensure there's a wilderness for our children and grandchildren to enjoy!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I was raised by an aunt and uncle who taught me to truly appreciate this country not just its people and democracy but it's remarkable geography. My uncle worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps one of the greatest public works projects in our history. I grew up exploring our nation's parks refuges etc. and realizing that I am who I am because I am a part of this extraordinary varied landscape. I believe that respect for the intricacies of nature helps me to respect the intricacies of humanity and life itself. I know you have many issues to address to benefit the people of our country. But I ask you to please make conservation of our beaches woods mountains etc. a priority. Many will oppose you saying you are not attending to the needs of people currently in crisis. But the BP oil spill has shown us yet again how intimately we are linked to our land. If we do not respect and protect our land how can we be the loving respectful country of people we say we are and aspire to always be?

As a volunteer in several state and national parks over the last few years I urge you to do everything you can to protect our Great Outdoors.

I want them to be able to see green grass rolling hills mountains plains wild flowers wild animals and all that God created. That's why I am asking you to PLEASE seize this opportunity to create expand

Our family's need places to enjoy. So much is destroyed without a second thought. We need to protect and conserve our lands for generations to come. Please do all that you can.

it cannot be replaced or recovered. Now is the time to declare ANWR permanently protected wilderness.

Get the guns firearms out of our parks

Please provide the leadership to ensure that future generations will have jobs AND always benefit and enjoy our public lands. Please design a bold natural resource production AND conservation strategy for the 21st century.

I have only one grandchild but she deserves to enjoy the beauty serenity and educational opportunities that only interaction with nature can give her. How about your children and grandchildren? Do they not deserve the same?

The environment is not the background against where we live. It is what sustains us and makes our life possible. If we don't give it our utmost priority we put our own lives in jeopardy. We must think constantly on the ecosystem services we get for free. The next generations must enjoy the benefits of a healthy world too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please protect public lands. We love to hike and see the beautiful scenery and the wildlife. We love our local forests and parks. We love Yellowstone and Zion and Grand Canyon and Crater Lake and all the National Parks. Once the land is destroyed it is gone forever. I voted for you and believe you want the best for our country. Thank you for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

CLEAN ENERGY "SYSTEM" NOW!!!

The very first step to ensure clean water for our whole nation to survive the heritage of our National Parks and our recreational lands is to FIRE Ken Salazar. There is no hope for conservation or preservation of our lands and our endangered wildlife as long as he is responsible for the interior. He is a criminal and is conducting his own agenda of wealth built on the blood of our animals and the rape of our resources. I would like to really believe the following statement.

Please take action to prevent the sale of over 1300 acres in the Grand Teton National Park. This pristine area is one of the most spectacular resources our nation has. Do not let it be diminished by public holding inside the park.

Please a bold conservation program for our natural resources that protects our wilderness plants and animal life is a necessity not an option. Why must it take so long for our leaders to recognize the importance and beauty of these landscapes? We live in a beautiful country and it is through smart bold conservation programs that we are able to keep these landscapes beautiful for us and the future generations to enjoy. Thank you.

We need to continue to connect people to nature and protect our watersheds for the health and welfare of our country.

Protect our water

Guarantee clean air to breathe and clear air to view the parks

Protect our country from greedy oil mongers do not allow any drilling on our soil or waters

My most memorable and favorite vacations are in our country's National Parks Wildernesses Seashores and Monuments. Reduce the impacts of Global Warming and human overpopulation I wish you success: we will all benefit from this even though we may not be able to visit all these beautiful and sustaining areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. I personally conserve energy and resources at home so that the environment can stay natural and healthy. let's not put those efforts to waste through unguided development. . I backpack here in the Northwest and visit the Southwest wilderness every year. . Water is everywhere in Puget Sound and the balance between development and nature must be kept to preserve life. . If we don't we all die. . Let's do this intelligently so we don't over run natural habitat. . Without the funding how can we manage effectively?

Studies show that today's children are not as close to nature as we would wish. We want the next generation to be good stewards of the outdoors and to enjoy it. Please take every opportunity to create expand and protect our outdoor spaces in America including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Many of these have been neglected with loss of resources for too long. It will be appreciated long after our lifetimes! We have only one earth to protect and cherish there is no planet

I am in my 70's and thought that you were going to be better at protecting the wilderness than Bush was but now I am finding out that this is another area and that you are just carrying out Bush's policies. I had the chance to camp in most of the Federal and State campgrounds in America including Alaska and I already saw massive timber cutting all over the U.S. This must be stopped.

As a biologist and a veterinarian I am deeply concerned about the loss of species from our planet the only abode of life that we know of. Big species like moose are NOT the only ones that need preserving; less obvious ones such as soilenriching bacteria also need to thrive which requires large truly wild areas. Keep it up.

All of my life I have enjoyed spending time in the woods waters and parks of our great country. I cannot imagine what holidays vacations and time off work would have been like had I not had such outlets. It is imperative that we protect such places to insure that people will always have these places in which to spend their leisure time. Strictly enforce current laws for clean water and air

I am in awe by the beauty of this country and have spent hours hiking in various mountain ranges and National Parks. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites.

Doing this will not only bring the people more 'Nature' experiences and education but will help our Nation's wildlife and our air quality.

One of the best things America ever did was to create national parks monuments refuges and wilderness area for all people. We need to always protect these actions and never take them for granted.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The value of America's outdoor natural areas is beyond measure. It is our responsibility and privilege to protect and preserve these regions.

At a time when the natural world is under human siege on all fronts; drilling mining farming ranching logging suburban sprawl and global warming (these are only some of the major assaults); it is urgent to set aside intact wild places while we still have them. These are not our resources to plunder and leave future generations bereft of. Their value goes far beyond economic scenic or recreational. Our own wellbeing...our very survival as a species depends on their continued existence.

As a USDA Forest Service employee I witness the excessive impacts of people on areas in our forests that are not protected firsthand and on a daily basis. Last summer we collected enough recyclable cans and bottles in the forest to fund our end of the field season party. Regardless of why people are not exhibiting proper actions while in our beautiful forests the truth is that they aren't and something needs to be done. Our forests and parks are our sanctuaries. Don't let them become just another forprofit venture.

We've been blessed with life on a gorgeous infinitely varied and wondrous planet. As far as we know it's the only one we've got! We humans have done a great deal to both hurt and heal our Earth and we need to mobilize further to do more to preserve the beauty that surrounds and sustains us. wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild

The population continues to increase the campgrounds enlarge and even so one needs a reservation for a campsite. Many are turned away. Outdoor recreation is essential to overall health and happiness. Remember Teddy Roosevelt. He had the courage to set aside wild lands for our national parks. The population was much smaller then. What foresight the man had!!!! It should not be ravaged by those wanted to sell off the ferns cacti mushrooms trees and bushes. We rely on those watersheds. via a fee free day at a park 2x/year and offer nature walks and programs. for nonmotorized activities. The noise and trail destruction by motorized vehicles should not be part of a wilderness/nature experience.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I spend a great deal of time in an are of the world that still flourishes in a natural manner....southern Mexico. The lack of industrial development in this rather remote area affords me the life experience of watching the flow and balance of people and nature in an everyday manner food is on the table fish are available to catch there are natural settings for cows to live their lives etc. People have fewer toys to play with but enjoy their families and nature as a result. It is now a lifestyle that I don't want to lose because it brings a harmony within and without I have not experienced in living 50 years in different areas of the United States. I'm not saying to go back to being without modern conveniences but not to destroy that which makes life worth living in the first place. There is more harmony when people coexist with nature and not destroy it for personal gain. There is more freedom for all creatures to enjoy life human and otherwise when we live with them and respect their needs and desires for simply living. It's a choice I still have and had to look for a place in the world outside of the U.S. to enjoy this "not doing harm to others" everyday. Give that back to us through conscious decisions that keep us close to our inheritance with Nature.

We need to protect and conserve our precious lifegiving planet so that we do not ever have to go to another planet.

My 10 year old daughter could tell you more about saving the environment and the problems we are facing as a world/nation than any oil/coal/nuclear lobbyist. If you wish I can make that happen. Spend money on something that will last generations. Support and expand the National Park System and get energy speculators and mining operations out.

We have only 1 Earth for most people. Maybe wealthy are planning to go to another and abuse that too. Don't fool with MOTHER NATURE!

Our nation is blessed with some of the most beautifully diverse wilderness areas in the world. PLEASE help protect them.

PLEASE make wilderness new parks and monuments and restoration of wetlands and wildlife habitat the cornerstone of America's Great Outdoors

Preserving habitats and protecting our wild places and teaching people to connect with nature is in our best interests. We are only as healthy as our environment. One thing we need to include in our plans is wildlife corridors which allow genetic diversity and lower the risk of human/animal conflict.

Protect small Family Farming

Fire Salazar. As a Latina I am embarrassed by his rightwing actions against wolves the sea turtles and other wildlife.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am an Oregon grandfather who throughout my life has enjoyed the opportunities provided to Americans through our national parks national forests and wilderness areas. You are standing on the shoulders of giants including Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir. I urge you to continue their tradition.

CA wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks State parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and State historic park sites. Fully Fund All of America's State parks for future generations by Funding CA State parks in America and in CA. in CA State parks in CA State parks in CA State parks Stop Meg Whitman & her plan of depleting CA Conservation efforts~!!!!!!! T

Preservation and conservation should be one of your top priorities. I have visited several of America's National Parks and natural treasures. We do not want to a country that uses up and exploits its natural resources.

I really feel like this is the most important issue of our day. Please help to save our planet.

As we move forward and as our population grows we have to be inventive in the ways we use our land going forward working with cities states parks and wildlife. We have to save corridors for wildlife as climate change forces them further north. I also think we need to start making our cities grow up instead of out. If we can do this one above all else we have something. Don't wait until we have to drive 2 hour just to enjoy nature.

whole natural ecosystems are necessary to support productive agriculture preserve wildlife populations regenerate water supplies suppress extremes of climate and store large amounts of carbon. it is essential to the human spirit to experience the beauty and feel of natural landscapes. these are essential to support ALL life even ours for example by providing us with fresh water and through the pollination of our crops by bees and other animals. support programs to connect city dwellers with the outdoors and increase educational activities by Park Rangers etc. trails and access for boating hiking fishing hunting camping etc needed to increase the amount of outdoor areas and to complete preservation of some of our most outstanding lands by acquisition of holdings WITHIN Parks that otherwise could be developed.

I fear that reduction in wild natural areas is having a dangerous impact on the overall health of the planet. More locally on the coast of North Florida we have bears and coyotes in our neighborhoods even on the barrier island that I live on! The only explanation I can think of is too many people and activities in their habitat. We need wild places for wild things.....all part of the web of life on the planet.

Once we were a country of almost all wilderness but so little of that is left.. Please protect what is left

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

All my vacation plans are made to be surrounded by our great outdoors. I don't need to travel out of the country because we have preserved such magnificent vistas deserts forests and flatlands. It is essential that we continue and even strengthen the protection of these God-given treasures.

Our wild & natural spaces are important to protect wildlife and to preserve for plants & to improve our air & water quality. The less off-road vehicle areas the better less noise from ATVs & 4WD vehicles & less damage from them is better. Please also protect our wild areas from non-natural intrusions.

As residents of Colorado we have enjoyed and responsibly used our precious federal and state lands for recreation and generated economic impacts as well through our spending while doing so. We have NOT done enough to protect our lands and water from big business and corporations however. It is TIME NOW to do much more and that is our priority. Preserve and protect and keep our natural lands reserved for wilderness and open space uses free from ORV's mining logging and other industrial activities that have had a much larger degree of access to OUR lands than they should have.

Every action is needed to undo the damage of previous generations.

Conservation has to be proactive Not reactive!

protect the natural land

Protecting watersheds is also essential for assuring adequate water supplies for all Americans. This is another reason to improve watersheds and to supply adequate funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Cutting waste in the military as proposed by Secretary Gates could supply the money.

What a relief it is just knowing you're in our White House President Obama. One of many reasons is believing a good Democrat will work actively to protect and/or restore our physical environment our wetlands our Gulf our State Parks the animals we must better share this good earth with. Protect America's great outdoors Mr. President. It matters.

We must make sure that future generations will be able to visit and explore the great outdoors instead of reading about how beautiful they once were.

Please protect "OUR" outdoors!

Congress also needs to pass comprehensive climate change legislation that addresses global warming. Please let scientific experts dictate this bill not the fossil fuel industry.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Insure that all energyrelated projects coal oil natural gas wind and solar do not damage our environment watershed and recreational areas

Please protect our mother Earth! We have only one planet and need to protect her for our children's children. Only a small percentage of water is for drinking. The rest is salted in the ocean frozen in glaciers or often polluted or diverted for farming cities etc. Please explore and review our current policies. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Animals and plants also have to share our limited resources. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites as well as how we abuse our lands and aquifers with mountaintop removals mining and irrigation. and provide wildlife corridors Reduce big monied corporations from using public lands for their personal profit including abroad when possible!

Prohibit mining oil and gas drilling and timbering in all Federal parks and wilderness areas.

To start you can fire Ken Salazar and put someone into that position who has the best interests of the country and our environment in mind. Ken Salazar is more interested in lining the pockets of fellow ranchers than he is in preserving and protecting our wild lands and wildlife.

I would especially like to make sure that the integrity of the core of Grand Teton Park be protected given the potential sale of the school sections that are now endangering it. One possible idea that I have not seen discussed is to trade the airport land to the State of Wyoming but I would like to see that done only if it can be done with stipulations such that it does no harm to Grand Teton National Park including maintaining the restrictions on runways etc. In no way am I recommending further expansion of the airport activities. I would also like to see ANWR protected in perpetuity.

I believe that it's time to "undevelop" out overdeveloped lands around the country and replant the original habitats that existed in about 50% of land. Allow the animals and flora to come back. Encourage people to cut WAY down on the number of children they have (being childless is not bad if people wouldn't make good parents) so that the human population decreases by about 1/3 of its present size. God put the animals on this earth to teach humans how to act. We need to share the land with them again and turn American into a naturefriendly environment again. Its beauty will increase exponentially as we increase the flora and fauna here. Other countries can take our example and may do likewise.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Constantly I turn toward nature to get me through tough times because its energy is calm and healing. And I take every opportunity to enjoy wonderful retreats to camp under the oaks and redwoods which always fills my soul with love and kindness. Please help turn the tides that capitalism has done to our land; it is not to be exploited polluted or destroyed for our human consumption and convenience. It truly breaks my heart to see the loss of our natural wonder and the dramatic effect it has on all nonhuman inhabitants. I know that you are a man of integrity and I am grateful for all your and your administrations assistance with this issue.

It is important to understand that if you don't take huge steps to preserve and protect our wilderness habitats for other species corporate and business interests will ruin all that they can. A spoiled planet is not good for our grandchildren.

Keep joy on the National Agenda. Seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Imagine a Paris without the Bois de Boulogne or San Francisco without Golden Gate Park where city people can walk smell flowers and touch trees. I can tell you from experience it feeds the soul. Imagine a California without Yosemite or smaller parks with the best fishing or the beauty of Crater Lake. Nature we just can't live without nature and we used to sing songs and write poetry to nature all the time. The girl scouts brought me that joy. Again keep JOY on the National Agenda.

Our family traveled through eastern Kentucky and TN. this summer. It is a beautiful region but it is marred by some of the mountain top removal. The habitat eco systems stream pollution and lost forests are irreplaceable. We cannot continue to scar our wilderness for greed and lack of concern of conservation.

I am especially concerned about the mountaintop mining near Cripple Creek Colorado which is destroying the Rocky Mountains and polluting the waterways; and with pollution and overuse of wild and scenic waterways in the Missouri Ozarks. (I believe the Wild & Scenic designations should be upgraded to wilderness protection.)

IF WE ARE TO HAVE A HABITABLE FUTURE THIS IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors in the way that I have been privileged to do so. We need more open space as our cities and towns expand. I would hate to see the next generation have only cramped over crowded parks.

I am particularly interested in a linked nationwide system of bike paths and bike routes and in the protection of habitat for wildlife.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

All you have to do is watch just a small part of Ken Burn's outstanding documentary "The National Parks : America's Best Idea" to get a glimpse at how important it is to protect our wonderful wild lands and to protect them for all American's and our future generations. Just look out our back window and see what has happened to OUR Gulf of Mexico. We CANNOT let this happen again and we CANNOT let it happen to a place so majestic as the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge where the "drill baby drill" mentality seems to be gaining hold on your legislation signing pens. I so hope you make the right and only decision to be made concerning this extremely important issue. It will definitely have an effect as to where I put my vote in the upcoming elections as well.

I would also like you to eliminate the parking fees in the San Bernardino National Forest. It's a travesty to have to pay to walk in my own forest.

We have a civic duty to act respectfully and responsibility.

to protect life from global warming. no more over looking the wilderness act to motify the meaning of wilderness. and especially children starting with preschool because that is when the mind is most open to learning. but not at the expense of nature. And for being who you are an open minded and loving Anthropologist's son. (I am an Anthropologist's daughter.)

PLEASE HELP!

As a mother of six children and a high school teacher I am deeply concerned about the environmental legacy we are leaving our children. In addition if we are to create sustainable communities and avert the ecological destruction of Earth we will need to learn from natural ecosystems.

Further a natural environment is imperative to the health of the world we live in. The health of forests oceans streams meadows and their inhabitants effect the natural health and happiness of all else in this world the whole world.

When our children were young we camped in every state in the country. Above all we chose our National Parks for their very special qualities. I hope our grandchildren will be able to enjoy such experiences. I also have a special attachment to Mt Rainier which I have climbed three times. Now I live on the Olympic Peninsula and hike regularly in our magnificent Olympic National Park. I also bird watch and know the importance of habitat. To sum up the priorities listed below are essential if this great heritage is to be available for years to come. I would also add as a central priority enacting legislation to control carbon emissions and deal with global warming. On that one lots of luck.

We MUST preserve what God created for our next generations to enjoy!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fire Ken Salazar.

We have already lost the land needed to ensure the survival of the Florida panther and the gopher tortoise will not survive once the economy improves and rampant development becomes the Florida norm again so public lands and native flora and fauna please consider these priorities for America's Great

please protect our future.

I have hiked in the Olympics and the Smokies and driven over the Rockies and Cascades. I've visited Bryce Canyon the Grand Canyon Badlands The Barrier Islands and the Keys and Sanibel and Captiva out in the Gulf. I'd like to think these wild and beautiful places will remain undeveloped so my grandchildren can see the same vistas.

Our untouched natural landscapes are the most unique in the world save them!

The best way to deserve a positive legacy is to preserve any and all outdoor spaces and facilitate their continuation into the future.

We must be sure that we protect and expand the lands we already have ensuring that the wildlife can thrive and we must keep our wild spaces in the best condition and provide funding to keep them healthy.

My older brother has been a bus driver at Denali Park in Alaska for over 30 years. I have visited Alaska twice and hope to return to it and other wild places such as the parks in Utah and Arizona that I have visited in the last few years (my brother "winters" in New Mexico so visit there also). Once it's gone it's gone.... Let's not let that happen.

Please stop raping our planet.

America's great outdoors is beautiful beyond words but it is also disappearing and under constant attack by those who see the natural resources as lumber or untapped oil reserves or other value resources. We must protect these resources for our future generations so they will be able to see what a beautiful land this is.

Dear President Obama I am an Environmental Psychology professor at the University of South Florida and I teach my students about the physiological psychological and social benefits nature has on human's health and wellbeing. I hope you know about all the research in the area and how very important America's great outdoors is to it's people whether they realize it or not. It is basically your job to protect the people and that may mean protecting the natural environment.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I know you have "alot on your plate" and you are doing the best you can under the circumstances but this is a vital issue...please protect what we have left.

Much more educations needs to be done to educate city folks on how important our national parks and urban parks to the health of of all humans to the air we breath the wild life that live there the peace and tranquillity we receive just visting a park. Please do all you can to protect these treasures. Past presidents knew this the first time they saw a wilderness site like Yellowstone don't let their work get destroyed.

I would like the wilderness and the wildlife to be there for the next generation and generations to come just as they were here for mine and my family. All Americans deserve to have this saved for them.

Experience has shown us that nature has been the greatest source to find solutions to the problems we face as people and as a people. Every time a species disappears from this world we lose the possibility of solving a problem we may or may not even know exists yet. The loss of any single species diminishes us all. Our future is constantly unwinding please make sure it is still there when we get there.

I am the father of three daughters and the grandfather of eight grandchildren. I live in a beautiful area on the Oregon coast. My grandchildren liven in the Puget Sound area of washington in my home city and in Portland Oregon. I am deeply concerned for their future. I urge you ... in taking corrective measures to stem the collapse of our economy create new jobs and preserve existing ones to modernize our health care system and to foser decent intelligent discussion and debate of public policy issues.

From my earliest childhood memories the outdoors have been an important part of my life and I have passed that down to my child and all the children I teach. I hope that at this special time you will ensure that this extreme enjoyment will be preserved for all.

In 1960 I first visited many national parks the memories are still firm and endearing and of great importance in my life. Please secure and add to such places for those generations to follow! We must not allow wilderness and wildlife to become endangered any more than presently exists in fact please help us to add to their preservation. My heartfelt thanks for all you do.

I have visited three of our national parks: Yellowstone Glacier Yosemite. Each is gorgeous in its own way and I truly enjoyed being there if only for a short time. I noticed that each had many visitors of all ages nationalities. etc. and I trust this will continue through the coming years. America is truly beautiful and all of our national parks plus other land and water spaces need to be preserved for generations to come.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Obama Administration has frankly been looked down upon in terms of what they have accomplished for the environment here is your opportunity to "change" and it is encouraging to see that happening. For generations presidents and people have cited "preserving our land for future generations." I think one of the biggest things to look at conserving right now would be scenic tourist attractions such as mountain ranges where strip mining has become a huge problem because it utterly destroys the mountaintop. I also think an area of priority should be bodies of water (maintaining the water's health and clarity) and large roadless forests that are being targeted for road building since that would take away from the secluded space people expect.

During the past two months I have had the opportunity to drive to and visit many California State Parks and Beaches with an Annual Day Pass. I am impressed with how the State of California State Parks system has been able to keep biological cultural historical and environmental pieces together despite a severe budget crisis and a Governor who apparently did not see the value of such important state treasures. As I see it it is exactly the same for the national parks forests monuments and wildernesses etc.. It is time protect expand and create more diverse and viable areas for future generations to appreciate and nurture on a national level.

Address the impacts from climate change

Like most Americans I place a very high value on our shared outdoor spaces and I want and expect our elected officials to protect and preserve them for the long term rather than allow them to be degraded or lost for short term profit to industry or their potential for benefit to private owners or because of neglect.

Please protect a cornerstone of our national heritage for our children and grandchildren.

The time to do this is now ;respect what President Roosevelt put into place and allow it to continue for future generations to enjoy.

PLEASE DO THE RIGHT THING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO COME.

If the great outdoors are not protected now they will be lost for future generations.

Thank you very much again an we all need to PROTECT an stop the Slaughter's an Burning up an Blowing up of our ANIMALS an WILDLIFE an EARTH !! Please do all you can do an then some ..

We need much more conservation of nature and lots less consumption of our natural resourses.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'm especially concerned about preservation of wetlands. The more we learn the more apparent the critical role of wetlands becomes. We see this clearly in the recent gulf spill. The benefits of a strong wetlands system too often in the past considered unproductive land ripe for development are too numerous to mention here but you are aware of all that. So please give due consideration to the need to preserve wetlands.

Like so many other Americans my wife and I are active members of the Grand Canyon Assn. and we donate to their efforts to maintain this pristine national park. But there are so many outside pressures (lobbyists) that want to turn it and other parks into money makers for those for whom they do their dirty business. We cannot let that happen. We must hold up as examples the works of Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt Harry Truman and Bill Clinton all of whom kept an eye on what was happening inside our national parks and historic sites.

PROTECT PROTECT PROTECT AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS THAT PAST PRESIDENTS AND PRIVATE CITIZENS HAVE PUT ASIDE FOR US TO ENJOY!!!!!! IF WE DON'T DO IT NOW IT WILL BE TOO LATE!!!! WE NEED TO BALANCE NATURE WITH DEVELOPMENT SO OUR NATURAL RESOURCES ARE PROTECTED!!!!

Sir This is all we have to pass on to our children and it needs to be protected and allowed to return to a balanced time. If you do not do everything that you can to help preserve and protect our environment and our animals then we are signing our own death warrant because we will not be able to live in what is left. Thank you do this for your daughters and all of the other children that we leave this to.

I served an Americorps term last Summer with the Montana Conservation Corps leading groups of youth into National Forests to do trail and conservation work to preserve these spaces for their future will you honor their efforts by doing more to protect natural spaces?

Before it's too late while we still have the political power to do something in our time....Please our water our air and of course our wildlife!

Create support for alternative energy vehicles solar and wind NOW Protect endangered animal species and the area they live in from oil and development

Once the Great American lands are destroyed they will never be the same. Those lands that qualify for Wilderness protection must be given that designation that they deserve. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. including wildlife corridors that will help migration and survival.

Some of my favorite memories growing up are of our family vacation trips going camping in the majestic Texas parks and spending wonderful times at the beach cabin enjoying the beautiful Texas Gulf coast beaches and sanctuaries. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

Distribute as many recycle bins as garbage cans

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are not safeguarding our wilderness areas we're destroying them. We need to stop caving into big business and protect our environment.

I personally enjoy Hiking and Mountain Biking these activities help me stay active and energized. I want my 1 yr old son to be able to enjoy these activities in the same woods I have. Clean up rivers and streams forcing tighter pollution regulation

Please give attention to repairing wild areas and habitats in the Gulf Coast region contaminated by oil. Also leave the wild horses burros and wolves alone to live!

As an avid user of our publicly held lands I have seen many uses and abuse of these great treasures. Please help protect our natural resources for our health and that of future generations. We all need clean air land and water to have a healthy society. Humans have made a dramatic impact on our native ecosystems in the past 200 years in this country can we slow the tide?

President Obama The cities with the highest cancer and leukemia rates are those that have the largest amount of automobile congestion. It's clear that we need the oxygen produced by trees. If you are truly interested in the health of American citizens you will take the opportunity to protect all trees parks and natural spaces. Multinational corporations appear to have free range to destroy any kind of nature. It's time to pass legislation that revokes their privilege to destroy everything in their path. The coal and petroleum industries bear the greatest responsibility for destroying nature. Please use your conscience to preserve this Garden of Eden with which we've been blessed we are rapidly destroying her.

Please help preserve and expand our natural lands.

It seems that the ecosystem of the entire planet is out of balance and has been since the Age of Industry. I have a love for nature and our planet that is so profound there are no words. Everyone needs that. There are so many issues to address it can be overwhelming. Nevertheless in light of this climate change we humans must stand up to the challenge as a united front to do something of substance to save the whales dolphins salamanders etc. the list goes on. Basically now it is evident that if we want to save our own species we must protect all of the other species we have caused to be so out of balance. I know this sounds strange but we must save the plankton! We need to protect our great outdoors yet we need to leave it untouched by humans to heal that means no more roads in the wilderness. We humans have consumed way too much of this planet. No need for that glut. 2008 and consumerism makes it plain for all to see. Thank you

I am behind you on these very important points stated above to protect and maintain what we have as a nation and on this earth as a whole. Thankyou.

I strongly believe it is important to preserve land as close to its natural processes as possible. This would include leaving any resources that may be desired undisturbed.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for your attention. Let this initiative reflect and represent that here in America we are committed to finding new ways to live within and relate to our environment that will sustain both it and us into future generations to reflect that we are willing to do our part as a world leader to combat climate change.

The parks in California are an important issue to me. Please save them.

Create a Jobs Program to alleviate the \$8 billion maintenance backlog of National Parks and Unemployment simultaneously! Remember that the Earth is our House in Space and our Food Source and our Water Source and and and! What happens to Earth and the species on it will eventually happen to us too! (In Parlance "Don't Crap where you Eat!") How do you want to be remembered? Like Teddy Roosavelt or Herbert Hoover?

I want my children's generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

with an eye toward the future and encourage smart growth Connect ALL people with Nature and reach out to our diverse citizenship Preserving America's natural gems should be part of our global stewardship and cultural identity standards.

It's so easy to take our lovely country for granted. Because of our behavior countries that have little impact are suffering at our expense. PLEASE fight the corporations!!!!!!

I would also like to see more tools implemented for land and wildlife conservation short of full government ownership.

I definitely realize that YOU have many issues to contend with however keeping our ENVIRONMENT and WILDLIFE free and safe for our progeny needs to be a PRIORITY!

As resident of New Mexico which has almost 75% of its lands publically controlled by one or another federal state or local government agency we are in urgent need of your leadership to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Act. Your Presidential voice will provide strong support to get this critically necessary funding.

These places are priceless and if we let them disappear they will be gone forever there will be NO way to get them back. To ensure that current and future generations will always benefit from and enjoy our

Priorities for me are that we do not compromise existing wilderness by allowing mining logging road building which would harm the water the forests the natural beauty of these areas. That the department of interior cannot sell public lands to the highest bidder. That science and nature are used to determine how to best protect areas that are open to development for business as well as citizens to create a win-win. That we enforce clean air and water regulations. Businesses that pollute are held responsible.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I teach too many students who have never been exposed to nature and an appreciation of all life forms. The first reaction of many of them is to step on a bug shoot a deer or use a street as a trashcan. We need to not only preserve our wilderness areas but to add programs accessible to all citizens especially the young ones that will teach responsibility and an understanding of the web of life.

This is not just about the next generation being able to enjoy the great outdoors. Whenever we take away protected land it usually is a stopgap measure with no long range provable positive solution in mind. However when we destroy the land the impact is long range with an irreplaceable loss. Please do not engage in stopgap measures. As the Native Americans say one must see the effect of your actions on seven future generations. We are so untrained in this thinking and you have the power to shift that.

We are quickly using up the earth's resources. Now is the time to become conscious of the real facts to begin conserving preserving and restoring all that nature has given us.

Provide Increased Nonmotorized Access and Recreational Opportunities

Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir began creating these special places. I have been in many national and state parks state and national forests wilderness areas and national monuments. Each of these visits has enriched my life. Please help!

Beauty especially natural beauty is being pushed aside in our fastgrowing and sometimes outofcontrol world. The sanity and awe that come from being in nature are what have sustained me and my children through times of stress and adversity. It is a comfort that is ours by right and citizenship. It is also our right and responsibility to maintain and conserve the diversity that will surely provide life for our descendants into the future. I am doing my part by becoming a woodland steward and supporting conservation causes. I know I can do more.

Improve Watersheds This great country has always protected its wildlife and their habitats with the Endangered Species Act. Now however it seems that no one in our Congress Senate or leaders of our states care about what has always been one of our greatest assets. Do we want our children grandchildren and future generations to look at these wonderful animals in history book pictures because we have slowly destroyed them by the greed of the American people. These animals have no one to protect them except us. God created them for man to take care of they are a vital part of our heritage please insure that they are a vital part of our future. Thank you for getting protections for our wildlife and their habitats.

I am fortunate enough to live with the redwoods in Northern California which were nearly wiped out by lumbermen before protective laws were passed. It is up to our elected officials to advocate for the preservation of our national treasures. We are counting on you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If nothing is done to save this your children and grandchildren will never know the joy and beauty that was originally created by our Great Father in Heaven.

Protect WILD HORSES WOLFS BUFFALOS WATERSHEDS WATER WAYS TAKE ALL PRIVATE WELFARE CATTLE AND SHEEP OFF OUR PUBLIC LANDS !

Promote appreciation of and respect for our natural and historic places Increase awareness of the benefits that accrue by preserving our heritage Increase funding for preserving and protecting our heritage

Come on Obama do something that will make a difference in our country.

Please use sciencebased environmental concerns to preserve the US's outdoor treasures.

We need to protect future environment including wildlife and all elements of ecosystems for future generation. Please stress to the public that we must overcome with vigor the selfishness and selfcenteredness that seems to wish to use up resources and kill the golden goose that is our planet that provides our water and air and that sustains our life. We have obligations.

Fully fund our national parks they need a lot more money than they are currently getting. Increased access should not include motorized vehicles in national parks or wilderness areas

The concept that land(which includes all our natural resources) is a resource that belongs to everyone being created by the Creator for all is fundamental & goes far beyond conservation into economics.The value of land should be taxed for the whole community & labor & capital should be untaxed in order to cure our economic ills. Anyone who causes any pollution or damage to our natural resources should be taxed. Tax what you burn not what you earn. For more on this crucial matter go to www.henrygeorge.org

Our planet would be lifeless without wilderness areas. We all gain energy in every aspect of our lives from our forests grasslands and natural waterways. We need a new perspective and respect for our planet and what makes it work naturally.

I voted for you and will in the future as long as I see that you are a president that puts conservation ahead of business. Let us set the standard for the world. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

: Please conserve large landscapes that include our most pristine wildlands working forest and ranch lands private lands and the connections across these large areas. Large natural areas provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. : Wildlands represent some of our healthiest and most intact lands. Please use all tools available to protect our public lands including recommending new wilderness and national parks designating national monuments and expanding National Wildlife Refuges. : Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. Please prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands making restoration a national priority. By restoring our forests we can spur economic growth by providing needed jobs and improve recreation opportunities. : Please create new national programs that help connect people especially our youth with nature. Today youth especially people of color are underrepresented on our public lands and it is important that new policies and programs are developed to encourage more youth participation including nature education or recreation programs and a revived civilian conservation corps. No matter where they live all children deserve the opportunity to learn about and experience the wildlands that belong to all Americans. : Recreation is a great way for people to experience nature and help develop a strong conservation ethic. Please ensure access is increased for all Americans. : Please support fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas protect lands around lakes rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails or provide key wildlife linkage areas. Strong leadership is needed to shape a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

Stop destroying the U.S. You don't see other countries destroying their lands (not including the ones at war). They have more respect for their country than people who live in the U.S. has.

there is just so much of the wilderness left please do whatever you can to preserve as much of what is left as you can we are not alone on this planet we share it with a vast array of amazing wildlife. it would be a poor legacy to the next generation to let any more of it disappear. want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

I am aware that in this time the main goal is to make corporations happy but we must think of our future and the future of our kids. It would be a sad day when there is nothing for them left to see besides trash and buildings.

We cannot continue to destroy/degrade wild America. The repercussions are too awful. We are supposed to be stewards of this planet. We need to do a much better job.

With all the carbon dioxide in the air our country is in need of as much oxygen as we can produce. Green plants and trees give off oxygen. That is why I want you to protect and conserve America's land parks and forests. Clean water is a top priority for America. We need to protect our scenic rivers lakes and creeks. Americans take oxygen and clean water for granted. These two commodities will not last forever if we do not conserve them.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Wilderness areas are vital to the health and wellbeing of people wildlife and planet Earth. Humans need to experience natural places and the best way to guarantee that this can happen is by expanding and protecting national state and local parks.

The key points are well covered in the letter above but I would like to add my personal feelings to this. In the past few years I have spent time to go internally and discover my true core values. Many people do this maybe before they are in their 50's but they do the self examining to find these. In the truly hard uncertain times of this era I know Nature is my core. To be unable on a daily basis to enjoy the fluttering butterflies the song birds busy taking care to find their next meal a box turtle slowly crossing the flowering wildflowers the beautiful sky at night would be unnatural to me. I am one of the lucky individuals who has the opportunity to live in an area that is being protected. While not a National Park the NJ Pinelands is a National Reserve. Protecting all of our land should be our priority. The land does not belong to anyone we merely babysit it for the next generations. On my watch I'd like to believe we will continue to do just that save it for all to come. Enjoying the wonders of this great Earth is OUR right. Please continue to go to all lengths to save every possible inch of America.

I am asking you to preserve the Great Outdoors in the face of indiscriminate development urban sprawl increasing population and fewer and fewer open space for people to experience for a sense of peace and to reconnect with our natural world.

It is important to maintain the balance of all of the planet's life and varied ecosystems. Conservation at a Large Scale areas and expand them

America will become nothing more than a thirdworld country if these lands are not regulated and protected.

We need to work together to undo the past administrations bad policies and protect these lands instead of giving them up to special interests and dirty fuel industries.

I am writing to urge you to work to protect wilderness areas parks and other parts of the great outdoors.

fire salazar! Then do the right thing and stop corporate/congressional greed and save the planet....you do have children don't you? Do you want to leave them an unlivable poisoned planet??? Take action now or consign your descendants to a horrible future and a terrible present!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am concerned with the WILD HORSES AND BURROS being roundup and often killed by getting in to the hands of the wrong people from the BLM we need to protect our western states from Uranium digging. WE must protect our vast forest land and wildlife. The past 2 yrs. have been nothing but killing wolves horses dying from roundups and for what? to bring in the big oil companies to destroy our lands meant for our wild life. Is our greed for money so important to rid our country of any historical location? This country has to slow down we have destroyed what God has provided. Our government has done a lot of harm to our great outdoors.

Limit access by offroad vehicles which ultimately degrade the land

It is only through nature that we can fully understand ourselves and our origins. Preserving our precious wilderness and other outdoor wonders is therefore fundamentally necessary for us to become complete as human beings. Quickly address and implement solutions to slow Global Climate Change

We have polluted our waterways and land in the interests of massive food production so it is more important now more than ever to help protect what remains of our wilderness and waterways from further toxification. It is so disheartening to fly across the country and no longer see blue waterways below. Please help save our land.

I'm an American and I've seen enough housing developments strip malls and strip mines in this country. We need LESS development and MORE of the natural outdoors preserved!

I grew up spending most of my summers in the Adirondacks or St. Lawrence river and can't imagine my Grandniece and nephew not having that opportunity. PLEASE not only save and protect our wild spaces even more importantly help America be a benchmark for saving our Planet (as a habitable space for people and wildlife). To me that is one of the key things the world needs to wake up to before it is too late. Make us the leaders not the followers in this effort I beg you...

To be more specific how about starting with protecting what is ALREADY supposed to be protected but isn't? Like the WILD HORSES and their ancestral land given to them by court order and law but wildly disregarded and blatantly ignored by BLM who rounds up these magnificent creatures with OUR TAX DOLLARS! In addition these millions of acres that are supposed to be protected need to be managed responsibly and that includes getting CATTLE and SHEEP OFF THE PUBLIC LANDS! These lands belong to the American people and if we continue to let cattle ranching mining and other destructive activities on these lands then our grandchildren will inherit deserts devoid of wildlife and soul. I'd like to see species protected on a much larger scale such as WOLVES which we have treated horribly! These animals should have sanctuaries where people can visit but not harm or destroy the land. We need to become stewards of the land with a mentality that we ought to take care of it for many future generations and not merely to profit from it in the short term. for the 21st century I trust that you will take our public comments seriously and into consideration.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of the largest failings of our conservation "system" is the lack of connection between various reserved areas. Without these connections populations become isolated and much more fragile than a larger combined population would be. The Adirondack Park is a prime example of what is needed.

I personally would like to ask you to be the president who made environmental issues important. I realize there are other issues more important but would you please leave something for your daughters and my grandson to enjoy and remember. Thank you so much for your time.

As our population continues to explode creating and continuing wildlife refuges and protecting new wild places were never more important.

Come on Mr. president do what's right for posterity.

For all of you with sons and daughters I want their future to be even brighter than ours. Environmental conservation is the most important thing we as a people can do to contribute to the healthy future for our children that we all want. With sustainability and ecofriendly business practices it is possible to actually lower the financial cost of our basic needs and instill quality morals for our future generations. You men and women know what to do so do it for the sake of the human race!

I have lived in Illinois my whole life and have always enjoyed the outdoors and the opportunities that the great lake and wonderful parks provide us. I also have been lucky to travel to Hawaii camp at the Boundary Waters and visit several other beautiful American nature sites. For the past five years I have been a Ranger in DuPage County and have seen first hand the enjoyment people receive from coming out to our wonderful outdoor areas. I implore you to follow with any and all means possible to protect enhance and continually support monetarily and politically the environment in which we live visit and enjoy everyday as Americans. Thanks for your time and continued support of our natural areas.

Restore the wolf population to create healthier deer and elk herds. People need to connect with wilderness.

How wonderful it would be for this Administration to be known for its conservation efforts and successes. When we conserve we protect not only our remarkable natural heritage and protect wild places and wildlife we also do so much for people on so many levels. Thank you.

Corporations have WAY TOO MUCH POWER especially as concerns our environment!
Corporations are NOT PEOPLE! MONEY IS NOT SPEECH!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I wish we could forget which side we sit on politically when we come to discussions on our natural heritage. We really don't have the luxury of making this a political issue open spaces wild animals fresh water and wetlands birds and fish these are not political nuggets to bring out when we need votes or to put to one side when we feel the vote is against us. That's why I am asking you a President who seems to understand that the environment is beyond politics to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild I have no particular sites in mind when I write this letter because I do not agree that one site is necessarily more important than another everyone who lives in a specific area will feel that a particular place is more deserving than another. The point really is not the specifics which any of the trusted conservation societies can advise on but the fact that we need to think ahead. We need to think ahead far beyond election dates and 4 year fund raising and even 8 year polling days. We need to stop seeing conservation and environment as a vote grabbing issue and look further than that. We need to stop damaging out watersheds and wildlife habitats. We need to address conservation on a large scale as well as locally. We need to educate people as to why our natural resources are not there for us to misuse overuse and abuse.

This Presidential Administration has promised to make environmental protection and sustainability priorities I hope you will continue your efforts to help us into a new era of conservation.

I have been backpacking in the western US wild areas for over 40 years and have begun to share this experience now with my children. I am concerned that there is less wild land now than even a few decades ago and feel strongly that we need to take steps to preserve what little is left.

In taking action to protect our public and wild lands you will be taking action to protect our future generations. We are intimately tied to our environment... its health reflects our health. Protecting these spaces and the wildlife within them is both sensible and needed.

Instead of underfunding this uniquely significant budget item let's cut wasteful spending by the Pentagon especially the obsolete coldwar programs and pork barrel projects. I implore you to do something positive like protecting the budgetary line items that maintain the natural beauty of our great country.

I want my children to be able to have the same quality of relationship to the wilderness of the great outdoors as I have had the opportunity to have. I am sure you want the same for your children and grandchildren.

We need to find a balance between conservation of our environment and the production of energy. If we can send a person to the moon surely we can work this out. Our futures depend on saving our environment.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is no need to take away more land for urban development when there are so many areas that are abandoned that can be redeveloped.

Don't let developers turn our most precious resources into parking lots and strip malls; some things are worth more than money. To help others realize the value of our natural environment they need to be exposed to one which is not polluted or paved over.

For those of us who live in a watershed environment like we do in Michigan the water becomes vital. What we put in obviously we take out. One simple example is that of salmon. Over the 25 years of living here we have gone from being able to fish for salmon from Lake Michigan to not being able to eat it. Our efforts are beginning to pay off for Lake Erie I hope that we are wise enough to continue to clean things up.

Our country is blessed with a wealth of beautiful natural areas that should be preserved. To often these types of concerns fall to the wayside when issues involving power and money take precedence. But these are the things that are not replaceable. They are treasures and should be treated as such.

My husband and I both work in land conservation in North Carolina. While we've seen tremendous strides in public lands acquisition funding and management we are all too aware of the largescale threats of population growth and global warming. The first inevitably places more and more pressure on our natural resources through inappropriate land use. The second places more insidious stress on all of our natural lands since global warming is likely to cause more erratic weather increased catastrophic fire sea level rise including saltwater inundation of freshwater resources and increased exotic invasion in natural areas made more vulnerable by environmental stress. Setting aside MORE and LARGER natural areas is not the only solution; we obviously have to reduce the source of global warming limit population growth through education and engage in wise land use planning. However acquiring and protecting large blocks of forest will help reduce global warming acting as a carbon sink and a source of oxygen. Acquiring natural areas with high diversity clusters of rare species and relatively little evidence of disturbance will ensure that these areas act as reservoirs to minimize species and natural community losses. And acquiring extensive areas along rivers and streams (of at least 300 feet in width) will ensure that aquatic resources are protected for our drinking supply as buffer against flooding and for the rich diversity of species which rely on riparian resources.

I am a teacher and mother who values above all else the need to pass on to our children a clean environment rather than one damaged beyond repair by humankind. The most important challenges now facing us as a society a country and as human beings are (a) the need to develop sustainable methods of producing energy (b) the need to protect and preserve the outdoor spaces and wilderness areas we have left are.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As someone who has found the wonderful and much needed respite in getting into a wilderness setting to recharge and relax I cannot encourage you enough to protect what seems to be rapidly disappearing. Wealthy "owners" of lake shores here in Minnesota seem to believe they can do and build anything they want destroying the God given blessings I believe need indeed must be preserved. Why do a few always think they have all the rights that ought to be shared with all? And when those "powerful" folk buy legislators even governors with their wealth so no rules or regulations get passed we have destroyed what may never be reclaimable!

Address Conservation as a national priority areas and their bordering areas through federal educational and access programs

PLEASE KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK. WE NEED A FAST MOVING TEAM TO UNDO THE DAMAGE FROM THE LAST ADMINISTRATION. WE KNOW CORPORATE INTERESTS DO NOT MOTIVATE YOURS!!!!

OUR AMERICAN MUSTANGS AND OUR WILD BURROS NEED TO BE PROTECTED. THEY ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR AMERICAN HERITAGE. I WANT THEM TO BE ON OUR PUBLIC LANDS FOR OUR CHILDREN AND OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN.

I look at the mountain top mining and see how easily we destroy beautiful places in the name of progress. I fear how readily we kowtow to corporate demands and claims of saving the economy by destroying nature.

Mr. President we need to protect our environment and wildlife. If the Gulf is not a lesson this nothing will ever be. To more in that direction we need to fire Ken Salazar and replace him with an environmentalist. Unless that is done we are spinning our wheels. Thank you.

Our shared outdoor spaces provide the opportunity for human interaction with the natural world and as a result of this interaction improvement in our collective physical and emotional health. Understanding the advancing threats placed upon many of these natural areas we would wisely protect what we have now. In order to do this our nation's people need to know what they have even if they do not live close to these resources and do not have first hand knowledge of these resources. The way in which they will have this knowledge is to visit natural areas and enjoy the splendor that is there. For this reason I ask your administration to take the lead in this America's Great Outdoors project!

...Dear President Obama. PLEASE TAKE TIME NOW TO HEAR OUR HOPES AND CONCERNS FOR OUR AMERICA'S FREE AND OPEN SPACES. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE PLANS FORMULATED TO PROTECT THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF OUR COUNTRY. I ASK YOU TO TAKE TIME AND TAKE NOTE PLACING CONCERNS ON THE HIGHEST LEVEL AS THE LEADER OF OUR COUNTRY I KNOW YOU SEE THE NEED.

Parks and historic sites need protection from commercial interests and exploitation. Motor vehicles should be limited and vehicles such as offroad and snow mobiles should be banned from such places.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To us protecting our natural heritage is one of the most important tasks Americans currently need to focus on. We firmly believe that with your leadership our citizenry will pull together and protect our environment the most valuable resource we have.

Wilderness areas in this country have been under siege by corporate interests usually energy recreational vehicle enthusiasts or ranching and any other organization that might find interests in public wilderness areas. Our wilderness areas need to be protected to preserve them as wilderness. We need a movement much like at the birth of our national parks as many of the same forms of environmental destruction threatened those lands so many amazing habitats are being destroyed like the hilltops of Appalachia. This kind of land preservation offers benefits more widely and in a more sustainable way than developing or extracting from the land which is a net loss to the public. Preserving wilderness improves watersheds and wildlife habitat critical in a time in human history where species are vanishing at an alarming rate due to human habitats and when over 6 billion people on need fresh water on a planet where less than 1% of the water is drinkable and 50% of that is accessible. In addition now more than ever we need places where we can have experiences in raw nature to help counter and balance our immersion in technology. Finally providing increased access and recreational opportunities to the public is the highest and best form of land use we can pursue. More than the deficit which comes and goes wilderness is a true gift we can give to future generations.

I also have a very specific request: the elimination of mountaintop removal mining. Companies have had free reign for decades to destroy mountains in the Appalachians mountains with names trails homes and histories and have wreaked environmental havoc in the country's oldest and most diverse ecosystems; indeed one of the most diverse in the world. It is not an exaggeration to say that they rape the land and then leave it broken. It is a practice that should be stopped not one that should simply be regulated or diminished. Many of our most beautiful spaces have been permanently lost.

Our country is nothing without our land! Please work to protect the natural resources that we have so that future generations can enjoy America!

Our Great Outdoors need to be protected by empowering the local land managers with the authority to enforce the land usage laws already in place. We DO NOT need any more wilderness or land areas closed to the public. What we need is for our public lands to be more accessible by the public including motorized travel and better access for the handicapped. Address Public Awareness of responsible OHV usage Protect access to all public lands including OHV trail systems by increasing land use education and etiquette and by increasing motorized access to public lands including motorized access Fully Fund all motorized and offroad trail opportunities Fully fund our local USFS districts to enforce the laws and regulations already in place to protect our public lands. Fully Fund land use education programs Please DO NOT lock us out of our Public Lands but instead create a way for our lands to be better accessed and protected by better land management.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Nothing is more "American" than the enjoyment of America's great outdoors and Public lands! I want to remind those who seem to forget that Generations of motorized OHV Users and Supporters are taxpayers who through those very taxes which have funded the procurement expansion and maintenance of these areas. Millions of private dollars and countless private hours of time are donated every year by the OHV community to expand and maintain OHV trails and riding areas. The OHV community has proven through their personal investment of time and money that they care about the land and are committed to responsible use of that land. These people have an equal RIGHT to use and enjoy these lands. I urge the managers of PUBLIC Lands recognize this invaluable commitment as well as encouraging and expanding the responsible use of Public Lands for ALL Americans. Local land managers who should already have the authority to enforce existing land usage laws can through the proper enforcement of existing regulations; protect our Great Outdoors and Public Lands. There are more than sufficient regulations and statutes in place to allow managers to protect our Public lands! We DO NOT want or need additional wilderness or land areas closed to the public. What is "public" about land that cannot be accessed by a substantial segment of the "public"? What we need is for our public lands to be more accessible to ALL citizens including responsible motorized travel as well as improved access for the handicapped. To ensure that current as well as future generations will always benefit and enjoy our public lands please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors: Increase Public Awareness and a Positive Image of Responsible OHV Usage Protect access for ALL Americans to ALL public lands including the existing OHV trail systems by increasing land use education and etiquette and by encouraging responsible motorized access to public lands including additional motorized access areas Fully Fund all motorized and offroad trail opportunities Fully fund our local USFS districts to enforce existing laws and regulations to protect our public lands. Fully Fund land use education programs specifically aimed at Responsible OHV access and Use. Please DO NOT lock OHV users out of Public Lands which belong to ALL Americans! We encourage and insist that those in power create a pathway to increased access to public land by all users while assuring those very lands are protected through improved and responsible land management.

Please do NOT cave in to the lobbying of the dirty industries (coal gas oil) and allow them further to despoil OUR lands.

In those instances where private industry is allowed to use public lands they should pay a reasonable amount instead of getting access for almost nothing. And when they're finished the land water and animals should be in the same or better shape.

No more oil drilling in U.S. coastal waters

Let's stop investing in war and start investing in our own country and its future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The great wilderness is sadly gone. The open spaces that remain however are still of immense environmental and social value. These spaces must be preserved and enhanced for us today and for future generations.

Having grown up in the beautiful Willamette Valley of Oregon I have a great appreciation for our green spaces towering trees and a walk in the woods. That is why I know that preserving these special places and creating more will have a lasting positive effect on our generations to come.

Please consider that people aren't the only beings on our planet and the rest of the natural world needs to be protected from our heavy footprint.

Regulate Toxins in our Waters More Stringently The EPA and agencies in the Department of the Interior should be monitoring and regulating pollution and toxic dumping and land use issues. Their concern should be in protecting the environment not in helping corporations abuse our land and waterways. I want the children of my children's children to enjoy our beautiful country. Please follow through!

I concur with the following from the Wilderness Society. It seems to me that it is critical to preserve wilderness areas that belong to all the people and I hope your administration will take the lead in preserving and enlarging it for the nation. Thank you.

We have already desecrated so much of America and the resources the land has given us. Enough is enough. Global Warming is here steps MUST be taken to not only preserve what we have but to rebuild restock our resources. The future IS with our generation. Please know and realize how very very important this is.....

I have spent my life of 56 years stewarding America's landscapes and productive farms. I teach natural history environmental science and land conservation. The connection we humans share with the one great life force of nature is essential to the wellbeing of this generation and future generations. I have spent many weeks and months experiencing our great wilderness areas forests and parks. The solutions for our future as a civilization depend on preserving intact healthy ecosystems and our planet's biodiversity. Without these resources we will lose the basis for our greatest commodities and economies. Please be bold in creating new wilderness areas expanding our national parks and forests adding watershed management protection and conserving our precious natural heritage so that my children and grandchildren and all future generations. While camping in one of the beautiful New York State campgrounds in the Adirondacks this August I was struck by how these facilities benefit the poorer families. For many the summer vacation consists of packing up the camper truck tents and moving to a campground by a lake. The respite from daily life and work is palpable in the woods and on our waterways. Spending time outdoors around a campfire fishing hiking or paddling renews our souls and restores our health. Being in nature is a necessity for us all. I was on a nearby island in Maine when you visited Mt. Desert Island with your family this July. I was so thrilled to know you were taking time for yourselves surrounded by the immense beauty of Acadia National Park. It made me extra happy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please pay attention: This is a much bigger issue than recreation. This issue is about our human soul and our relationship to Life. We have no soul or life without respect and reverence for nature. This protection of the natural world is the most pivotal critical aspect of human life today all other crises are rooted here.

Less than 3% of the United States original forest remains. Where we are fortunate to have old growth it is often in fragmentary plots broken up in a way not conducive to protecting animal populations especially migratory ones. Please make preservation of native forest and restoration of multispecies and multistage forest ecosystems an urgent priority. In many cases the Forest Service is selling timber permits for less than it costs to manage the sales build and maintain the roads and it is putting timber on the market when demand is low due to slow housing starts. Who benefits? A few extraction companies who do not have an investment in the future of the environment and seek only shortterm gain. We can do better. If we are to ever cut the majestic oldgrowth it should be for timeless projects such as those of the CCC and WPA building the great lodges and parks of the depression years.

We also need to be more proactive in preparing to counter global warming as much as possible. Most scientists consider this not an issue any more in that unfortunately global warming is clearly happening right now. The issue is getting our political leaders to communicate this as a national priority.

Provide more funding for national parks & their staff

Please ignore those ranters and ravers from the Tea Party who would have you believe all Americans agree with them and their big oil big business partnerships. The majority of us want our shared outdoor spaces protected from drilling and mining.

As a resident of the State of Michigan the Great lakes are my true heart's home and particularly the Michigan Dunes area where I reside. The overwhelming beauty endless opportunities for outdoor recreation and easy access to wilderness areas that exist in Michigan make this a resource of inestimable value and one which we must protect and preserve with great care. If you have never experienced the beauty and bounty of this place I urge you to come! Bring your family and dear friends. The experience will change you and enrich your life!

I ask you to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild To ensure future generations will always benefit and enjoy our public lands please consider these priorities for America's Great Remove cattle from grazing on land within 50 miles of bison Close sensitive areas with endangered plants and animals to any offroad use Stop drilling along our coastline. With two explosions and oil spills in ONE year it's time we went green as a nation. That alone will save thousands of species from extinction and put America's labor force back to work. Once we ruin them they're gone forever. especially inner city children. They are our hope and future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Address public awareness of responsible OffRoad riding Protect our OffRoad riding areas
Improve access for all ages Connect people with OffRoad motorcycling and nature Provide
increased access and OHV opportunities Fully fund OffRoad riding opportunities

I am tired of seeing public land and resources being abused by corporate interests or private ones being trashed and contaminated then abandoned by them. Please please act on this while there is time and support to get it passed.

Please do not allow business and corporate interests to determine what is the best use of our shared outdoor spaces. Use of the resources of our planet must be done wisely and these resources must be allowed to exist into the far future. Shortsighted plundering of our natural resources for shortterm profit is not wise management of these resources. In addition it is essential to the well being of our species that we have places where we can be in touch with the natural environment. We can learn more about God spirituality and what being human is about in nature than we will ever learn in a humanbuilt church. We must all be guardians of our wild/natural places.

You need to start taking action to preserve our forests wildlife and environment. These are not just beautiful places to visit but necessary resources for our quality of air health and lives.

We must take bold action to reverse The Bush Administration's crimes against our limited and precious natural environment. We have much to do to undo the greed and shortsighted corporate dominance over our Public Lands and Resources.

I do not go to wilderness parks any longer. I did always go when I was growing up and I would hate to think that new generations will not have this God given moving experience. Experiencing nature is a wonder in creation and should not be discarded for greed or any other purpose. Perhaps Congressmen could take less in wages perks and benefits to help balance the budge. There are viable ways to make this work.

You promised to help people if your we elected. Well you have been elected and now it's your turn to KEEP YOUR PROMISES! Please preserve our natural resources and tell BIG BUSINESS that they already have enough. (After all just how rich do they need to be?) Say NO to BIG BUSINESS and YES TO AMERICA. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The fuel oil automotive telecommunication computer media technologies chemical manufacturers coal mining industries etc. have taken a tremendous toll on the environment. The bigger picture involves a wider and deeper view of the future world of planet earth. We have the technology to change the way we use energy we have the technology to use alternative cleaning products that are biodegradable we have the technology now to change transportation. The Obama administration forged ahead with extremely bold moves from the very beginning. America knows that it can be done. It is time to take another bold move now. Use that boldness to assist the earth and humanity. Change the way we use fuel technology chemical manufacturing (which includes oil chemicals paint solvents fuel detergents toxic beauty products hair dyes industrial dyes poisonous computer parts monitors batteries coal and oil etc.). Take a stand for the USA and ban any product that is not biodegradable sustainable green or healthy for the environment as well as for human use. Do not trade with countries that import poisonous products do not use toxic products or toxic ingredients in US companies abroad. Computers and cell phones are toxic. Stop the manufacturing of poisonous technology. Stop the manufacturing of toxic products altogether. This is the only answer and dancing around the topic is useless and only delays the problem for another administration to tackle another year. Every day it gets worse time is ticking away while we could be making our country a healthier place to live. Why are toxic products allowed to be manufactured? Change how things are manufactured. This is how we will ultimately protect the great outdoors. I'm not interested in pussy footing around with nice ideas. Let's get to the core of what is happening here nowtoday and end the problem of environmental terrorism forever! Thank you~

That's why I am asking you to please seize this opportunity to follow up on your campaign promises that you would support conservation efforts. Thus far our response to the BP crisis was lackluster. We essentially allowed BP to do what they wanted and they controlled the disaster situation. Now it is time for AMERICA to protect itself. To this end I strongly urge you to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests meadows trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Protect our wild horses and mustangs Protect the buffalo in the west and Not allow them to be killed to protect farmer and rancher's interests. (cross infection from buffalo to cattle with brucellosis has never been proven) Thank you very much for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy After the first half of this year Americans are expecting a MUCH STRONGER STAND ON CONSERVATION BY THE WHITE HOUSE

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please conserve large landscapes that include our most pristine wildlands. Large natural areas provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. Wildlands represent some of our healthiest and most intact lands except of course the Gulf at this time. Please use all tools available to protect our public lands including recommending new wilderness and national parks designating national monuments and expanding National Wildlife Refuges. Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. Please prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands making restoration a national priority. By restoring our forests we can spur economic growth by providing needed jobs and improve recreation opportunities. I feel this is crucial. I was raised by my mother a school teacher. We didn't much money but we could go on vacations because we could camp. Every trip was a learning experience. As a teenager in Georgia I worked as a day counselor for innercity children that had never been to the woods teaching them what I had learned. Places like the Fern Bank Science Center is still my most favorite place to visit. If we don't reconnect children to the living forests and wilderness they will be lost. Recreation is a great way for people to experience nature and help develop a strong conservation ethic. Please ensure access is increased for all Americans. Please support fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas protect lands around lakes rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails or provide key wildlife linkage areas.

THERE IS NO TIME BUT NOW. STOP THE ENERGY MADNESS. NO MORE GAS/OIL EXPLORATION. BEGIN WHOLESAL CHANGES IN ALL POLICIES. LEAVE OFFICE IN A BLAZE OF CONTROVERSEY. MAN UP TO THE MASSIVE EGOTISM THAT HAS TAKEN OVER THE PLANET.

Use BESTAVAILABLE SCIENCE in DecisionMaking

Protect our oceans I am on the water and see the harm that is being done by pollution drilling and human inconsideration.

Please protect our beautiful wilderness!

It is SO important that we take whatever measures possible to protect our wilderness and its life! This has been a neglected facet of the government's oversight and I plead with you to make it happen!

To all: Please fulfill the campaign promise to return science to its rightful place in the theater of public discourse and policy making.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In wilderness is the preservation of the world. Our precious natural heritage is not just a vast Theme Park to entertain the masses it is necessary to keep our sanity our connection to our souls. I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. To do otherwise would give to the very rich profits that they don't need and impoverish the rest of us in a profound and irreversible way. Only a great leader can save America from itself. You can use your bully pulpit as Teddy Roosevelt did to protect something invaluable that belongs to us all and chasten the corrupt plutocrats a little.

Strong leadership in the areas of conservation is critical at this time. I trust you will make decisions that protect and preserve America's great outdoors.

Louisville has some great parks (first designed by Fredrick Law Olmstead at the end of the 19th century) and we're embarking on a 21stcentury project to give us more parks around the perimeter of Jefferson County. That's great! While parks are important I'm also concerned about keeping our builtup areas environmentally friendly as well. So I'd like to see your initiative go beyond parks and address urban issues as well.

Provide Increased Access when scientifically appropriate Also Limit access and types of access when scientifically appropriate Provide for sustainable and renewable Recreational Opportunities

Price entrance and use fees so that people contribute to the upkeep of these natural resources. Use volunteers as much as possible to keep costs down. (Increasing the use of volunteers should be considered for all Federal land and parks.)

Please protect America's outdoors and do not give in to the coal and oil companies who do not have America's best interests at heart.

We are in great danger of jettisoning our wildlife and wild spaces priorities because of the imminence of global warming. While we must start preparing for the future in a far more vigorous way than we have to date you should take a leadership role in resisting those pressures! I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild Many learned scientists were mobilized for the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico crisis I believe to great effect. We can do this on a larger scale with careful planning and FUNDING. I believe we have a chance if seized NOW to save our planet from destruction by uncontrolled warming and to save our natural areas from destruction by uncontrolled rapacious pursuit of oil and gas. But it will take enormous resolve vision and action on protective policies.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The loss of wilderness and animal habitat is alarming. I am 58 yrs. old and I grew up in a time when the world was green and full of summer night sounds and starry skies. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild These vital parts of our legacy have been underfunded and diminished during my lifetime. We need a climate action bill NOW and we need a bold conservation strategy for our wilderness areas NOW. Both of these are really conservative positions the sensible position for maintaining an environment which will be liveable and sustainable in the future. I live in Virginia the state everyone thinks is beautiful. Parts of the state are indeed breathtaking but more and more of the state is suffering from development over timbering mountain top removal coal mining multilane highways and concrete concrete concrete pipeline and electricity distribution etc. etc. Virginia is also a state which prides itself on spending as little as possible on the environment and education well it is beginning to show! The most secure way to preserve lands is to bank them in the federal programs and I'm begging you to take this opportunity as part of the Obama administration legacy more green and less concrete for the future of Virginia and the United States and North America and the world. Every acre saved is an acre saved!

We have the benefit of great wilderness areas because of visionary action taken in the past. While there are always pressing issues that need a "right now" answer or fix acting to protect wilderness is a stake in the future. Since you campaigned under the heading of hope and action what more optimistic step could you take with this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Dear President Obama One of the hardest aspects of this might be to protect some areas FROM people as well as for them/us. I hope that the recognition of wilderness is not just in expanding and maintaining human access to nature but also to protect wildlife in a people free environment in those places where human presence would be detrimental.

Honor our treaties and agreements with and the sovereignty of Indigenous nations Restore more land to Indigenous nations Restore corridors between isolated natural areas i.e. pockets of old growth forests Incorporate traditional Indigenous thinking in the visions and policies of the US managed areas Form partnerships with Indigenous nations to implement their ideas Purchase and set aside more lands Indigenous nations hundreds of years ago set the example for us by setting aside large areas to be kept pristine and never to be permanently lived in and farmed so that large animals had a viable home. One such area is called Kentucky. Perhaps we cannot be as ambitious as they are but we can set a vision with their ideas in mind.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family and I travelled West in 1976. During that trip my children developed an appreciation for those beautiful lands that Past Presidents set aside. I know that there will be millions spent by the coal and oil industries to sway your thinking. They will attempt to make your decisions directly relate to the current state of our economy. I know that those presidents that recognized the value of conservation to our country were also pressured to utilize these lands for big business. That these presidents resisted that pressure and that their decisions have benefitted generations to come must serve as a lesson for you and all future presidents. Don't let history say that President Obama let our future generations down.

In addition I implore you to consider putting significant emphasis on restoration of degraded watersheds and in particular the 1000's of watersheds in the western U.S. impacted by historic mining. One good way to do this would be to pass the a Federal Metal Mining Statute that provides for bonding and reclamation of new mines as well as funding a trust fund for cleanup of abandoned mines. Thank you for you willingness to work for both a clean energy future for America and a clean environment. Best Regards Stuart Jennings

Fully Fund Archeological Research Projects Fully Address Native American Involvement in All the Above

It is cliché to talk about being at a crossroads but the environmental conservation choices we face today as Americans and as world citizens feel increasingly like the mother of all crossroads. Do we choose to be like the proverbial snake that devours its tail just because it's accessible it's cheap and it tastes good; or do we choose to become the wizened critters we aim perhaps are meant to become: human beings capable of resisting the shortterm instinctive desire to reach for whatever they can swallow because they have eyes that see beyond the moment and beyond themselves? As humans we share a seventh sense a wisdom that allows us to grasp the magnificence of belonging in a world that is both timeless and immeasurable. Experience has taught us time and again that what is cheap and tastes good is rarely in the longterm selfpreserving. Must we gorge munch and nibble ourselves away to prove it once and for all? Please seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. To ensure that the unique experience of our specie's seventh sense gets transmitted to future generations please consider these priorities for our wilderness perserves: Thank you for your leadership through so many difficult passages. Standing firmly on the bold side of conservation strategy will allow the torch of our seventh sense aspirations not only to continue to burn but to be passed on.

Make the Great Lakes a Marine National Wildlife Habitat or National Park!

Provide parking outside the park reduce cars in parks

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Resist pressure to expand oil and mineral exploration or extraction.

Its time to do the right thing by America and our grandchildren.

We in the San Juan Islands of Washington State are working hard to preserve precious places from development. Although a small county only 17000 residents we have been able to purchase many acres through the work of our Land Bank and Preservation Trust. These areas supplement our limited National State and County parks. I serve on the board of our countywide environmental organization The Friends of the San Juans and we are very active in protecting watersheds and wildlife habitat. We also involve local citizens in our restoration work and much of our science projects as well. Working on the local level is critical but we expect you to be working on the larger issues and areas on behalf of our entire nation; it is just as critical as our local efforts.

Protection of these places and values requires that they not be subordinated to the (often vain) search for new energy sources. Once destroyed the natural habitat we treasure is gone forever. Please don't let that happen.

Coal gas and oil are going to be a needed unfortunately for quite a time to come. It is up to all of us but especially you to make sure it is used wisely.

Legalize bicycling in all Wilderness areas.

No Teapot Dome type deals. No allowing mining companies and oil exploration companies to drill in National Parks or areas set aside as recreation spots for the public. If mining has to be done fees for doing so should reflect upon current market prices of the metals mined. The profits from such fees should be piled back into the Parks system for fire safety and park maintenance. And full environmental impact statements with public hearings should be mandatory for ANY oil gas or mineral exploitation on Park lands.

Consider reviving the Civilian Conservation Corps to put more young people to work for the common good!

You are a brilliant man and I'm so proud to have you as our president. I must plea with your good sense though on the matter of protecting our beautiful country and pushing forward the use of renewable energy. We have learned that drilling for oil is dangerous and disasterous. Sarah Pailin and her army of ignoramous are wrong when they chant "Drill Baby drill." Now that Democrats are finally back in the White House let us become a wiser and more sophisticated country and stop the mistakes that were guided by oil/coal greed
PLEASE!
no more drilling in our oceans!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please enact prudent green energy policy now while we have the opportunity.

It is also critically important that we preserve species habitat now while so many are under stress from pollution and a climate change. I suggest a nationwide "Respect the Environment" educational campaign that emphasizes the importance of our natural world promotes accessibility to it via the parks and educates about its endangerment.

: Please conserve large landscapes that include our most pristine wildlands working forest and ranch lands private lands and the connections across these large areas. Large natural areas provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. : Wildlands represent some of our healthiest and most intact lands. Please use all tools available to protect our public lands including recommending new wilderness and national parks designating national monuments and expanding National Wildlife Refuges. : Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. Please prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands making restoration a national priority. By restoring our forests we can spur economic growth by providing needed jobs and improve recreation opportunities. : Please create new national programs that help connect people especially our youth with nature. Today youth especially minority youth are underrepresented on our public lands and it is important that new policies and programs are developed to encourage more youth participation including nature education or recreation programs and a revived civilian conservation corps. No matter where or how they live all children deserve the opportunity to learn about and experience the wildlands that belong to all Americans. : Recreation is a great way for people to experience nature and help develop a strong conservation ethic. Please ensure access is increased for all Americans. : Please support fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas protect lands around lakes rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails or provide key wildlife linkage areas.

Fund improvements in National Parks & pay Park Rangers a living wage from private interest groups

Now is the time to set forth an aggressive plan to better protect America's wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. It may be one of the greatest achievements of the Obama Administration.

Please conserve large landscapes that include our most pristine wildlands as well as wetlands working forest and ranch lands private lands and the connections across these large areas. Large natural areas provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

President Obama a major reason we voted for you was because we thought and felt you would help us protect our lands ecosystems environment and wildlife for future generations. I know you have lots on your plate and this doesn't seem very important right now. But that's where you're wrong. Only an informed wise and intelligent person can truly see how important it is especially now to preserve these areas. For clean water and air sure we all want that. But just as important for all of our wellbeing and welfare we need to preserve/conservate as much as we possibly can. RIGHT NOW. Don't be foolish enough to believe we have time or that it's another president's problem. Don't be like all the rest and do absolutely nothing to help us all.

Do not allow guns in the parks

I join this message about preserving parks refuges forests all national outdoor shared places because their existence as habitat for flora wildlife and humans is important to me. These places also essentially help "clean the air" we're so busy mucking up. Please take a scientific approach to the environment (not a capitalist or commercial one) in setting the strategies for land conservation in the 21st century.

Also please protect our wild mustang horses as they are supposed to be protected by law. The same for our wolves. We're allowing a massacre while asking other nations to quit whaling fishing or seal hunting? Until we treat all our wildlife with understanding we will never be a great nation of people that treat each other well. Kindness begins with the smallest things and so does cruelty. America's legacy is up to us.

As a teacher and a parent I cannot remain passive when our natural heritage may be at risk from those wishing to capitalize on our need for more energy. We need new energy policies that do not depend on wasteful technologies of the past such as shale oil.

We must repair the damage done by the Reagan and George W. Bush administrations in exploiting our common resources for the profit of a few special interests! Please do what the MAJORITY of Americans want in regard to our precious national monuments.

Restrict noise pollution specifically from offroad vehicles including snowmobiles

I ask that you and your administration to do what you can to preserve and protect our wonderful outdoors.

If this isn't addressed properly just think what type of a world your girls will be living in come the future. Don't they too deserve to enjoy the great outdoors as we all have as children? Please throw your support behind this.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Wilderness and nature are critical to our developing youth and all of our sense of place. America's great outdoors must stay great. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. We must not sell out for the sake of shortterm gains of fossil fuels or the paper industry. Please ensure that your administration makes every effort to protect our last wild beautiful and critical habitats for the wildlife we must save for biodiversity and for humans. Please use your power to prevent drilling mining hunting forestry and other degrading processes in our last wild places forests oceans mountains wetlands deserts.

I am lucky enough to live in Marin County California where local leaders here had the foresight to preserve our county's natural beauty by developing the region with these interests at heart. Today it is one of the most desirable places in America. I hope you will lead our whole country in these important directions just as our county's foresighted leaders led Marin. The dangers are very real if you ignore the importance of water & wildlife conservation.

include global climate change in any decisions you make

Peace

. Help educate people to respect the land.

encompassing multiple ecosystems increasing the opportunity for biodiversity. creating jobs. increasing revenue generating wildlife watchers to local rural communities. in an effort to educate and raise awareness and instill the desire to secure for perpetuity. for all citizens Don't be afraid to tax the rich I don't mind....Really.

THIS MUST HAPPEN. THERE IS AN AREA IN WYOMING AND COLORADO CALLED THE RED DESERT THAT ASTOUNDED ME WITH ITS BEAUTY SPACE LOCATION. I HAVE BACKPACKED AND CAMPED IN MANY PLACES IN WY AND CO. BUT WHEN I VISITED THE RED DESERT I HAVE ONE OF THE MOST WONDERFUL EXPERIENCES IN MY LIFE. I HAVE SEEN GORGEOUS PLACES IN SOUTH AMERICA THAT WERE BREATHTAKING BUT WHEN I SAW THE RED DESERT IT BEAT ALL OF THEM. IT MUST BE PROTECTED FROM GAS OIL DRILLING ETC ETC. SOME HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN BUT ONLY A SMALL PART. EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE PAST TO PRESERVE IT. MAYBE NOW IS THE TIME TO PROTECT IT FOR OUR KIDS. SO THEY CAN HAVE THE EXPERIENCE OF VIEWING IN ONE SPOT (I WILL NEVER FORGET) 5 RANGES OF MTS WHEN TURNING IN A 360 DEGREE CIRCLE 3 DIFFERENT RAIN STORMS THAT DIDNT HIT THE GROUND AND A HERD OF WILD HORSES DISAPPEARING OVER THE CREST OF THE DISTANT RISE. THAT WAS JUST A FRACTION OF THIS REGION OF BEAUTY AND DESOLATION. MARY LOU MORRISON 845 E. THIRD CASPER WY. 82601

(but by this I do *NOT* mean Let People Drive ATVs Wherever They Want)

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama The environment needs your help! I

Please act before it is too late. I worry about the state of the environment and the health of our planet.

Dear President Obama and other decision makers. We elected you because we knew that you were not only intelligent but that you would ensure that policy decisions would be based in science. We expect you to fulfill our expectations. One way that can be done is addressing the multitude of conservation issues. All credible science is clear. ACTION IS NEEDED NOW. We can no longer merely "take" from the environment. The future of the planet requires it.

We're counting on you to stand strong in resisting those who would destroy huge parts of our sacred land for short term monetary gain.

The beauty and ecological diversity of Southern Illinois among other places warrants protection. Shawnee National Forest Giant City State Park Garden of the Gods Lake Kinkaid Lake Murphysboro are just a few examples. The Mississippi River Valley in general needs attention from source to mouth.

We only have ONE chance at preserving our natural resources for ourselves and our descendants. No one will give up their subdivision to regrow destroyed forests or grasslands! We are seeing the effects already of not taking care of our natural resources more flooding as we clear drainage areas etc. Also if people are not connected with nature they don't realize that they are dependent upon it we truly are part of the world however much we try to pretend we are not. PLEASE give this issue enough attention so we do not lose more of our natural beauty forever!

Take responsibility for the upkeep of Nat'l Parks Monuments etc. No compromises please!
This is not economics. Raise taxes where necessary to get the job done Whoops! NOT for Defense! PEACE!

Saving and protecting the outdoors is critical to future generations and for natural resources. If you have watched the PBS special regarding the development and creation of the national park system you will recognize the great accomplishments that endured and why it was and is important. Every bit of green space is important and controlling developments of space and protecting nature is of paramount importance. These are learning environments as well as beautiful place to enjoy. Please use your influence to develop a strategy

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please make sure that we are protecting our wilderness areas. The condition in which we leave the world says the most about us to our children. Will we leave a world that says to them that we cared about our own comfort and pocketbooks and were little concerned about the opportunities of future generations to enjoy the natural world. We have had that opportunity and I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. We will always be able to build more houses parking lots roads and cities but the natural world wilderness and historic sites are beyond our abilities to recreate. Once they are gone they're gone..... forever.

Specifically It would be great if you could work with/empower public lands employees like at the Bureau of Land Management to have better regulations that allow them flexibility in organizing and leading group activities for youth. I've run into problems trying to work with them to organize activities that get families out onto BLM lands to explore and enjoy them. Not only that but look at the obstacles that prevent families from all walks of life from getting out to enjoy our public places. Transportation infrastructure? What about federally funded public transportation from urban/suburban places to public lands within an hour or two of these communities?

Reduce mining and drilling activities. Eliminate pesticide use on American farms. Eliminate the use of antibiotics on animal feedlots except for urgent need in response to specific illnesses.

And PLEASE aim for a better environmental and national resources legacy than the horrible performance of your predecessor!

we are the caretakers of our land. we need to take care of it so future generations can enjoy it as we have.

I worked for the Forest Service in the 1950s as a fire watcher in northern Idaho. I know the importance and beauty of America and its wild country. Please continue to protect it. It is the heritage of my children and grandchildren who depend on you and all our government to preserve the land. Remember to protect foreign wild life and land also.

The National parks are the visions of another forward thinking President. He would be very upset and not what he envisioned of how a treasures are being whittled down by leases and permits. The Parks are being nickle and dimed to be a Disneyland atmosphere and for profit for a few.. Stronger protection for all life within parks. boundaries. Public or BLM lands need to be added to Nat'l Parks to make "Green corridors" for migrating wild life. Summer and winter ranges. Decrease the number of leases for mining and grazing. They are being given first priority by Government Agencies to the detriment of wild lands and wild life.. Have an environmental group be in charge not a government agency. No building. create a buffer zone near all rivers and no clear cutting. Ban mountaintop removal. poisoning the future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We cannot preserve and protect our wildlands wildlife and National Parks if we keep allowing development and/or oil and gas exploration & drilling on public lands.

I don't believe providing more public access or adding recreational areas is a promising way to protect the wildlands. That only promotes destruction of the natural lay of the wildland.

It is imperative that we protect what we have before we lose it forever to ever expanding commercial development. Our heritage and history is at stake it is beautiful and must be preserved for future generations to learn from and enjoy. We must give our wildlife a chance to remain a part of our world also by protecting their habitat. I am very much in favor of spending my tax dollars for this kind of preservation.

Thank you for preserving what cannot be replicated by mankind but can easily be destroyed by mankind.

I deeply value the constructive direction you are trying to lead our country in.

I grew up in a three room apartment in Washington DC where my mother worked for the government then headed by Franklin D. Roosevelt. The zoo was our back yard Watergate our summer music festival the boat to Mt. Vernon our summer excursion with visitors and the Lincoln Memorial in all its majesty the keeper of our dreams about America. I grew up with a deep belief in the people's land from sea to shining sea and a sense of responsibility in taking care of it for future generations. We can never retrieve what we lose in shared spaces and wild lands. public lands please promote these priorities for America's Great

Take administrative action to direct government agencies to manage ALL roadless areas in as per the requirements of and in the spirit of the Wilderness Act. Provide Increased Access and Nonmotorized recreational Opportunities

Stop leasing out thousands of acres from OUR public lands to ranchers and "culling" the wildlife there to the ranchers' benefits and profits!

Please create new national programs that help connect people especially our youth with nature. Today youth especially people of color are underrepresented on our public lands and it is important that new policies and programs are developed to encourage more youth participation including nature education or recreation programs and a revived civilian conservation corps. No matter where they live all children deserve the opportunity to learn about and experience the wildlands that belong to all Americans

Please make our refuges truly refuges not subject to hunting mining or snowmobiles. We must maintain habitats.

Keep off road vehicles out of wilderness areas and national parks. We don't need these things destroying the land harming the environment and creating noise and gas fumes in pristine areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect Salmon habitat and reverse Bushera mistakes End policies permitting clearcutting forestry practices from further exploitation and destruction Promote a conservation ethic and sustainability I pray for your leadership in shaping an forwardlooking conservation strategy.

Dear President Obama As an American who personally and professionally is connected to nature and the great outdoors I implore you to stand for wildness and the open spaces that we need for a healthy planet body and soul. I wholeheartedly stand with the Wilderness Society and the comments and considerations they proclaim below. Thank you.

My husband son and I have made full use of America's outdoor spaces for decades. As a young couple we made hiking a large part of our lives in spite of the fact that we lived in NYC. We began taking our son hiking since he was 1.5 years old. Now age seven his love for the outdoors has only grown. He has a special appreciation for all of the life that our great parks rivers forests wildlife refuges and wilderness hold. It is a privilege for all of us to be able to access America's greatest treasures. I want the coming generations to continue to enjoy America's great outdoors like we have. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild

In my teaching of college students I am always moved by the experiences they tell me about involving special outdoor places (forests wilderness areas etc.)
Protect the species native to these spaces

I am writing to express my desire to see additional roadless areas declared to be wilderness areas free from mineral and other exploitation. In particular roadless areas within certain national grasslands the Little Missouri National Grasslands in particular are rapidly declining due to the extremely rapid pace of oil/gas exploration and production. Over the past several years the size and number of roadless grassland areas within the Little Missouri have declined at an alarming rate. I urge you to consider working with Interior Secretary Salazar Senators Byron Dorgan and Kent Conrad to see that some of these special remote roadless grasslands areas be protected for future generations. In particular please review the the Bullion Creek region for such a roadless wilderness designation. This area also provides critical habitat for the golden eagle bighorn sheep elk cougar and possibly even the threatened gray wolf.

Much as the early twentieth century led way to large scale land conservation let this be the time to strengthen renew and drive efforts forward to conserve of territorial oceans.
Address Conservation including ocean conservation at a Large Scale including the oceans

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up right next to the Colville National Forest. It is a beautiful place in WA State but each time I have gone home to visit my parents over the last 10 years more and more of this land has been clearcut and logged causing problems with the local watershed mudslides etc. Many of the local people don't understand the importance of conserving these resources which is why YOU need enact laws to help my children and their children have access to these beautiful lands in the generations to come. I know there are other important matters for you to address at this time but when you protect our wild places you will leave a legacy for generations to come and that is one of the important reasons why you are our President. Please protect and expand America's shared outdoor spaces including . Please consider these priorities for America's Great . Restore the ocean and lands devastated by the recent oil spill as best you can . Educate people about the importance of conservation . Thank you for your time and attention to this letter. Good luck with everything you are doing.

These areas need to be protected both from industrial uses such as mining and drilling and destructive uses of motor vehicles especially on trails.

for the 21st century I would like to urge you to give special attention to wild undeveloped spaces to preservation of natural areas national parks natural wildlife refuges wild rivers. Preserve wetlands and marshes. We need "nature" public lands instead of a focus on recreation. We need a focus on Back to Nature and natural wild areas that are located near enough so that people do not have to travel untold miles to reach them.

Since a large percentage of the vast expanse of this great country's landscape is already altered and scarred by human activities it is imperative that the remaining unspoiled areas that remain in their full natural state be immediately permanently and fully protected. Once the land and habitat is changed by human activity it is difficult and expensive to return it to its natural state. I urge you to make setting aside more land as Wilderness Areas Wildlife Refuges and National Monuments a top priority. And please fully fund the Land And Water Conservation Fund so inholdings in current parks can be acquired and the parks themselves can be expanded. In this era of habitat fragmentation and climate change in order to survive and adapt many species will require large expanses of fully protected habitat.

Continue working on alternative fuel sources so drilling in our parks and near wildlife refuges will finally cease.

Protect our wildlife...prohibit killings of animals on the Endangered Species List (like the wolves in Colorado Montana and Idaho)

Please listen to people...there are a great number of us that want our parks kept safe...wilderness to stay out of hands of developers and companies that take from the land.

Fully fund the National Park Service

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Everytime I walk along some trail or path in our National lands I think how beautiful this country is and how fortunate we are that former Presidents and others took the time to protect these lands for all of us (and I suspect they hoped forever!!!) Future generations must also be able to enjoy these public lands. That is why I am asking you to consider these priorities for America's Great

Watching Ken Burns' PBS series on the National Parks was revelatory. Without government intervention many of the place we now know as national parks some of the most gorgeous land on the planet would have been destroyed for profit. Among the obvious great things our government can do is protect our great outdoor spaces for all generations.

With such actions your administration can take steps to ensure that clean air and water don't become scarce resources in our nation.

THIS COULD BE A WONDERFUL PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM TO EMPLOY MANY PEOPLE AND PRESERVE THE BEAUTY OF OUR COUNTRY.

The following is a recording but I mostly agree with it. EXCEPT I'm also a rockhound and I dislike how formalized NPS/wilderness sites disallow casual nonprofit surface rock collection. With that in mind perhaps you can strike a balance:

Do not give away federal lands. These lands belong to the people of the United States to enjoy.

Here's an idea: stop spending billions killing brown people bring ALL the troops home from EVERYWHERE close down the empire and preserve protect and defend what we have here.

I really can't believe you need a majority of Americans to tell you this. Are you that uninformed? Or...have you lost touch with reality? Or have you forgotten what you learned as a child. It is wrong to continue to destroy our natural resources and kill wildlife in the process...NOW...DO YOU GET IT? Americans with compassion are telling you this every dam day! Do the right thing...already! P.S. Don't count on the Republicansthey represent big business as we all know now...SO...while you have the power...USE ITbefore it's too late.

We can be horrified about the possibility within our lifetime to witness the last lion last elephant and last rhino in Africa the last tiger in India yet some states and with the Interior Dept. idly acquiescing watch as we may lose the last wolves...again as well as other species. We allow industry and snow mobiles to disrupt the shrinking living space of wildlife watch as birds change their patterns and allow for the increase in pine beetles and deforestation of our country with all its inherent dangers from fire to decreased in elements needed by the earth. Examples go on and on. I'm horrified and pissed as hell. I thus endorse the attempts by The Wilderness Society in their following message

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

CONSERVATION EFFORTS AND IMPROVEMENT OF WATERSHEDS AND HABITAT NEED TO EXTEND BEYOND THE CURRENT PIECEMEAL APPROACH. WE NEED TO BEGIN THINKING ABOUT HOW TO CREATE REGIONAL WILDLIFE AND PLANTLIFE CORRIDORS THAT MITIGATE THE TREND TOWARD HABITAT FRAGMENTATION. CONSERVATION ISN'T SIMPLY AN ISSUE OF PROTECTING A FEW MAJOR PARKS AND RESERVES. IT IS FUNDAMENTALLY ABOUT PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OF ECOSYSTEMS HABITATS AND CRUCIAL RESOURCES ON WHICH WE DEPEND ESPECIALLY WATER AND ARABLE LAND.

Having had the opportunity to connect with nature in the great wilderness preserves in this country has been one of the most inspiring and enriching experiences of my life. A personal connection with the natural world offers endless benefits from spiritual solace and the cultivation of a real sense of belonging to the improvement of health both physical and psychological. And of course protecting natural environments preserves water prevents erosion cleans the air reduces climate change and preserves biodiversity. But today there are numerous and unprecedented threats to this nation's (and the world's) natural treasures from pollution overdevelopment global climate change and recreational abuse from too many people using too few protected areas. All of these problems will continue to get worse unless something substantial is done to address them. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. addressing conservation on a large scale protecting our few remaining wilderness areas with more wilderness designation improving watersheds and wildlife habitat connecting people especially youth with nature fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Amend the Mining Act Stop using public lands for energy projects

Please help to save our planet!

Make everyone watch Ken Burns film on our national parks. Let's make ALL of the United State's wonders available to all Americans. Thank you Mr. President.

Once our forests and wildlife are destroyed they're gone forever. Please don not make that a part of your legacy. Stop baiting & trapping (If you want to hunt be a man/woman and track the animal down yourself. Stop these inhumane acts now!)

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While watching Ken Burns' outstanding "National Parks" documentary on PBS it moved me deeply when someone who worked on the program said that the parks best represented all of the good things America has to offer.. In fact the entire title of the show is: "The National Parks: America's Best Idea". How fortunate we are that Theodore Roosevelt worked so tirelessly to make sure that these areas were protected nurtured and cherished during his years as President and throughout his lifetime. We must continue this effort to protect all natural and historic spaces throughout our country. These areas are also the best part of America and we must remain as diligent as President Roosevelt was to preserve them and keep them special. Once these lands are encroached upon and destroyed we can never get them back. Please make the preservation of our Great Outdoors one of our top domestic priorities. This is a valuable uniquely American resource that must not be ignored. Thank you.

The clock is ticking and the time may be growing short. If the Republicans gain control of either house of Congress after this next election any meaningful chance to protect wild America from the developers and corporate destroyers will be gone.

Please help protect our wilderness. I'm very fearful that in 20 years there will no longer exist these beautiful and unique places and that many of the creatures that live here will be extinct because of this. PLEASE do all you can to protect our beautiful country before it's too late.

i would like to add sadly that my generation has seen the last of the best this country offers i would not like to be growing up now with this mess we are leaving them so dear president obama please save as much wetlands dry lands oceans for the future while we have a chance

This Administration has the opportunity to follow the example set when our National Park system was started by President T. Roosevelt and make an historic difference in the way our country thinks about nature and its natural resources. I am concerned about the lack of understanding of nature that is prevalent today and fear the consequences if we do not act the change that.

I live near a river that has been so polluted that the fish at times can not live in it. About 7 years ago the Glide Corporation in Anderson Indiana dumped chemicals into the river. As a result all of the fish for 50 miles were killed. This happened in the Winter time. Had it been in the Summer we might have been looking at a different death toll. This was the White river and it supplies water to Indianapolis. We must stop using our rivers as sewers. At one time the White river was clear you could see the bottom of the river.

I also think that the more wilderness and nature that is preserved the better our chances of survival during climate change. We can actually pay for this by cutting our defense spending. We can certainly close at least half of the military bases we have around the world. The money spent on wilderness will do to protect us than the wasted money spent on illegal wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Bush tried so much of the important things that make our country a wonderful place to live. Please protect our people lands and seas from what was done in the name of PROFIT for his cronies.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A good way to start would be to make sure that off road vehicles (snowmobiles ATVs dirtbikes 4x4s etc.) stay OUT of National Parks....PERIOD!!

Expand our wilderness areas Create new wilderness areas Fund the National Scenic Trails

I am especially interested in seeing all the public land agencies make environmental sustainability their number 1 goal.

Bring back the CCC!

I have so enjoyed our national parks and wildlife areas and hope to protect them for many generations to come. They are what makes this country special and something everyone can enjoy. These places say much about our past and what we value as a nation. In New England where I live it means protection of Mt. Washington and the Wilderness of Maine threatened constantly by logging and overdevelopment. I believe you appreciate the beauty of this country and the places those before you have protected. I hope you can do even more.

I trust you will do the right thing and preserve our wilderness parks rivers etc. We can't afford to lose our most valued treasures. America has many beautiful places and they deserve to be preserved for all time. Thank you for your continuing support of America and the American people. You can be a hero for conservation!

As my two daughters and I have enjoyed visiting many of our national parks I would hope that you would support and protect any and all of our outdoor spaces for all to enjoy. There will always be those more concerned about making a buck than preserving anything worthwhile that's why we have to hold them accountable and not give in to their monetary desires no matter how much money they throw at our politicians.

Dear President Obama and Administration I am a 61year old retired high school English teacher. I spent three decades helping teach and inspire America's youth. I tried to help them understand that they can make a difference in their lives by expressing their voice and vision. I deeply appreciate your willingness to hear America's voice regarding preservation of our beautiful sacred environment. Too often we've sacrificed our environment for greed. We now have the opportunity to begin turning that desecration around and to honor and protect our natural heritage. I am particularly a lover of ancient forests and I hope you'll do whatever you can to protect ancient redwood and old growth groves. There's now less than 5% of the original forests remaining. Those trees and forests have been an inspiration throughout my adult life. Please also act boldly to save as much wilderness as possible. Also address conversation on the largest scale. I ask you also to improve wildlife habitat and improve watersheds. Help in any way you can to and fully fund the land and water conservation fund.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Wilderness Society expresses things much better than I do but I'd like to make a personal point. North America contains some of the last places on Earth that have not been carved up and reduced to rubble. We need to act decisively to conserve our wild areas or they will be destroyed it really is that simple. I'm very happy with your administration so far you can count on my continued support. But I hope you'll go the extra mile and use your executive powers to protect more wild areas under the umbrella of the Dept. of the Interior.

Please do everything you can to preserve and restore land to its natural state to protect watersheds wildlife habitat wilderness areas wetlands and recreation areas. Once land is developed it cannot be truly restored to its original state. Please support education efforts to teach citizens the importance of preserving our wild lands.

We are to leave this land to our children. Please do all that is necessary to protect our open spaces our farm lands refuges parks and our historic sites. NOW

First waht I want is for you to stand up for the change that you promised. You have done some but you really dropped the ball on Energy. You had a golden opportunity to teach the American people about the dangers of Fossil fuel use but all you did was stand there twiddling your thumbs for all I can see.

Sirs I strongly believe protecting Vast areas of our public lands will greatly benefit the entire planet. Recent worldwide weather disasters should clearly tell you that Global Warming is reality. Scientists state that protecting vast areas of public lands & oceans is what the the Planet needs!! Start Preserving Protecting our Future. Stop Wasting time. Parks & Monuments should be at the top of your list.

I have grown up enjoying the beautiful Colorado backcountry and sill go camping with my parents now that I am fully grown. My girlfriend, a second generation Vietnamese American who spent her childhood working in her parent?s restaurant, has recently latched on to dirt biking and my sister and her boyfriend and I regularly enjoy taking our off-road vehicles into the backcountry to enjoy the wilderness. I pray that my children too will be able to do this one day. Please help my family and thousands of other families continue to grow closer through spending time in our nation's precious wilderness in the manner that allows all types and creeds of citizens enjoy even if they are not able to hike for days to access there remote locations.

I have only a simple comment: Leave the off-roading community and our lands alone! Our children need open spaces to RECREATE in, not look at in a book.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have responsibly enjoyed off-road motorcycling and mountain biking for more than 35 years. I have 3 children that also love these sports. Continuing to close our public lands to exclude proven responsible and sustainable activities like this is unjustified and unfair to the public majority. My business, Rekluse Motor Sports, manufactures centrifugal automatic clutches for off-road motorcycles. We manufacture our products right here in Boise, Idaho. We have employee 36 people here and have created more than 15 new jobs in the past two years alone. We are a company that chooses economic sustainability here in the US over more profit for the owners by keeping our manufacturing locally. Please choose the path of responsibility to the public at large; keep our lands open to diverse forms of recreation. Thank you

I have ridden OHV trails in the Sierra Nevada mountain range for my entire life and am just beginning to share this passion with my children. I worry that the trails we have come to know and love will someday be closed. Our ability to access these areas only increases our respect for the wilderness and desire to see it preserved in a way that maintains the habitat and still allows OHV use.

I have seen too much land closed for no reason. I would like to see some of this land opened back up for more people to enjoy.

I have selected the below "predrafted" letter because as a parent of two teenage boys we struggle to keep them off the street corners and away from drugs and the people associated with drugs. My wife and I spend tens of thousands of dollars on campers, motorcycles and quads to keep our kids focused on the outdoors. We encourage them to invite their friends to go with us on the weekends as well as teach them the value of our public lands and to only use established trails. Cutting new trails is completely forbidden in our excursions on public lands. To remove more access to public lands you might as well just mail drugs directly to our youth as the only place they will have access to is the streets.

I know this is like spitting into a strong wind. You guys do exactly what you want and do not give a hill of beans what the people of this country want. Why don't you leave us alone we do not want to give any more land to government closure. We are a free country or we are supposed to be. Stop taking our land. Let senior citizens enjoy the land also. They cannot walk into this land anymore because of their age. Please leave it alone.

I live in a private home overlooking the Sacramento River Arm of Shasta Lake. I take care of my property and love where I live in a beautiful small community of good and caring people. Most of us are retired after many years of hard work to be able to attain a peaceful lifestyle. PLEASE DO NOT DEMINISH OUR LIFE LONG DREAM!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I live in a state where almost half the state is already off limits to access. If the goal is to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors this can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking, yet the Initiative seeks to create Wilderness and Monument areas closing another 13 million acres to people who enjoy those most popular forms of recreation. The Presidents is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. I belong to several and they have not been asked to participate in this process? Why is that?? The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands.

I live in Bozeman, Montana and I enjoy the outdoors several times a week. I hike, mountain bike, ride on designated trails for dirt bikes and snowmobiles. The recent closures for Wilderness areas are devastating and further closures would be more so. Many here in the Gallatin Valley support and honor the "Share it" policy and they hold each other responsible. We do not need more Government imposed regulations on where we can and cannot go for outdoor recreation. I urge you to reconsider your plan.

I must insist that this planning process be opened to the light of day and all Americans for input and review before moving forward. I voted for Mr Obama and I can certainly vote against him and any other politician who sides with this type of land closure process. Most real Americans will move to defeat any attempt like this in the future. Please consider these words carefully before moving forward with any plan including public land closure.

I object to spending over \$2 billion of my tax dollars locking the majority of the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations. President Obama is doing nothing more than trying to create a legacy in his presidency. Open up more land out here in West!

I object to spending over \$2 billion tax dollars locking the majority of the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations. . This proposal reeks of political payback to the left wing liberal environmental terrorists who supported the President in his election. This proposal, like the healthcare bill, is not wanted by the American people and will make him a one term President!

I oppose the Presidents proposal to designate these lands as Wilderness.

I own land in NV surrounded by government land. I moved there to enjoy the nature and the wild. Locking me and my family out is a bad joke. These protected areas are being designed by city dwellers who have never even been to the land they want to shut down. The government does such a poor job in protecting the wilderness, BLM, and National Forest in NV now, adding more land is a joke. Work on maintaining safe access and use and preserve what we have. Stop trying to take away our access to lands that are owned by the PUBLIC.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I own mountain property in Colorado. I am also an avid off road motorcyclist. As more areas are closed to OHV use, this just makes the areas that are still open get more crowded. Higher use of trails causes more trail damage which then promotes more closures. Seems like a downward spiral to me. Don't close more areas! Open up more! There is some Wilderness area near my property that I see is rarely used. It doesn't make sense to me that there should be more.

I paid for all those reckless homeowners that got rewarded for stupidity and now my outdoor activities are taken from me. No more land closures. I want to enjoy the outdoors stop limiting my options.

I personally enjoy recreating in many different types of public land, from Nat'l Parks and Wilderness Areas to Nat'l Forests and BLM land. The experiences are vastly different but equally rewarding. The American people need to have a variety of options to fully enjoy our great open spaces. I encourage everyone to object to shifting more of our public land from less restrictive to more restrictive uses. Private property rights are central to our cultural foundation, more regulation and restriction are not the proper action, for a non-existent problem.

I personally spend \$75 per year to access the Apalachicola National Forest, plus \$3 per day to park my truck. I am a responsible tax payer who cherishes his outdoor freedom, and I vehemently oppose the closure of the lands that is used by responsible off-road riders like myself. Do not attempt to take me for a fool and close federal land in order to allow me to "enjoy" it. Maybe we should focus our efforts on cleaning the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico instead. I'll be volunteering my weekend again in order to clean this mess. I don't ask for anything in return, so please leave these acres available to all tax paying Americans. V/r, Esteban Jose Berenguer

I respectfully ask that no vote be taken until all interested parties are included in the decision and discussions.

I spend so much of my time responding to potential land closures that I'm really starting to lose my patience on this. This is OUR land and OUR tax dollars too. I make my living in the powersports industry and I'm forever having to defend my income. My family and my extended family all use National Forest and BLM land to recreate year round. We're all really sick and tired of having our land and money constantly being used against us. But make no mistake, we will never stop fighting for our causes and rights and we have another generation coming up behind us that have even more tenacity than us. We're in for the long haul.

I strongly feel there needs to be plenty of wilderness with access for future generations. I am concerned this will not be available to them with time. With 120 million acres already restricted, we want future folks to know the land of their contry.

I strongly object to continued closures, and our PUBLIC lands not being OPEN to the Public for use...

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. I am outraged by this sneaky plan by President Obama! DO NOT keep me from recreating on our PUBLIC LANDS. I won't stand for it.

I strongly object to the closure of public lands and the Wildlands Project. As a responsible outdoors user, it is clear that there is just no way reducing access can preserve access!

I strongly oppose the designation of more monuments and wilderness as we already have sufficient and do not need any more. We need less government involvement and more parental involvement.

I want my son to be able to enjoy the outdoors that his father and I did during our childhoods.

I want to be able to use the land in my state and not have to walk forever to get into the mountains. Please keep our lands open for the tax payers to use.

I was surprised and disappointed to hear that the President intends to designate vast areas of public land as Wilderness and Monument areas. I strongly object to more deficit spending of over \$2 billion of my tax dollars, for what?... locking the majority of the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations. The vast majority of the public recreate on Non Wilderness lands. Designating more Wilderness will in fact discourage the public from enjoying the outdoors. As an avid OHV enthusiast, this will directly impact me, my friends and family, and all the rural communities that benefit from current access to public lands. I respectfully urge that representation from more diverse multiple use advocacy groups be included right away.

I would like for you to reconsider your land closure proposal. I voted for you in hope that you would protect my freedoms which I see eroding everyday. I have enjoyed off road riding since the mid 60s. I still ride and have shown my children, and my grand children the joys of off road motorcycling. I am very well aware of the delicate balance of the environment, but I have also seen land closed citing the environment only to see houses and shopping malls covering the protected land. I went to Viet Nam thinking I was protecting my life style I hope that you are not telling me that I might be wrong to believe that. I hope that you are not telling me that only you know what's best for me. Thank You

I would like to express my concern about the Wildlands Project. This seems like yet another attempt by anti-access elitists to prevent Americans from engaging in responsible family recreation on public land. We can't expect Americans to value and care for their public lands if we deny access to the majority of these lands. Responsible recreation, including mountain bike and ohv use on designated trail systems, is one of the ways that people learn to enjoy and cherish the outdoors. Further restricting these uses will have a detrimental effect on these lands in the long term, by preventing people from becoming connected to the outdoors and valuing that experience.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would like to state my disapproval of the proposed act of creating more wilderness land and areas that prohibit the public from entering in a vehicle or bicycle. The public lands used responsibly should remain open to those who like to explore and recreate in ways other than hiking or just from a restricted type of access. The MAJORITY of Americans are not able to hike any lengthy distance. Most all handicapped are unable to access any of the wilderness areas. Their only way of exploring is by a motor vehicle. As stated in the proposal that I urge that the acquisition of private and public lands for closure to the general populace NOT be passed and that public lands remain as they are - open to the public.

I would like to urge you to Stop the Closure of Public Lands and the Wildlands Project and consider a way of having more trails in these areas and having them open to the public to enjoy.

If we are to close off public lands for their own protection maybe they should be closed to all human activity. I don't have the proper statistics but I'm reasonably sure more wild fires have been caused by careless back packers, campers and arsonists than by off highway vehicles and mountain bikers. Much like the immigration problem, with proper enforcement and management of existing rules and regulations we may all be able to enjoy the wilderness in our own chosen fashion.

If you have ever been to our part of the country you know that wildlife has more than enough room to live and thrive. We do share the countryside and indeed our yards with the deer and the antelope. My family is close and strong due to our time together in the wilderness. We do not hunt but we do ride bikes and off road vehicles and urgently protest any more restriction on our access to "Public" lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'm worried and afraid that this administration has desensitized us to any figures under a trillion dollars. But lets put these billions of dollars into perspective shall we. The National parks service reports a maintenance backlog of \$9 billion on the land we already own. So in other words, we can't take care of the land that we already have but were going to spend more billions on acquiring additional land that we can't take care of. The preservation of public land is not an end in itself- it is a means to an end: THE PUBLIC GOOD! Our public is not served by the mindless closure of vast tracts of land at the expense of the sustainable use of our natural resources, responsible stewardship of our public lands, and the freedom and property rights of our citizens. The Antiquities Act of 1906 was an emergency power to protect small archeological areas from looting. This is where the "Monument Designation Authority" came from. Are we looting archeological areas? If so.. where? It surly can't can't be in all the areas that you have proposed. This is an outright gross use of power by this administration and will have devastating consequences to the people and our economy. Abraham Lincoln was once told of a farmer who said " I ain't greedy for land - all I want is what's next to mine" Our federal government is starting to resemble that farmer! When is it going to be enough? The feds already owns 650 million acres of land. That is 30 percent of the entire land area of the United States, It owns 45 percent of my home state of California. I ask again when is enough going to be enough? President Obama issued a statement in support of "Sunshine Week" on March 16, 2010 and said: " I want to applaud everyone who has worked to increase transparency in government and recommit my administration to be the most open and transparent ever, an effort that will strengthen our democracy and ensure the public's trust in their government". It is obvious that President Obama is not holding you secretary Salazar to this standard. This should be a public process with public comment, especially if this is just the formative phase of an unprecedented initiative using the very limited and very specific Antiquities Act. Where is the Looting? I urge you to reconsider opposition to the resolution and to take a stand on behalf of Transparency, Common Sense, Candor and alot of folks like me who are struggling in a severe recession AND NEEDLESS restrictions heaped on them by their OWN government. Where will our kids, kids recreate in the future? Best Regards:

I'm writing the letter to express my objection to the plans in Washington to create additional Wilderness and Monument areas restricting the use of public lands for recreational use such as mountain biking and off-highway OHV. The Presidents has expressed interest in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands. I would like to see multiple user groups involved and an open collaborative plan that protects key resources while offering recreational opportunities to Americans. Please do not pursue this headlong without understanding the full implications of what is being proposed. The current initiate would devastate small communities that support recreational use and force MTB and OHV users on even smaller parcels of land.

In addition thePresidents is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands. Such as Acorn group and the like.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In closing I would respectfully act that the publics input be included in the decision making process on such a large undertaking. The public that uses these lands deserve and need a say in how they will be used.

In closing, I respectfully ask that you reconsider this bill, and allow use of Public Lands by the public,

In general, I'm a big supporter of efforts to preserve land from development for wildlife and for human enjoyment in the future. In particular, I have little interest in making public land available for development by private interests where it doesn't benefit the general population. However, I'm concerned that the current legal efforts are going too far in restricting valid uses of public lands. These activities are easy targets for the part of the population that does not participate in them, and are often being unnecessarily limited. I fully agree that some areas must be closed to offroad activity, but other areas should be provided for those of us who want to enjoy our public lands.

Is this the Change we can expect?? This is just another example of president obama working to take away our freedoms as a nation while his pockets are being lined by special interest dollars.

It is inappropriate for the President to use his power and close off millions and millions of acres to off roading/trail riding/recreation. The President is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands.

it is time to pay attention to this non-violent group of people that are family oriented and only requesting equal access. PAY ATTENTION!

Keep land open for off road motorcycle use.

Keep our PUBLIC Land PUBLIC! Concerned Hunter, Fisherman, Offroad Dirt Bike Rider, and Gold Prospector! or We'll Vote YOU OUT!

Keep the trails open and open the ones that are already closed!

Keep your hands off our land.

Leave our land OPEN for us!!!

Leave our lands alone for those who use and enjoy and protect than when roiding ATVs. Let's not lock us out of everything by making all land a wilderness area.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Less than .01 percent of the public will access their "public" lands if this initiative passes. The only people allowed are hikers. People who are handicapped and would be able to access their public land via motorized transportation would be left out. These are OUR public lands and we need to keep them open for ALL Americans!

Let the tax paying, hard working, motorized recreation vehicle owners continue enjoying THEIR LAND!!! Have you considered the tremendous amounts of money, the motorized community contribute to the local and national coffers? Have you consider the thousands of good jobs this industry provides? Do you care? Well, WE DO! And we vote!

Lets keep PUBLIC lands open to responsible PUBLIC use!!

Lets use common sense and not limit further access for the public use. We don't need and additions to something that is already full. BLM's and NPS's financial and manpower shortfalls don't need this kind of help. They need relief.

Limiting of motorized vehicles is one thing but Mountain bikes and humans being put off limits is ludicrous! Hunting is a huge promotion to wildlife conservation and contributes millions of dollars to the cause. Many businesses in America thrive on this and so do the animals. The reintroduction of the wolf and protecting it to the point that elk herds are degraded by more than 2/3rds is a perfect example of us ruining the efforts that President Theodore Roosevelt put in place!! Lets learn from our history. Do not put land off limits to humans!

Locking up lands is not a management plan. If we have too many government employees, then lets return some of them to the private sector. You cannot continue to close off our "public lands" and squeeze us all down to one area. Those of us who live in these areas are continually seeing unnecessary road closures and poor management of what is remaining. There are no efforts to accommodate the disabled or provide access for rescue or emergency situations. There is no "Wilderness Experience" when we are all forced to be on top of each other on the same roads. It also creates a much more damaging impact on the roads that are being left open, because it increases the use.

Millions of people access open areas of land for many uses. There are already many designated forest areas and monuments in the United States. Open areas for public use is one the best things about being in America and living in California. Please don't close any more lands.

Most individuals voting on these rules never use and thus appreciate the outdoors. As an avid mountain biker and outdoor user of these lands I feel it would be tragic to remove access to so many beautiful regions of this fantastic country. I can tell you with confidence that 99% of mountain biking has virtually no impact on the local environment. In fact, local clubs provide significant help in preserving the trails and wilderness for everyone to enjoy.

I think you you should rethink this or atleast let normal people who actually use these areas vote on this issue.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This single issue strikes at the core of being an American citizen. The local field offices of the Federal Agencies (FS, BLM etc..) have an opportunity to work with local groups and develop good useable plans for improving access and still protecting the environment. If there is a big shadow being overcast by the current administration to completely close off the land by deeming it Wilderness or Monument, the local agents will become nothing more than security forces keeping American citizens off of American land. Finally, for me personally, this is a deal breaker of an issue. If any more lands are closed off to OHV access by this administration, I will NOT be a repeat supporter in any re-election effort!

have you ever gone up or down a mountain bike trail? Have you ever taken a Jeep over the Rubicon Trail or up to Holy Cross City, Co? I love being out in nature and by closing public land you restrict where we can go and be away from it all! You will create areas that will see increased traffic due to the closing of other places and therefore create more problems. In my past 7 years of off roading in Colorado with my college friends, we have come across 2-3 other travelers on the trail. If you close up shop on these public places it will make other places more congested, which I would not want to go! Plus, think about the areas that people want to get closed off. What will happen to the economy around that area? A lot of public places are maintained by local clubs that enjoy the availability of off road trailing and mountain biking. They offer services to those on the trails on the public land. Put yourself in my shoes and take a trip with us, camping, trailing, comradre, and we pack it in pack it out. You'll see what we are talking about and understand that we want to preserve nature just as much as the next one, but don't take our land away.

We need the ability to move thru areas safely. We do not go to the outdoors to be in traffic jams or lots of others on the same trails as we are. This affects the wildlife and the impact on the trail systems in a bad and unhealthy way. PLEASE listen to those of us that use the areas that you are trying to protect. Do not do this! This is the wrong way to protect OUR UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. Do not lock us out of our Great outdoors.

My family and friends use the multi use lands to recreate in many ways including the use of off highway vehicles. Maintaining the availability of these lands is paramount to the stated purpose of the proposed action, encouraging urban youth to enjoy rural wilderness! People use the outdoors to RECREATE and that term includes many definitions. Those definitions of the term RECREATE should not be constrained by select groups of people that do not happen to enjoy the same types of recreation as others. For the reasons stated below I object to the proposed action as it is written.

My family and I engage in responsible use of public lands including off road recreation areas. We participate in Adopt-A-Trail programs, organized area clean-up events, offer off road vehicle trail rides to underprivileged children so they may experience the great outdoors and, educate others on responsible use of public lands. We have earned the right to continue to enjoy our motorized enjoyment of our public lands. Respectfully submitted out of concern for the future of our public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family and I enjoy riding quads in Natinol forest every weekend in summer. I would hate to think that someone would take that away from us.

My family and many of my friends and their families are avid dirt bike riders. We ride for recreation and as a sport. It is so great being able to load up the kids and the ATV's and go ride. My son is special needs and this has been the best form of therapy you can imagine. His dirt bike is his life and the thought that he may not be able to ride is very sad. I am not sure you realize what will happen by pushing thousands of ATV riders into one little area. It will become impossible for families like mine to engage in their favorite past time. It will become unsafe with too many riders shoved into one area. Also the impact on the ATV industry will be very detrimental. What should I tell my son when he can no longer go out to the desert to ride? How do I explain that country he loves and wants to defend one day just took his right to ride his bike away? I also object to spending over \$2 billion of my tax dollars locking the majority of the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations. I am sure that if our Founding Fathers could see what has happened to the country they fought so hard for they would be very saddened.

My family has grown up using public lands. we respect it and take care of it. I want my children and grandchildren to be able to continue that family tradition

My Grandson was raised on Off-roading and as a result has family values and is a very good citizen. I live near Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Other than the lake itself, the land regions are woefully under-utilized because the normal Federal restrictions against anything except walking with your hands in your pockets. My wife and I are 65 years old and like to enjoy the outdoors on an ATV on trails. We do not "tear up" the environment. It is the only way we can enjoy getting out. But of course we cannot do that even in a "Recreation" area at Lake Mead. So now the President wants to shut off 13 Million more acres to any form of recreation. This is wrong! We need Use Management not Totalitarian restrictions. What are we saving the land for if the people can't enjoy it?

My main concern is for local interests. As off-road enthusiasts, we bring dollars to every economy we visit. All of these "initiatives" are backed by Washington people with little to no connection to the areas that will be affected. Stay out of local politics, Washington insiders. Driving us off our diverse and widespread trails into more and more crowded areas will simply accelerate the destruction of those trails, adding more fuel to the argument that we should be banned. Very unfair.

My son, daughter wife and friends enjoy mountain biking and feel it would be a tragedy to restrict this sport as it is helping reconnect the urban/suburban dweller to the great outdoors. Thank you,

My wife and I are in our upper sixties. We are unable to hike or bike very far, but we do enjoy our off-road experiences with Jeep Jamboree USA and other groups. Please do not shut us out!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My wife and I enjoy hiking, canoeing, mountain biking, and ATVing, and we object to spending over \$2 billion of my tax dollars locking the majority of the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations. We voted for President Obama and support his efforts in many of his programs, but The economies of many local areas here in Wisconsin count on the tourism dollars brought in through ATV trail access in particular. The loss of any access to the trails would be devastating to small businesses and the people who count on those businesses for their livelihoods. In addition,

Nature can only be appreciated and understood by experiencing it. The demands of society only permit Americans to seek 'local' land and restricting our access will have major impact on future generations and their concerns with nature. Our President is supposed to be "for the people" and was voted in as such from the promises he portrayed. Please, do not betray us. While the President has no real 'touch' with the middle and lower class, without us you would not be President.

NO MORE WILDERNESS !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

NO MORE WILDERNESS. NO MORE BLM MONUMENTS. Public land is for multiple use and public access, not for closing the public out of.

Obesity and family unity are at the the top of the list of issues facing Americans today. Riding dirt bikes and mountain bikes has shown to be great for physical fitness. Over the years dirt bikes and other off highway vehicles (OHV's) have grown as family outings. More outdoor areas need to be accesible for these purusits. Also, in these trying economic times, it has been shown that small rural towns that have or are adjacent to off road recreation areas benefit from the revenue generated by OHV's.

Off Road Vehicle users have a right to public lands and we are the only users who PAY a fee to use the land thru OHV registrations. Do not close our trails.

Off-road organizations contribute more to the clean-up of our natural surroundings as compared to sitting around a forest and only looking in. If something must be done to keep nature a wilderness, control the destruction of the Everglades, reduce or eliminate the destruction of farms for the sake of housing projects, donate more money to our existing preserves.

Off-road vehicle recreation is very important to me, my family and my community along with use of public lands in a non-motorized fashion. I implore you to incorporate more 'multiple use' provisions into these bills instead locking people out of PUBLIC lands. Thanks for your consideration.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

On a personal note, I have a 10 year old son in special education who loves to ride his dirt bike. It has helped with his balance, motor skills and his ability to develop patience. To take this away from him, and other children like him, would just hurt him. This has been the best form of therapy that his father and I have found for him, and we would be devastated for him to lose it because someone who thinks they know what's best for everyone wants to close our public lands so we can no longer enjoy them. My family moved closer to the OHV areas in Southern California so we could enjoy them more often. We usually spend at least 20 weekends per month riding our off-road vehicles in these designated areas. We have formed close relationships with many of the other people that are there for the AMA District 37 races. I cannot imagine what we would do that would have such a profound impact on our lives as this has, if this land were to be closed to OHV use. I ask you to leave this land open and let the public enjoy what is theirs. Thank you

Our Public Lands, My Public Lands are used by myself my friends and families on a regular basis for countless hours, days and weeks per year of responsible enjoyment. Any rules or regulations that serve to limit my access to my Public Lands are not wanted or needed. Stop Creating More Rules and Regulations That Limit My Freedoms Obama Administration.

Please do not close more public lands. I have had the pleasure of enjoying the public lands with my father and grandfather for all of my life. The lands available have been shrinking throughout my lifetime. I, like most outdoor enthusiasts, respect the land that I enjoy. As an Eagle Scout, I was taught to leave the land better that I found it, and I have seen this trait in the vast majority of the Outdoor Enthusiasts that I know. I hope that one day my kids and even their kids will be able to enjoy the public wilderness as I have. Please do not close the lands and make it so the only people who can enjoy them are the privileged or above average athlete. By banning motor vehicles and bicycles it is in essence closing off the lands permanently for handicapped / non-athletes and non-privileged citizens. Please also consider the following comments:

Please do not create any more National Monuments over the objections of those who live in that area- please listen to the locals who recreate and make a living in the area-No more big government and environmental groups know what is best for us attitude-we want local input of all stakeholders.

Please do not enact this plan to designate Wilderness Land and prohibit many forms of responsible recreation from enjoying the outdoors.

Please DO NOT pass this Bill, it is not what America needs!

Please do not take one of the last great family sports away from families. I thought you supported families and family time....please show it by NOT closing our wilderness areas to families interested in spending quality family time together.....time that creates wonderful memories for our kids.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please don't allow this initiative to be pushed forward!

Please don't take away more land from us! Off Roading does not have to be the villain of the great outdoors, but merely a way to enjoy it!

Please drop this bill. Land management should come from the county level and go up, not from the federal level and go down.

Please enough is an enough we need to keep this land open for all of us. It is always a small group that yells loud enough so you here them and then you react. Well we are tired of not speaking out and now it's are turn to raise our voices and make sure, you here us!!!! Because you are right enough is enough and it's our turn. So keep these areas open.

Please get a clue and stop the madness of closing OFF the PUBLIC land FROM the PUBLIC. We would like to recreate responsibly as we always have! We pay our fees to the OHV department and it looks like that is possibly going away if they have their way to attempt to close trails with that money!

Please give consideration to all users of these public lands and leave the management of these areas to the local governments.

Please help all of American's to enjoy the great outdoor.

Please help to keep public land open to the public.

Please keep motorcycling in you plans for my lands. Thank you,

Please keep our public lands, public.

PLEASE keep public lands open to all. The United States is a big place and we can all have plenty of room to enjoy ourselves. Please do not shut out more areas to my freely chosen method of recreation because you happen to disapprove.

Please keep the areas already available for public access for OHV use open forever. Please do not stop the tax paying citizens of the United States from enjoying such freedoms. . This does not seem ethical and will have an alarming effect on the citizens of the United States. Further, I urge you to please stop the closure of public lands and the Wildlands project.

Please leave my public land alone.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please let those of us in the public use our public lands.

Please look at what the public is doing with the land and I think you will see that we the people who use the land also value and protect it. We want to keep it open for our use.

Please make sure these valuable lands are actually available to US Citizens to really utilize!

Please note that while I voted for the President, I must say that I find this sort of thing most perplexing. Please reassess your plan here or the administration will surely lose my support. Thank you.

PLEASE QUIT CLOSING PUBLIC LAND TO PUBLIC USE AS WE WOULD LIKE TO RIDE AND SEE THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY IN WHICH WE LIVE AND PAY TAXES. BY THE WAY I VOTE ALSO.

Please reconsider closing this land, we need to get our youth outdoors and involved, helping them to become better stewards of our planet. Thankyou.

Please Stop the Closure of Public Lands and the Wildlands Project Wilderness locks people out of their public land because the land becomes inaccessible to everyone except a minority of healthy hikers who can walk for days on end. The rest of us rely on safe vehicles to tour and enjoy our land. Wilderness locks us out!

Please stop the Closure of Public Lands and the Wildlands Project!

Please take all resonable measures to preserve public access to our state and national lands for recreational purposes. These lands belong to all US citizens and should remain open to responsible enjoyment of all.

Please take the following into consideration. Diminishing public access to public lands is fundamentally wrong. With over 120 million acres already set aside with restricted access, the public is not able to "enjoy" public lands. Regroup and redirect your ideas to suit the PUBLIC, as this is supposed to be government BY THE PEOPLE and FOR THE PEOPLE.

Please, do not curtail any further my enjoyment of the outdoors. My primary pasttime is to go off-road riding on my motorcycle. I am opposed to any further curtailment of public land access.

Please, don't kill our sport and pass time of Off Road Vehicle use that allows us to see parts of the country that some will never receive the chance to see.

Please-please don't take away an Americans rights to use the forests!!! We need to share the forests & OHV groups have rights & need access to forests too!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Pls do not take away the only thing I have left to enjoy with my kids. They are so stuck on computers & I-phones in the house as it is. This has been our only way to get them out of the city & into the wild outdoors away from the influence of bored kids doing drugs. What little space we hv left to ride on is getting more & more crowded the past few years & therefore has made riding more unsafe. We need more space, not less!

I voted for Barack for President and believe in much of what he is doing. BUT, he does not understand the land use issues. I request that President Obama physically go to any large OHV recreation area and observe who is there. He will see families, mothers, fathers, sons, sisters, all camping and spending time together. We need the President's help to EXPAND opportunities for this type of recreation NOT REDUCE them. OHV use is the MOST family ORIENTED use of our public lands. We need more encouragement to help it grow even larger.

President Obama: Please do not close the forests to the public. It is the ONLY true form of enjoying our bodies and our soles-being one with nature and knowing us for what we are. Please don't turn this country into a TV watching, dumbed down state. In my humble opinion, you have been listening to one side of the story only. There is a second side. Please give us the option for input. The second side consists of the people who actually use the public land- not those bureaucrats who "discuss" it. If you have never been to a Dirt riding or bike riding "event" in the forest, please attend one and listen and watch the people and if you can come away from that and deny them the opportunity to enjoy nature and one another, then so be it. But you must at least give it an eye and an ear. I did vote for you, mainly because I thought you to be an intelligent person who would give each issue and intelligent "hearing". But now you have proved yourself un-Harvard worth, but listening ONLY to the Sierra Club and the like. The Sierra Club ALREADY has so much land that is only theirs. We Motocrossers and Atvers have NO land which is ours. We share it all with horses, hikers, bikers and every one else. Please, Mr. President, wake up to what is being thrown at you. Would they be so adamant if they did not have a hidden agenda?? If it really were in the best interests of the public, would there be such an outcry against what they are trying to do. It is another issue of the wealthy imposing on the more poor, denying them, the poor, the public, their rights to what is actually "American"

Public lands are for all. The Wilderness and Monument designations are designed to keep out all but a certain group of citizens. All citizens must share the land whether they hike, horse, bike or ATV.

Public lands are for the public, for the people. I am one of those people and I would like, I DEMAND, my public lands to be open to my use. Closing more lands to the people by designating more Wilderness and monument areas should be a slap in the face to our public land managers, because it shows how incredibly incompetent they are in managing the lands that belong to all of us, including me. Closing lands to the public, by what ever means or designation you give it, is gross mis-management of our public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Public lands are just that, public. All Americans have the right to enjoy them. How dare the federal government tell me how to run my life or infringe on my very freedoms. I agree as an off-road vehicle user, I do not need to ride on every inch of public space. We already ride in designated areas only. Leave our access alone!

Public lands are owned by the tax payers for the benefit of the tax payers. There is already plenty of designated wilderness land available for recreational activities such as hiking and back packing. Wilderness designations shut out cyclists and motorcyclists from using the land. We need more trails for mountain biking and single track motorcycle riding. Curtailing access to trails for riding puts more pressure on existing trails, which increases the likelihood that they will also be closed. More trails means less user density and less impact on the trails because user miles are spread over more trails.

Public lands should be for the public and not just for government control and special interest groups. Public land should be used for recreation and for our natural resources. We can and should work together with all groups to save the land and produce our own resources ie Mining, Logging, Farming, Ranching. JOBS JOBS JOBS!!!!

Public lands should be used to provide the most recreation to the largest number of people. By closing the land to all but hikers or horseback riders you eliminate the greater majority of the public that either are not physically able to or do not have the time to hike into these areas.

Restricting access to federal land will end the way of life that we have lived for 40 years. Our family loves, enjoys, and respects our public land and want to continue our access for family outings, enjoying nature, God's gift to all living souls.

Restrictions on logging and thinning of forest land has produced most of the worst forest fires in recent history. Stop the madness!!!!

Return the land and the government back to the people. Be fair and honest to all groups that ARE INTERESTED IN USING PUBLIC LAND

right now there really isn't much. please take a look at the proportions and take the time to think about it. It is out of balance. I think the last time I heard that only 10% or less of Death Valley can be ridden by an OHV. More so even the places that do remain open, small and few they are, are being condensed with more riders making them more dangerous. Please do not partake in this large land grab. It should be available to all the public, not just the ones who have political weight to push around. We are working people that use these lands for our vacations. We can afford to go to European countries, or resorts. So we go fishing, and camping. please do not take it away from use.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Shutting down our areas to ride is not going to get rid of us. It will only cause people to ride illegally in undesignated areas. Stop taking our areas away. Stop taking our form of recreation and exercise away. Don't force my kids to play indoors in front of the TV. As of now, they like to play outside riding their OHV's. They like camping outdoors with their parents and spending time outside in the wilderness. They are learning how to be responsible and respectful of the land. Please don't take that away from us. Don't take away the revenue we generate to the rural areas and their communities when we tour to their towns to ride our OHV's. We use their gas stations, their grocery stores and their restaurants. They need us to maintain a standard of living.

Somewhere you all must have lost your minds please get back on track. We need public use lands to foster better family outings and bonding. Families that engage in outdoor activities have better relationships and less possibilities of being involved in unhelathy activities, such as violence druggs and gangs. We don't have enough outdoor space for these activities and with the urban expansion and other regulations families need your help. Please do the job we sent you to do and represent us against all the special intrests and lobbyist it is your moral obligation to DO THE RIGHT THING.

STOP CLOSING PUBLIC LANDS!!!

stop taking OUR (as in WE THE PEOPLE) public lands from us

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, I am an avid outdoor enthusiasist and would hate to see the parks and forests that I have enjoyed for so long no longer be accesible to the younger generations including my son. Please reconsider you decision and keep the communities informed about what you plan and would like to do to limit our access to OUR NATIONAL FORESTS.

The bottom line, in my opinion, we do need to protect our wilderness, but we need to do it in a way that people are still able to enjoy the areas responsibly. The majority of people using the outdoor areas use them responsibly, but the few are messing it up for all of us. There needs to be better enforcement and harsher punishments for the laws and regulations that are already in place, not banning people from enhojying these areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The closure of these currently "Public" lands will create an adverse effect for the options both families and individuals have in regards to recreation. Those of us who live on the fringes of cities enjoy the fact that we can utilize off-road trails for our enjoyment. It helps to keep our children interested in the outdoors as opposed to loitering in the "Mall" or sitting idle in front of the TV or video game console and contributing to the already obese population that we are producing. Hiking, biking, and off-road motor vehicle use are a large reason we live where we do. We as outdoor enthusiasts are doing our part to help keep the land and water-ways clear of the debris that is discarded by the irresponsible public. We use it and help to clean it up. The greenhouse gasses emitted by off-road vehicles doesn't compare to the methane produced by the cattle that are raised for slaughter by large corporations such as McDonalds. Start with your regulations among corporations not the general public. Redirect their fines to help manage the land we still have the right to use as opposed to closing more land. Our children and grand children should be able to experience the outdoors, not re-live the experience through a video or a museum.

The communities surrounding these areas would get a real boost in their economy from the people using them. It would have them spending money on things like food and lodging which helps to stir the economy and brings in more tax revenue. Art Borman 323 Indianwood Blvd Park Forest IL 60466

The creation of Wildlife corridors will have a disproportional and severe negative impact on rural communities. It appears that organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and other similar focused NGOs stand to make huge illicit profits by swapping lands to the government for Wildlife Corridors. The President is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands. The President needs to include the two popular forms of recreation as a priority in his plan to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. These popular forms of recreation include Off Highway Vehicle recreation and Mountain Biking. More areas need to be opened to people who enjoy these popular outdoor activities. Wilderness and Monument designation are the most restrictive forms of land use management and reduce access. We need to revert some of these lands back to Multiple Use in order to promote access for urban youth and all Americans.

The elderly and handicapped must have motorized access or the public land is effectively taken from them. Public land is for ALL the public, not just a select few who are young and healthy enough to hike. The goal to reconnect Americans, especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, and growing rapidly, followed by Mountain Biking, yet the Initiative seeks to create Wilderness and Monument areas closing another 13 million acres to people who enjoy those most popular forms of recreation.

The First Lady's recent initiative to help our youth lose weight and become more active contradicts this closing of access to public land. Our youth need more locations where they can enjoy the outdoors with their families in whatever responsible means they choose, be it via dirt bikes, ATV's, mountain bikes, etc. Please preserve our access to Americas public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. I am 46 years old and have 3 teenage boys...and we all ride and appreciate nature and experience challenges and opportunities that strengthen the character and fiber of our family. As did my Father and my Uncles and Grand Father. This access to public land is why I moved here with my family in 1999. I can not believe what I am seeing happen right before my eyes... The President is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands. Land Grabbers...OBAMA AND HIS CABINET ARE THE WORST EVER, BY FAR...!!! The issue here really is about public access to public lands. The current administration appears to be very determined to 'fix' way too much of what we have all come to know and appreciate and respect. Every day I here of some other policy or tactic that makes me sick. This administration is acting as a rogue group of thugs. The backroom deals and late-night weekend deals are ruining this country. I know way too many VERY UNHAPPY UNITED STATES CITIZENS. I am sickened by this current administration. I can't even continue this letter without getting very upset. I will sign off.

I would really like to be able to ride my favorite trails with my grandsons in the future.

The last thing we need to do is waste more tax dollars. There is already too much money being wasted, a good example would be a highway overpass for wildlife. A lot of the proposed areas already have connecting public roads and land thru them. If this was put into effect then the federal government would be taking away private land and roads.

I am a responsible, adult off-road recreationist who wants his children to experience the outdoors in the same way I do. Please don't close public lands to responsible OHV access.

Please do not close off any more public lands and keep them open for all to enjoy.

The government does not have the right to define what they think should be "Monuments or Wilderness area", they have to go to the American people and see what the majority wants. In a time where we should be using the money on getting the country out of this economic downfall it sure seems as if the government is not using our tax dollars in a very intelligent manner.

The idea of taking a chunk of land and designating it as Wilderness in order to preserve it will make some people feel all warm and fuzzy inside. It makes my blood boil. So you make your Wilderness area and keep everybody out, but for how long? In most cases forever. You can only travel so far on foot into this area but for the most cases nobody will ever see any of it again. Ever. For the vast majority of Americans it might as well be a foreign country that doesn't allow visitors. No more Wilderness! No more National Monuments!

The idea that the public cannot vote on this issue seems to me to be under the table tactics and trying to sneak a bill by the public...after all..this is public land...shouldn't the public vote on it.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The initial Wilderness Act envisioned about 20 million acres as suitable. Today we have over 120 million acres of Wilderness where public access is restricted. In my state, over a third of federal public lands are Wilderness, and already that protection has been extended to places that do not meet the statutory criteria for Wilderness. The majority of the public have been forced onto smaller and smaller areas outside of Wilderness. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors we do not need more Wilderness areas, we need less.

The interests of the REAL PUBLIC are not being represented. As a wife, mother, business woman and OHV Activist, I am saddened by the broad stroke being made across OUR PUBLIC LANDS for the selfish interests of special interest groups. This Administration must stop circumventing the Federal Lwas that are in place to properly evaluate land issues. Listen to the public, not the special interests. Stop these land grabs!

Please do not take more of our lands. I currently recreate both in the wilderness areas of the west and in the public lands. Creating more wildernes is not necessary.

The people should be allowed as much access to as much public land as possible. Locking the people out of the land is unacceptable. There is already too much of our land that cannot be enjoyed by the vast majority of the American people. Please do not restrict access to one more acre of public land!!!

The funds generated from OHV registrations improve our local lands and in the case of California, have funded many non-OHV programs. The impact that more land closures will have on local businesses must not be overlooked. Everyone from the local sporting goods store to the OHV dealers will lose a significant portion of their business. Let's please keep Americans employed in the United States!

Please keep public lands OPEN to the public.

. Please do not listen to the lobbying of the environmental groups who would like to prevent access to all public lands except by the very few elite athletes that can backpack dozens of miles in to an area. As someone who has ridden motorcycles off road, the argument that doing so bothers animals or plants is truly absurd. In fact, you see deer and other animals using the same trails that the recreational users use. Many riding areas are maintained by the very people who ride their ATV's and motorcycles their, and we have a vested interest in protecting the beauty of the areas we ride in for our own enjoyment and the enjoyment of others. Please don't believe the hard core environmentalist propoganda. When has there ever been ANYTHING proposed that the environmental groups didn't object to? You can NEVER make them happy unless everything is 100% their way.... and they do NOT represent the majority of the American people.

The President needs to let local government decide how to manage the public land. Please don't exclude Off Highway Vehicle recreation and Mountain Biking. More areas need to be opened to people who enjoy these most poplar ways to enjoy the outdoors.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The primary point is that using monument designation to get around having public comment and legislative due process is wrong. I hike, mountain bike and motorcycle and support a healthy outdoor lifestyle that allows people to enjoy nature while respecting the environment and our impact upon it. However, this initiative is not well founded and does not follow a process that allows the voice of enthusiasts to be properly heard.

The restrictive closures as proposed in this bill cause more traffic in the remaining open areas, thus more congestion impacts what land is left for recreation. No multiple use has been included, just a narrow special-interest segment of the public has had any input on how our public recreational lands should be used and preserved. Preservation comes from those of us using the lands, and for every bit of land closed off comes the availability of the land to be used by those uninterested in preserving the lands. Self-enforcement is the best hope for the lands to be preserved, which is best done by letting people use the land and not be restricted to congested areas.

Also, making decisions for public land by circumventing public input is wrong and will not create strong laws reached via democratic methods. Do not short circuit our system.

As a member of many local off road clubs, I know we provide many, many man hours dedicated to the clean up of public land. We need to be included in this process.

Being an avid hiker for most of my life I have hiked many national parks to enjoy the nature and scenery. Now that I find myself a senior citizen, my knees no longer allow me to venture into places with only my pack and hiking staff. I still have the will, the curiosity and the love for nature but needed another means to get out there. I found that means in a off-road vehicle. Public lands should be open to all responsible users including seniors that need to use an Off Road Vehicle instead of a wheelchair. These funds would be better spent on helping America recover from the current economy.

But it is clear that he is only wants input from the misguided people whom agree with his views. The views and beliefs of most people who do not live in rural areas are as out of touch and misguided as their views and beliefs about cowboys and Indians.

Dear Sirs: Leave our public lands alone.

Government needs to concentrate on cutting cost, not becoming involved in additional projects that continue to raise spending.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a big wilderness supporter. I work for the National Park Service and have spent countless days and hours in the backcountry here since I was about 8. It is very important to me and I think well worth preserving. That said, I also am a firm believer that there should be different 'levels' of areas for different people and different types of use. Yes, those that can hike into remote areas, the most remote without even trails can thoroughly enjoy the true wilderness areas. If the researchers can be limited, then there is very minimal impact to wildlife and the environment in general. Currently there is way too much research, killing animals and harassing them in the name of research. But there needs to be areas that others can also enjoy and learn to appreciate this great country. Some like to ride horses, some mountain bikes, others motorized motorcycles etc. Should everywhere allow all access? No, I don't think so. BUT I also believe that there are already enough areas for wilderness use in this country and adding more will not improve anything in any way. There are also huge funding issues for the current wilderness areas. I know this very well working at a National Park. We cannot even maintain what is there now, how can we possibly maintain and properly manage even more? I say this from both a taxpayer and an employee. Lets properly do what we have now. I strongly encourage no more wilderness areas at this time. Not only are there enough areas now, but from a monetary point of view- this is like a person that can't afford the upkeep or payments on their house buying a new vacation house in the mountains because they love the mountains so much. Then asking someone else to pay for it since they don't have the money. First let us properly maintain and fund the current Wilderness areas (National Parks, Forest Service etc). I would support more areas for motorized used, and mountain bike etc. I think this is a great way for all, especially youth to get exercise, experience the outdoors and stay out of trouble! It also does a lot to stimulate economic growth, with users making various purchases to equipment. Please, lets fix what we have now first! Thanks for your time, (name deleted) Some boiler plate one points I agree with below:

I am an avid outdoor enthusiast that enjoys our public lands. The proposed closure certainly looks like more of the same Government rhetoric, massive closures for specific lobbyists. Keep our public lands open to the public. This includes all forms of outdoor recreation, not just specific uses. As a responsible off road driver I respect our public lands and enjoy visiting areas I otherwise would not be able to. These trips are spent with family and friends. Please leave our public lands open to the public. Good management, education and stewardship are important, not mass closures.

I am completely against any new designations of monuments of any kind.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am very concerned about the proposed legislation to reduce the amount of government property that I like to use for family recreation. While I may use the land differently than others, there should be equal access for all Americans - the PEOPLE own the land, not the government! The President SAYS he is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands. The goal to reconnect Americans (especially youth) with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking, yet the Initiative seeks to create Wilderness and Monument areas closing another 13 million acres to people who enjoy those most popular forms of recreation. This doesn't seem to make sense to me.

I am very supportive of conservation efforts aimed at preserving our wild spaces. I have a strong desire to enjoy the outdoors with my children and grandchildren. I do not agree with restricting access to off road vehicles, however. I grew up riding off road motorcycles and have dealt with having fewer places to legally ride as time goes by. In my experience, those that enjoy the outdoors, including off road enthusiasts, are normally very considerate of preserving the quality of our wilderness. By restricting access, we will reduce the number of people that actively use our wilderness areas, thereby reducing the number of people that care about them and make efforts to preserve them. I encourage increasing access, not limiting it.

I applaud the presidents goal of reconnecting Americans with the great outdoors. We need federal legislation that caters to the broad spectrum of American recreational interest rather than the minority of extreme preservationists.

I belong to a family oriented off road club myself and have been involved with off roading for over forty years now. I have personally seen how these family activities promote the family unit. Especially during these hard economic times this is a great outlet for many individuals and families! On top of all of that I think the economic impact should also be looked into. Just in the club I am involved with there are million's of dollars being spent on all types of off road equipment, motorcycles, ATV's etc. Of course not to mention all the trucks, trailers, motorhomes and all of the ancillary equipment to go along with those activities. Most of the large ticket items, trucks, trailers and motorhomes are still one of the very few items that are still being made here in the USA, we need to promote these types of activities not help stomp them out!

I cry foul to the use of public funds and monies to bar the publics use of anything. Let freedom ring, and keep the government out of unwanted areas.

I do not support the Wilderness land grabs. There is no need for a mass increase in the size of Wilderness Areas or Wilderness Study Areas. These areas decrease access to public lands by Americans.

I do not support this project.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I enjoy the use of public lands and believe good stewardship is the key to protecting this national and natural resource. Local organizations can be called upon to provide this leadership and are key to creating sound recreational decisions. I hope you will actively fight to stop this additional step in relieving the people of their rights. Thank you,

I feel as if this bill is UNAMERICAN. Since when did this process of limiting the Americans citizens rights become the new American way. I thought this nation was based on freedom and choice. My family and I love camping, offroading, hiking and enjoying the great outdoors. We also own a cabin in the sequoia National Forrest. I have noticed restrictions over the years and do not want anymore!! We use these these lands, someone in an office not familiar with the area and use should not be able to take it away from us. Waste of our money! Reducing government spending!! Thank you for your time.

I happen to enjoy most forms of outdoor recreation, including mountain biking, backpacking, hiking, 4-wheel drive, hunting, fishing, target shooting, and motorcycles. These should all be acceptable uses for public land. We should NOT allow the UN or any other non-American entity to be involved in any of our internal affairs either.

I have a family of four who enjoy exploring the outdoors on both motorized and non motorized vehicles as well as hiking. Designating lands as wilderness areas jeopardizes the opportunity for my children to do the same with theirs. Responsible use by all users is needed and welcomed by the majority of mountain bikers and off roaders. Our taxes and licensing fees we have to pay for off road vehicles should only be used to open areas and maintain these areas and not for more closures, education and patrolling. The smaller the area off road use is allowed the more impact it can have on the environment and also increases the temptation for some to use illegal areas. All groups who utilize the wilderness should be invited to have input on the proposed legislation, off road use has a positive impact on the local economies as well as on a nationwide basis.

I have always loved the outdoors--especially the mountains like the Sierra Nevada -- in my home state of California. But, at my age, my legs hurt, and I can't hike or backpack as well as I used to. This means that closing areas to vehicular travel would mean, effectively, closing it off to me forever. The only way I can get up to my favorite areas anymore is by jeep or motorcycle. I understand the intention is to preserve the lands, but the real result of this law will be to shut me, and most people in the general population, out of these beautiful areas forever. After this law is passed, only a few park rangers will get to drive quads in these areas, along with a few unemployed sierra club members, who have the time to hike for days to get into the back country. The average person won't have time, or energy to get to these places. The goal to reconnect Americans--especially youth-- with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking, yet the Initiative seeks to create Wilderness and Monument areas closing another 13 million acres to people who enjoy those most popular forms of recreation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have been riding motorcycles off road for 40 + years. In my teens and twenties it kept me out of trouble with the bad parts of our society and to this day is still a very family oriented activity. Please consider us before passing legislation that takes away our sport.

I have enjoyed the forest lands here in Colorado my entire life. I hiked the high country in my youth and still enjoy being able to access these areas by 4X4 and my motorcycle. Please don't block the access we need as we age. Thank you for your attention

The theft of Open-Space and Natural resources from our future generations by self-serving elected officials that lie to get in office, then trade favors for personal agendas, has got to end. I am in disbelief that another portion of America will not be actually part of America anymore, but will be part of some hidden area that no one can use. We bought, traded for, and fought for all the land within our borders, so that we would have the natural resources for the future. Now sneaky little pacts keep being legislated that stop the use of these resources, not for recreation or for logging, or hunting, or farming, or oil exploration, or anything else. It is being taken away from future generations as well. JUST STOP TAKING LANDS FROM THE PUBLIC THAT YOU CAN NOT MANAGE . One day you may want to go for a bike ride, or perhaps if physically challenged at a later time, you may want to drive a golf cart or UTV through some trails to a lake in a forest near your house. But you would have passed a law making that activity illegal. Stupid right? They aren't making any more land and these acts and bills keep taking it away. For someone who works in Washington, you may never care, but I do. chris fiore

These are American lands and must be accessible for the citizens to use as it is the average citizen who is paying the majority of tax revenue the government receives and uses to maintain these public owned lands. Keep public lands open for multiple use by the public.

This all about stealing and closing off the land to the people. No communist take over of our lands.

This is crazy. My family and I spend almost every weekend on the trails that they are trying to close. Our kids love the outdoors and get to see much more being able to see it by ohv. I do believe there are some places that vehicles should not be. Our state parks system was created for that. Forest land should be open for public use. We live in America for the right to be able to use this land . Put Obama and his family on a side xside, quad, dirtbike or what ever see if they dont enjoy it. Dont take this from our children. It,s what they love to do.

This is simple. Add federal, state, county, city, Natl. Monuments, Parks, Scenic, and on and on, and you find that half the public land is already closed to most of the public. 80% of the public are not capable of using most of our public land. Do not create more land that is closed to motorized and bicycle use. Use common sense. The "anti's", "greenies", and elitists are just wrong.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This really shows the vast mis-information campaign about off-road vehicle use and it's effects on the environment. We are not the enemy of the environment, we love it more than most can realize. We spend more time there than most of these people who claim to want to "protect it". To stop us from accessing lands our forefathers fought to give us is just plain wrong. There is no factual evidence to support this cause. What good are these lands if no one is able to enjoy them? Responsible access is the solution, and it's going on right now. Educate yourself on both side of the issue, you will be surprised what you find.

Those making these decisions need to spend more time in places they intend to close!! Myself and a vast majority of community members living in the surrounding areas agree that these closures are being made with blinders on. Please consider other options

I want to make it clear that Current government control of public lands is out of control and We are nearly at the "Nazi" state when it comes to the use of national parks and monuments. The Government employees found working there are not present to help us enjoy and explore the parks. They are there living in their own private retreats and view anybody else as an intrusion and a threat, often packing pistols. That is not how the parks were in the past and not how they should be! If you want to do something beneficial to the public, then Let's get back to reality! Stop the government land grabs meant to isolate use of precious resources to the wealthy and elite!!

Please do not take this precious land away from the people who use it most.

I am an outdoor enthusiast and OHV that enjoys the many trails and scenery in our country. I am however opposed to the closure of public lands and the addition of wilderness as it eliminates the ability of us to enjoy the great outdoors. Like myself, These designations are hurtful to those who actually use the outdoors the most. To go ahead with this plan, without asking for public opinion is almost akin to the health care bill that was passed against the wishes of the population as it would again create further resentment and distrust of all of our elected officials.

Hasn't the government taken enough of my rights already? Again losing more of our rights.
. Help us get our kids out of the urban forest and into the Redwood Forest. We (people who enjoy these most popular ways to enjoy the outdoors) spend far more money performing these activities which generate tax dollars and create jobs than the Sierra Club protesters who have your attention.

To Whom it May Concern, I do not think that it is fair for people to pay taxes for land that they do not have access to use in a safe and responsible manner. Outdoor recreation is what my family and I do for all of our vacations. Please do not take that away.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here we go again. Another massive effort by our government to act in the best interests, not of those who elected, them but that of the Special Interest Groups. Again we have a huge taking potential closure of public lands without adequate public input. A deceitful, secretive taking. We see the desire to close roads and trails that have been in continuous use for decades, if not the last century. I have been creating priceless memories for myself and my children on recreational vehicles for decades. For now I am doing so with my grandchildren as well. The President and First Lade are supposedly making a serious effort to get our children outside, involved in physical activity instead of sitting in from of monitors. Off road recreation does EXACTLY that. Now he wants to dramatically curtail off road recreation activities? Seem a little hypocrritical to me. The President is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands. PLEASE reconsider this massive, secretive land grab. If you must pursue it, at least do so with adequate public input. Edward L Trudersheim Senior Managing Consultant/Principal paradigm Tax Group

Please STOP the closure of public land(s). Thanks You

I am writing today to express my displeasure with this land act as it currently sits. Keeping public lands public is very important to me as I camp, bike and offroad on these lands in many different states every year. Their closures would serverly limit my options to enjoy these great lands. If there is anything I can do to help keep these lands open to responsible users such as myself, please let me know as I would like to help however I can.

Regarding the current possibility of closure of public land, without input from the owners of this land, the taxpayer. I have several reservations about the closure and how the process leading to the closure was arrived at.

Today, people chose motorized transportation overwhelming over walking or horseback. The American People own the public land, all the American people own it, not just the hikers. Without motorized vehicle access, the public land is effectivly stolen form the public. Photographers lose access, Fishermen lose access, Hunters lose access, Campers lose access. Grandparents recreating with their grandchildren lose access. Roads and trails for off road vehicle travel do not destroy the land, they enhance the land and improve the publics opportunity to enjoy and recreate on the land they own. The public is waking up to these land closures and are angry. We demand more access to public lands, not less. NO MORE NATIONAL MONUMENTS OR WILDERNESS DESIGNATIONS! REOPEN PUBLIC LANDS TO THE PUBLIC, ALL THE PUBLIC, NOT JUST THE KOOKS IN THE SIERRA CLUB!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'm in my fifties now and when I was growing up the outdoors was the only place to play. When my children were growing up I took them to as many parks as often as I could. I also exposed them to off-road motorcycle riding. It was great fun and they benefitted from the experience. If this initiative seeks to create increased restricted access areas close to populated areas then that seems counterproductive to the goal of having our children enjoy the outdoors. Making it more difficult by restricting access to enjoy the outdoors doesn't seem like the correct solution to the problem. I don't recommend unlimited access to these areas either. The planning process must include all interested potential groups of users.

As a lifelong resident of Eldorado National Forest, . The President stated that he is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands. Those who live, work, play, and protect our public lands are the ones who should be consulted - not those who simply want to lock up public land from public use.

We are concerned with this move to close more public lands to a variety of recreational use. The goal to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. While some youth may be convinced to enjoy the outdoors by foot, many of the youth, especially the behaviorly at risk, get introduced to the outdoors through more adrenaline inducing experiences. With these experiences, they are also taught responsibility. We have several local groups who work to maintain the health of the public lands they use because, due to their off road use, they have a vested interest.

We need to keep what we have open and do what we can to allow access to more public land. Some of the best keepers of the land are the ones who use it. It seems wise to me to have more offroaders involved in keeping trails open.

We need to minimize commercialization of our parks, the widening of roads in public lands, yet we need to keep the land open to use by multiple forms of OHV transportation. Preventing the use of a renewable resource such as logging is counter productive. Logging promotes wildlife habitat, decreases fire risks, provide local jobs and decreases foreign imports. This plan smells of control and not freedom. Who is going to make the money in this program hmmm! Not the little guy again.

What we need is a replacement of public lands. I don't mind designating some public lands for Wilderness area, I think it is great but on the other hand we also need some land set aside for family recreation and for us to enjoy some of the wilderness. So for every 10 acres you close we need 1 acre for recreation, 1000 acres closed 100 acres set aside for recreation. Its only fair. I have recently enjoy some of the few open areas designated in my State lately. I've had to travel several hours and burned many gallons of gas to get there. So if the president wants us burning fuel and using up the limited space on the roadways he better start setting aside more tax dollars to spend on upkeep and regulations for the limited areas we have to travel to to be able to enjoy our recreation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I first got my dirt bike 3 years ago there were plenty of places to ride which is why I ventured to get one in the first place. Now we have one legal place left to ride and as of this year 2/3 of that has been closed down. ORV riding is fun for the whole family and I have seen first hand that it also helps keep kids off the streets by giving them a way to release all their energy. Please stop closing our recreation areas!

When you close these areas to traditional use people get squeezed into smaller and smaller areas. This increases the impact on these areas and cause further restrictions on their use. this results in the elimination of any close by area for people to have free choice of their type of use. A lot of areas proposed have had generations of use and cannot be classified as wilderness under the Wilderness Act. Pleas keep these areas open and under the same status as they now have. Thank you

Why would you do such a thing people dont relize how much money out door recreation produces. Just in my small town of 1,000 people 1 time a week(sundays) we have a poker run for atv's dirt bikes pretty much anything off road. We have anywhere from 500-1,500 people show up and this brings revenue to our town just think of all the gas,food,drinks and other items will be bought in our town just on a sunday so why close the land that so many people take their family and just goes out to spend the day and have fun. If you close a lot of these places you wont have people driving and spending as much money because they wont have anywhere to go so you will see a drop in spending money just because you want to close land for some stupid reason.

I believe public involvement in outdoor recreation is a key to preservation. If people enjoy the outdoors, they will advocates for preservation. Preservation with responsible and appropriate access is key! I believe our National Forest system and the BLM can properly manage and preserve our nations natural lands while at the same time balancing public access issues.

Please do not take any more lands away from us. We all can enjoy and preserve our public lands without having government involved. Thank you.

With all this said, I voted for for the current president because I thought he was a intelligent man who cared about the american people. The country is in a very bad situation right now, recreating in places like these are something we americans can enjoy, in a time when so many people have lost so much. Why kick us when we are down? Why take away something that the american people love so much? I don't understand why the government continues to take public recreational land away from the public. I ecourage the president that I voted for, to stand up for the american people and let them enjoy this beautiful country.

With the proposed land closers we the people have little or no land left for recreation for all people, as a tax payer and citizen I feel this is just plain wrong to block the people out of our own land. I enjoy my public land almost every weekend, please do not close more land that we all enjoy and respect. Thank you

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

With threats of more land closure, our government is only creating more opportunity for youth to get more obese, join gangs, carry weapons, use and/or sell narcotics; the negatives are overwhelming and our jails and prisons continue to get fuller by the day. I hope you would Mr. Salazar include the otherside of the conversation; the OHV organizations such as for example The American Motorcyclist Association, CORVA, Blue Ribbon Association, Save the Trails, Hunting and Fishing; all the groups that represent activity based recreation in our country.

Your support in keeping our public lands open to off road vehicle use would be greatly appreciated. We have enough public lands closed to public use and access due to special interest groups.

I am a long time off-road enthusiast. It is very important to me that public lands be kept available for myself and for future generations. This can be done in a very responsible way that will allow for multiple uses on public lands forever.

Keep the land open to the public

Please keep our public lands open to ohv recreation for our future generations to allow for similar recreational opportunities I enjoyed growing up in Nevada. With Nevada comprised of roughly 90% public land, it is unique to most states in the nation and exploring the endless areas of public land would not be possible without some form of ohv transportation. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue so near and dear to my heart.

Your actions will determine how I vote when the time comes. Thank you for your time,

Protect our Wilderness: In Maine, we are working with Congressional leaders to protect wilderness and wildlands from the islands off our rocky coast to the mountains on our western boarder Your support of these proposals can preserve our wildest lands for future generations.

Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat: Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. The Obama administration should prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands, making restoration a national priority.

Support Proposals to Connect the Outdoors to People especially Youth: Support nature education programs, a revived civilian conservation corps, and programs that inspire people to go outdoors.

Our public lands belong to all Americans and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. Our region hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Investing in our region will permanently protect a large and varied natural landscape, create economic opportunities for neighboring communities, conserve the region's biodiversity and recover its wild species through habitat conservation and restoration.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect the proposed Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area: Located less than 100 miles from the Bay area and Sacramento, the region stretching from Lake Berryessa to Snow Mountain is our outdoor wonderland. It gives us clean drinking water, spectacular views, and places to hike, kayak, and more. Local people have come together to support designating the Berryessa Snow Mountain region as a National Conservation Area so future generations can enjoy this natural treasure. The administration should protect this treasured area and other unique landscapes for future generations.

Conservation at a Large Scale: Large natural areas, such as the Berryessa Snow Mountain region provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change, while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.

Protect our Wildlands: Wild places are some of our healthiest and most intact lands. Permanently protecting the wildlands of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region and defending against threats to our wildest places should be a priority as the administration looks to leave a legacy of protected places for the public to enjoy.

Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat: By investing in restoration of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region we will create jobs that are built around proper stewardship of our natural areas. This restoration will enhance wildlife habitat, preserve critical water supplies and connect people to the land.

Connect people with Nature: The Berryessa Snow Mountain region provides countless opportunities for connecting the communities of the Bay Area and the Central Valley with nature. Existing outreach programs for families and children will only be enhanced by permanent protection of this natural playground, where recreation and outdoor education opportunities abound.

At the launch of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative in April, you wisely state that, ""Even in times of crisis, we're called to take the long view to preserve our national heritage..."" I am writing to you to show my support for that statement and to thank you for including all Americans in the nation-wide discussion to reconnect Americans to the land through conservation and recreation. As a nation, it's important to recognize, maintain, protect and expand our nation's heritage represented in historic and cultural sites, trails, national monuments and parks.

Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources, but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection.

We need more National Parks, National Monuments, National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative I ask you to put history back on the map by funding historic preservation programs like Save America's Treasures, Preserve America, and National Heritage Areas and to provide full, permanent funding for the Historic Preservation Fund. Each of these programs embodies an important public-private link to places and landscapes that matter.

Please commemorate National Wilderness Month by (1) rescinding the ""No More Wilderness"" policy and reinstating the former process by which BLM identified and protected wilderness study areas, (2) directing the BLM to take another look at the unbalanced Utah resource management plans, and (3) telling the BLM to put in place management strategies that ensure the future sustainability of these truly wondrous places.

The American people need to be considered as the fourth branch of our government. Our voices are vital to the direction of our country. My family lives and thrives because of the great outdoors. Our garden and chicken sustain us nutritionally, and our trails give us ways to mountain bike and hike to keep us active and healthy.

Please stop the destruction of our resources by banning hydraulic fracturing and gas drilling in rural America.

But not with wilderness designations as they are to restrictive to recreational use.

I would like you to start with the Sonoran desert in AZ. By protecting our borders, you will be preserving this beautiful place for generations to come. By refusing to beef up border security with requested Nat'l Gaurd troops, you are allowing this region to be trashed by illegal's and drug smugglers who have no respect for our land, country or people. Do the right thing Mr. President. Protect our land, protect our borders.

I too have two daughters and the older one has a young daughter who is passionate about the world. I hope that the world will be unlike that depicted in the movie Wall-E, one of our favorites. She is only six years old, and I often wonder what she will inherit. As you know the powerful have a stronger say in the shape of the future, and I voted for you to spearhead such change. It is now time for democracy, no more corporacy. PERIOD.

This is especyaly true where I live. Historical sites, forrests, and farm land is being bulldozed with agression and our history and heritage are being wiped away in the name of progress.

I think that the American Mustangs and Burros should be included in these plans as well. They were given land in 1971 that has been pared down to less than 35%. Their ancestors helped us settle this country and they should be given protection, not extermination and incarceration.

We must act now to preserve this legacy for future generations. They can always make more money but when the land is gone, it's gone. Please protect what we have left from the misplaced greed of temporary gain. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

ALSO Mr. President, the National parks are Parks, they are there for our benefit. However, we, as boaters cannot utilize them to our advantage. Can we please look into the possibility of allowing boating on some of the best rivers in the world, I.E. the rivers in Yellowstone?

DO NOT CLOSE KICKAPOO PARK NEAR DANVILLE, IL. IT IS A WONDERFUL PLACE TO SPEND THE DAY WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS. THE WILDLIFE IS AMAZING!!!! KEEP KICKAPOO STATE PARK OPEN ALONG WITH THE REST OF THEM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!11

Beyond the next generation will be a future incumbent on the protection of our undeveloped land. The length of that future may ride in your hands right now.

Please help save our environment and expand the few wild areas left!

Please support alternative energy sources, stop the drilling in the oceans and in our wilderness areas.

Please stop with the antigun antihunting smears that go around concerning law abiding citizens. thank you.

I also implore you to keep these spaces owned and run by America, no outside involvement in our greenspaces.

And I think that the Anter restrictions on deer in the state of Texas in Fannin County should not be placed on young deer hunters under the age of seventeen. It is different for hunters of a older age, but to get younger kids to hunt, It is important to allow them the chance to know and feel the accomplishment of harvesting their first deer without worrying about getting in trouble because the deer antlers were to small!

Please also look into the privatization and commercialization of our waters of the US and here state of Washington. Public access is being limited, and aquaculture is destroying important fish habitat and commercializing public beaches. Please contact me for more info. .

This is very important for all Americans to have the chance to experance the great outdoors. This is a resource that is quickly becoming more difficult to find in America. Your administration needs to take action to find the funding to protect the State and National parks we have now and support the Parks of the future. Thank you

Of special interest to me is our coastal areas such as beaches, lagoons, fisheries, tidal and surf zones. Southern CA has a very rich relationship with the coast, but struggles with development that wants to consume it, pave over it, or build on top of it. The oil disaster in the gulf coast was a great lesson about how precious our coastal areas to all parts of our lives and economy an Americans. Please help us to preserve our coast, as well as all other natural areas for the betterment of all of our future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Have higher standards to protect our waterways for our future children.

Also why isn't it mandatory that we recycle? If 100 years from now we still are not recycling, what do you think the earth will look like?

It takes 40-70 years to replace woods & forests.. Please do not destroy any of our forests by making them multi-use!!

Please continue to do more than necessary to proactively protect our natural habitats and precious few species left on Earth. Your campaign slogan was "Hope" - and right now I am hoping you will do your part in this fight against humanity's ceaseless destruction of the Earth.

"NATURE AND WILDLIFE" is more important than any space program. I say we focus on our planet before wasting time and money on other planets.

This is vital for the physical, mental and spiritual health of all Americans as well as the health of the land itself and the ecosystems it embodies.

Please help us promote science in the classrooms.

You need to open up more of the old trails that have been closed to 4wheel drives, More places to ride your ATV's. We have beautiful mountains but limited on how to use them. I remember going to Citico and Tellico mountains in Tennessee and riding old 4 wheel drive roads, Riding ATV's. Beautiful country but off access these days. Your looking for revenue just open up roads and ATV trails and charge a small fee and you will increase revenue. I remember when Tellico Plains, TN. was on TV and in magazines showing trails and lots of fun, been on them myself, That is how you get the most out of life and get away from all problems and Just HAVE FUN

As a grandmother and a voter and an environmentalist, please protect our waters and lands now!!

And please don't add any more roads to protected areas.

Please do not close any more of our national parks. Our family loves the outdoors and enjoys camping and it breaks our heart to see the picnic areas closed on The Colonial Parkway or to hear that other places are closed because our Governors don't want to spend the money. Please bring back outdoor life for all to enjoy. Thank you.

You could start by having the state to reopen our back roads. We use those roads for hiking, camping and hunting. They are also our only way to get to most well known fishing holes at most rivers. I voted for you, as well as a majority of family members. Our way of providing for our families are slowly being taken away. Please help us while you can.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I also ask that high elevation lakes administered under the Forest Service be stocked with sport fish (mostly rainbow trout) in order to create opportunity for young people to hike, camp and enjoy fishing in wilderness areas. Forest Service policy in some areas (like the Flat Tops Wilderness, Routt N.F.) take the opinion that they don't want to allow stocking of rainbows in some lakes because they are non-native. I believe this is a personal opinion that should not translate into stocking policy. Thank you for allowing me to voice an opinion. And, thank you for your care and support of public lands. It is so good to have administration support for wildlands and wild things!

Americans are always whining about what they want, but when it comes time to pay up for it where will the money come from and will they then want it so badly????????? I will gladly pay a tax for protecting our outdoors.

This includes fair trail use for Mountain Bikers, hikers, etc.

Especially work on fixing and maintaining Southern California's trails, mountains and the forest deserve to be preserved for every American past, present and future to enjoy.

It would be of benefit to more citizens if instead of designating more areas as Wilderness Areas, that they be denoted as National Recreation Areas or National Conservation Areas designated

AS a former Park Ranger in Michigan, I know by experience that people look forward to using their job vacations to see our National Parks, State Parks, city Parks, Trails, esp. forests to camp, fish, hunt, etc. Our majestic scenic mountains and rivers and our National Monuments. If you don't take full responsibility now, you will be the start of natural disasters and what our forefathers wanted for the people of our Land of The Free!!! Please govern yourself, accordingly and with respect to all citizens. Thank You!!! ;)

more parks for bikers of all types

We need more Mountain Bike Trails for the State Of Texas. I live at Lake Sam Rayburn and it is ripe with land but no trails.

I enjoy the outdoors - our forests, parks, NWRs - and want future generations to do so too. I think it's a crime to sacrifice them to mining, logging, grazing, and perhaps saddest of all, neglect. I'm happy to pay a little more either in prices for manufactured goods and food and in taxes for better protection (can't cost any more than two wars).

Work for ways that all self propelled travelers can enjoy wilderness.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please call for : an immediate moratorium on BLM deadly wild horse round-ups return of BLM captured wild horses to their home/public land Accountability for BLM violations of Wild Horse Protection Act crimes 1. No outside scientific research performed 2. Sale of our wild horses for slaughter 3. Inhumane treatment, harassment and mismanagement resulting in permanent harm to our wild horse populations Release of wild horses and protection in safety, ensuring their land is sustained with tax payer dollars, rather than BLM mismanagement in extermination of wild horses Each moment counts another wild horse's life could be lost please act now to protect our wild horses for our future generations. Recent studies indicate wild horses inhabited America prior to Spaniard re-introduction, they are a native species and require immediate protection. Thank you

Stop oil and gas drilling

As a professional wilderness trail worker and mentor to the Americorps/California Conservation Corps Backcountry Trails Program, Always consider the future. Always consider programs like I am a part of that will help educate younger generations of the importance of conservation. Thank you.

Please keep out trails open. We have little area to ride in around us.

Snowmobiles don't damage the land or wildlife.

There is no ethically appropriate use of Off-road vehicles on Public lands. All use should be by licensed plated insured vehicles. No Quads or dirtbikes should be allowed on public lands as these are "thrill" vehicles that damage the environment wildlife and disturb non-motorized users.

As a Ducks Unlimited member and Pheasants Forever I strongly recommend designation of the Prairie Pothole Region as a Treasured Landscape in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. This area is vital to waterfowl on our continent as well as to many other species. We continue to lose acreage at an alarming rate. Please work to approve the designation.

I am writing to express my support for designating the Prairie Pothole region of North Dakota and South Dakota as Treasured Landscape in the Administrations "America's Great Outdoor Initiative. This is a region that is critical breeding habitat for millions of waterfowl. It is very important to all of us that this area receive this designation. Thank you

i implore you to make this quickly disappearing region one of the Treasured Landscapes of North America. it provides enormous nesting habitat for the entire central and mississippi regions.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Sirs I am E-mailing you concerning the Obama Administration's "America's Great Outdoors Initiative". Having spent many days of my life in the Northern prairies of our great country specifically North and South Dakota and Eastern Montana I passionately encourage you to include this national treasure better known as "America's Prairie Pothole Region" in your America's Great Outdoors Initiative. This region contains some of the last and best remaining natural waterfowl nesting habitat and is currently under severe degradation by continued pressures to convert virgin prairie lands and drainage of vital wetlands to croplands. In most cases these areas are of marginal value for agriculture purposes. On the other hand these same areas are necessary and vital for the continued wellbeing of our precarious continental waterfowl populations. As a member of Ducks Unlimited Delta Waterfowl and a number of other Conservation oriented organizations I ask for your support for including this treasured Northern American landscape in your America's Great Outdoors Initiative. I thank you in advance for your support of this request. sincerely

Dear trusted steward of our public lands In Southern Michigan we used to have thousands of acres of natural Oak/Grass Savanna and now there is less than 100 because of urban sprawl farming and forestry. I highly encourage the AGOI to designate the Prairie Pothole Region as a "Treasured Landscape." I ask this for the millions of birds that use this as nesting habitat and the natural unfragmented area that is undisturbed and sits as a true wilderness area. Lastly this "Treasured Landscape" is a jewel of the American people and should be protected and cherished for generations to come.

Please designate the prairie pothole region a Treasured Landscape as recommended by Ducks Unlimited. Thank You

Please consider the Praire Pothole Region as a high priority in the administrations "Treasured Landscapes" in the Great American Outdoors Initiative. Having walked that landscape in the Fall chasing ducks geese and sharptails there are few finer and more peaceful and prolific habitats that I have seen or walked. It is the breadbasket of waterfowl and with the help of CRP and the innumerable private individuals who have contributed to its preservation through the purchase of conservation easements it is retuning to great productivity for both rancher and waterfowl.

Please designate the prairie pothole region of North Dakota South Dakota and Montana as a "Treasured Landscape" as part of the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. As a falconer birdwatcher and duck hunter I am one of the millions of Americans who finds huge recreational opportunities in the prairie pothole region. As a biologist I value the rich ecological diversity of this area and its importance as breeding and staging grounds for migratory birds and other wildlife. As a taxpayer and observer of state and national policies I recognize the importance of jobs and revenue created by outdoor enthusiasts in the prairie pothole region. I strongly support the Administration's efforts to preserve protect and enhance these productive wetlands and grasslands. Please formally recognize the Prairie Pothole Region as a Treasured Landscape.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please designate the Prairie Pothole Region of the upper Midwest (North and South Dakota and Montana) as a "Treasured Landscape. We need to preserve important breeding habitat for migratory birds and grassland nesting birds of all species. This is an important program for future generations. Thanks for the consideration.

Please designate the Prairie Pothole region a Treasured Landmark in the administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We need to prevent the loss of waterfowl habitat.

Please save the Prairie Pothole Region. I have been there and seen first hand how wonderful and how important this area is to waterfowl and so many other creatures.

Put keep the prairie pothole region a Treasured Landscape forever so that wildlife will have a place to bred.

The prairie "pothole" country should be a major consideration as a 'treasured Landscape' for AGOI. Much that has been lost should be reclaimed for the benefit of both man and wildlife. Our now understanding of the ecosystem dictates that we preserve what little that we have not destroyed. Our knowledge of today coupled with our stupidity of the past should not be overlooked.

The prairie pothole region of the Dakotas and upper Midwest are definitely important landscapes for consideration.

I strongly urge you to: 1. Preserve Otero Mesa 2. Pass NM Omnibus Public Lands Bill 3. Pass Organ Mts. Desert Oaks Wilderness Act And 4. Pass HR 5334- El Rio Grande Del Norte National Conservation Area!Keep it wild! They are all unique spectacular World Heritage precious wilderness areas rich in native species cultural resources & vital ecosystem services. Do your job-Protect Our Public lands waters wildlife sanity economy & health! Your attention to this most urgent matter would be much appreciated by all present & future generations of all species.

Dear Secretary Salazar PLEASE support President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Here in my neck of the woods the El Rio Grande Del Norte National Conservation Area was proposed. On May 18 2010 Congressman Ben Ray Luján introduced a bill in the House (HR 5334) to protect 235980 acres in northern New Mexico.The El Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act is a companion measure to legislation introduced last year by Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall. HR 5334 was introduced to protect a huge area in north central New Mexico that encompasses the Rio Grande Gorge Cerro del Yuta Mountain (Ute Mountain: proposed Wilderness?13415 Acres) and the Rio San Antonio Wilderness Study Area (proposed Wilderness?7992 acres). Representative Luján and his staff have met extensively with local ranchers conservationists and other constituents from traditional communities to ensure that the land and its traditional uses are honored and preserved for future generations. The legislation will protect tribal and traditional economic rights including New Mexicans' access to the land for grazing and wood and plant harvesting. sincerely

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I applaud this initiative. For my beautiful state of New Mexico please set aside more protected lands: designate Otero Mesa as a National Monument and pass the Omnibus Public Lands Bill including several areas worthy of protection. Once these lands are set aside off-road vehicle use must be restricted to limited areas to leave the natural area and wildlife protected for all to enjoy in peace and quiet.

It is vitally important to preserve New Mexico's Otero Mesa. Ranging across more than a million acres Otero Mesa contains one of the last desert grasslands in North America. This Chihuahuan desert grassland is rich in native wildlife cultural resources and potential wilderness. Additionally the Mesa sits atop a large freshwater aquifer. The area treasured by hunters and other backcountry recreationists is near the growing populations of El Paso TX and Alamogordo NM offer outstanding opportunities for reconnecting Americans to our great outdoors. National Monument designation for Otero Mesa would permanently safeguard this national treasure and would provide a huge boost for the local economy. We owe it to future generations to protect the untamed spirit of this wonderful place. And the still bigger picture - New Mexico deserves an Omnibus Public Lands Bill! Omnibus Bills like the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 passed last March are an important tool to shepherd public lands laws through Congress. We need an Omnibus Bill passed in this Congress to include the following key pieces of legislation: Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness Act This bill was designed by the community and is supported thousands of citizens four local elected governments two local Chambers of Commerce half a dozen local sportsmen organizations community groups and conservation organizations. The bill would permanently protect over 300000 acres as Wilderness and National Conservation Areas including Broad Canyon the Aden Lava Flow and the incomparable Organ Mountains. El Rio Grande Del Norte National Conservation Area On May 18 2010 Congressman Ben Ray Luján introduced a bill in the House (HR 5334) to protect 235980 acres in northern New Mexico. The El Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act is a companion measure to legislation introduced last year by Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall. HR 5334 was introduced to protect a huge area in north central New Mexico that encompasses the Rio Grande Gorge Cerro del Yuta Mountain (Ute Mountain: proposed Wilderness?13415 Acres) and the Rio San Antonio Wilderness Study Area (proposed Wilderness?7992 acres). Representative Luján and his staff have met extensively with local ranchers conservationists and other constituents from traditional communities to ensure that the land and its traditional uses are honored and preserved for future generations. The legislation will protect tribal and traditional economic rights including New Mexicans' access to the land for grazing and wood and plant harvesting.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please strongly support and work for protection of some key New Mexico wildlands as part of President Obama's "America's Great Outdoors" (AGO) initiative. In particular please urge President Obama to designate New Mexico's Otero Mesa as a National Monument under the Antiquities Act. Ranging across more than a million acres Otero Mesa contains one of the last desert grasslands in North America. This Chihuahuan desert grassland is rich in native wildlife cultural resources and potential wilderness. Additionally the Mesa sits atop a large freshwater aquifer. The area treasured by hunters and other backcountry recreationists is near the growing populations of El Paso TX and Alamogordo NM offer outstanding opportunities for reconnecting Americans to our great outdoors. National Monument designation for Otero Mesa would permanently safeguard this national treasure and would provide a huge boost for the local economy. We owe it to future generations to protect the untamed spirit of this wonderful place. For more information please visit www.oteromesa.org. In addition some New Mexico conservation bills should be included in any omnibus federal lands legislation that Congress may act on during the remainder of this year. These pending bills include: Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness Act. This bill was designed by the community and is supported thousands of citizens four local elected governments two local Chambers of Commerce half a dozen local sportsmen organizations community groups and conservation organizations. The bill would permanently protect over 300000 acres as Wilderness and National Conservation Areas including Broad Canyon the Aden Lava Flow and the incomparable Organ Mountains. For more information please visit www.donaanawild.org El Rio Grande Del Norte National Conservation Area. On May 18 2010 Congressman Ben Ray Luján introduced a bill in the House (HR 5334) to protect 235980 acres in northern New Mexico. The El Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act is a companion measure to legislation introduced last year by Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall. HR 5334 was introduced to protect a huge area in north central New Mexico that encompasses the Rio Grande Gorge Cerro del Yuta Mountain (Ute Mountain: proposed Wilderness?13415 Acres) and the Rio San Antonio Wilderness Study Area (proposed Wilderness?7992 acres). Representative Luján and his staff have met extensively with local ranchers conservationists and other constituents from traditional communities to ensure that the land and its traditional uses are honored and preserved for future generations. The legislation will protect tribal and traditional economic rights including New Mexicans' access to the land for grazing and wood and plant harvesting. For more information on the El Rio Grande Del Norte Conservation Area please visit the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance web site. Thank you very much for considering my AGO recommendations. sincerely

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Obama Administration Officials Dear President Obama: As a lifelong New Mexican I highly value our state's wild places for their conservation and recreation value. I spend time outdoors hiking camping rafting and exploring New Mexico's public lands almost every week. Our public lands are required to serve a multitude of purposes -- recreation conservation and resource extraction like drilling mining grazing and logging -- which reflect the multitude of values that New Mexicans and Americans place on them. However some uses are incompatible with others and I believe it is important to balance the uses so that all are protected rather than using all lands for all uses at all times. This means that some lands used for drilling or mining will no longer be available for high-quality recreation and it also means that some areas with important recreation and conservation values need to be shielded from extractive uses that degrade them. In order to achieve this balance of uses I ask that you:

- 1) Permanently protect Otero Mesa from oil and gas development. Otero Mesa should be permanently protected as a national monument. This beautiful million-acre grassland which I have visited on several occasions is home to more than a thousand native species and sits above a vast untapped freshwater aquifer. A half-million acres of Otero Mesa qualify for wilderness designation; and a national monument would preserve these fragile wildlands while promoting traditional uses such as hunting and hiking.
- 2) Create a National Conservation Area in the Ute Mountain area. This will protect the amazing high desert along New Mexico's river the wild and scenic Rio Grande. This designation will protect important wildlife corridors.
- 3) Protect the Organ Mountains as wilderness. Congressional leaders have introduced a proposal to protect the Organ Mountains wilderness a spectacular backdrop to the city of Las Cruces. Your support of these proposals can preserve our wildest lands for future generations.
- 4) Designate the Manzano Wilderness Study Area as part of the existing Manzano Wilderness. This will preserve a critical wildlife corridor through the Sandia and Manzano Mountains.

New Mexico is the birthplace of wilderness and it is home to some of our country's wildest remaining public lands. From the southern desert grassland Otero Mesa to the wild and scenic Rio Grande our vast public lands support native wildlife and plant species significant water resources and imperiled desert ecosystems. Thank you for working to develop a balanced public lands policy that protects and nurtures the legacy of wilderness in New Mexico setting some areas aside for recreation and conservation alone. Future generations will be grateful that we have done so. sincerely

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We heartily support your program called America's Great Outdoors. We visit many wild lands and open space areas both those near our neighborhood and those far away in national parks national forests and BLM public lands. We ask you to support bold action to protect more of our federal lands from damage that would wreck their values through logging of old-growth forests offroad vehicles on too many trails or oil and gas drilling in the most precious wild areas. We like Secretary Ken Salazar's approach to setting priorities for federal lands such as by designating areas off-limits for oil leasing where the lands are more valuable for other purposes. We urge the following as key agenda items for your administration: 1. Bring more federal lands into wilderness status. Many proposals are already before Congress and need your help to get them enacted. 2. Give special emphasis to wilderness proposals for the red rock canyon country of southern Utah. BLM's wilderness studies were completed more than 25 years ago but little has reached wilderness status because of opposition by rural county officials who continue to ignore the national value of these canyons. 3. Fund the Land & Water Conservation Fund at its fully authorized level to support acquisition of recreation and wildlife lands at the federal state and local levels. 4. Bring more federal lands into national monument status through presidential proclamation. If conservative legislators refuse to negotiate reasonable boundaries for high-priority areas of our natural and historical heritage you have authority under the Antiquities Act to protect them. We thank you for bringing national attention to America's outdoors and to the need for protecting these precious lands for public use in the future. sincerely

Our great outdoors is a unique and precious part of our heritage. We need to protect and preserve it. Once it's gone it's gone forever.

This can be done by fully funding the land and Water Conservation Fund. ensure that future generations will always benefit and enjoy our public lands Please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors. Improving watersheds and wildlife habitat protecting wilderness providing increased access and recreational opportunities will all help to connect people with nature. There is no better way to relieve the stress of every day living by going to a park bird watching or just hiking for the sake of the scenic views and exercise. Thanks for your help and leadership in providing a conservation strategy for the 21st century. Sincerely

I support improving our natural lands including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges coasts and shores recreation areas parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. My family almost every year after Christmas goes on some cross-country skiing trip on forest lands and every summer my wife and I go the Black Hills and enjoy Mount Rushmore and the Black Hills National Forest. There is more out there than I will ever see but it is brought to me by photography and science and I want to see as much as possible protected. So: - Address Conservation at a Large Scale for mega-fauna - Protect our wilderness for nature services and spiritual renewal - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Connect people with Nature including more wildlife eco-tourism - Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities accessed by transit - Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund sincerely

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am asking you to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. To ensure that future generations will always benefit and enjoy our public lands please consider these priorities: - Address Conservation at a Large Scale - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Connect people with Nature -> this is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR MENTAL HEALTH/stress reduction has improves ATTENTION AND COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS. PLEASE fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund sincerely

Management of conserved private lands continues at the direction and expense of the private landowner, not the federal government, which struggles to maintain lands it already owns. In the western states, the management and habitat improvement of federal lands are increasingly reliant on state and private funds to provide necessary services.

As a public entity, the Small Acreage Community Farm must exist to serve the entire community. Because the marketing demographic for organic produce is often high-end, the perception of CSAs tends to be somewhat elitist. Relying solely on the income produced by a CSA is therefore often considered an obstacle to supporting the broader community. The RFA believes that the Small Acreage Community Farm CSA can and should be structured to ensure the participation of the larger community, by accommodating residents at all income levels. Developing secondary income streams to support the farm is therefore essential to providing the widest access possible.

We encourage identifying local resources like SWCD and RC&D, and building a relationship with them or a similarly positioned entity, such as a local extension office, early in the process. Such partnerships are vital to project success.

Once the hurdle of funding a project manager is resolved, it will be much easier to address the challenge of identifying needs and additional funding requirements. Ideally, additional funding requirements will be prioritized according to: 1) Urgent infrastructure development/production requirements of the farm 2) Expansion of community involvement in the farm 3) Diversification of farm business opportunities These three priorities may overlap, and the most desirable condition will be one where all three priorities are met.

The time to act is now. It would be imprudent to wait-once landscape integrity is lost it is prohibitively expensive to restore. We need to heed lessons learned the hard way elsewhere where massive amounts of money are being spent attempting to restore a broken ecosystem.

The Keeping Maine's Forests proposal to establish a model for landscape scale forest conservation in the Maine Woods would advance each of these federal agency priorities in a meaningful manner. Moreover, the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative is prepared to move forward immediately in collaboration with USDA and DOI to work with willing forest landowners and enthusiastic and experienced conservation partners, providing the federal agencies the opportunity to demonstrate on-the-ground accomplishments in achieving their priority goals and to establish a model that can be utilized elsewhere in the country (including the forests in the southern portion of Maine which are largely composed of smaller woodlots).

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Keeping Maine's Forests recognizes that it will be important to demonstrate success in selected areas early on and then build upon that success. Accordingly, Keeping Maine's Forests proposes an initial pilot project phase to test and learn from the concepts encompassed by this proposal. Keeping Maine's Forests seeks to pursue one or more pilot projects (depending upon the availability of funding) that could be immediately pursued which fully embody the objectives of the initiative.

Two potential pilot projects, the Downeast Project in eastern Maine and the Western Mountains and Lakes Project in western Maine, are described on the following pages. Both pilot projects involve multiple landowners and the use of both conservation options (purchase of conservation easements and fee lands) and stewardship initiatives.

Based upon the Departments of Interior and Agriculture's interest in participating in the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative, the Steering Committee will solicit other pilot project proposals and initiate a review process to identify and endorse the project(s) that best further the objectives of Keeping Maine's Forests. The specific terms of transactions will be determined by negotiations involving the landowners and buyers representatives. Keeping Maine's Forests will work to ensure that its involvement with projects is closely coordinated with and adds value to the funding process for state and federal conservation programs such as Land for Maine's Future Program and the Forest Legacy Program.

Near term conservation opportunities: Over 200,000 acres are currently on the market and available for possible conservation easement or fee acquisition.

It calls for the creation of a true partnership between private forest landowners and the public that maintains or enhances a sustainable timber supply and rewards landowners for maintaining and enhancing ecological and recreational values;

It is focused on landscapes rather than individual projects; It calls for increased flexibility in programs and new ways of meeting state and federal agency missions;

It calls for a coordinated interdepartmental and interagency approach - each agency contributing a part to a larger whole;

It calls for landscape scale stewardship (improved management) to maintain wildlife habitats, maintain clean water, sequester carbon and provide other ecosystem services;

It ensures that community interests and needs are supported; and,

Community Forest and Open Space Conservation When substantial funding is established for this program, it would be very beneficial to selected communities located on the edge of the Maine Woods. Its use in Maine could be enhanced if there were the flexibility to utilize conservation easements.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Land & Water Conservation Fund Keeping Maine's Forests would benefit if federal-side LWCF could be used to acquire conservation easements to buffer national wildlife refuges and other federal lands. Increasing LWCF funding for stateside programs would also benefit Maine's ability to utilize funds for other projects.

Additional acquisition opportunities exist along salmon rivers and there is the potential to use RLAG funds for projects involving conservation of Canada lynx habitat.

With modifications to eligibility requirements and payment limits, EQIP could play a greatly expanded role in the Maine Woods.

Given adequate resources and program modifications to eligibility requirements and payment limits, CSP could be used extensively throughout Maine Woods to provide a wide range of public benefits from private forest lands.

With modifications to eligibility requirements and payment limits, WHIP could play a greatly expanded role in enhancing wildlife habitat in the Maine Woods.

Additional resources could expand the Canada Lynx work to other large ownerships as well as lands associated with the endangered Atlantic salmon. Expanding HFRP efforts to biodiversity and carbon storage issues would open up many new opportunities for landowners to participate including, for example, lands located within the state's Habitat Focus Areas.

Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentive Program Program has yet to be established by USDA. This program, if developed effectively, could provide enormous benefits to the Maine Woods where public recreation predominantly occurs on private land.

Office of Ecosystem Markets Emerging markets for forest ecosystem services could create significant new income streams for forest landowners and communities. The proposed KMF pilot stewardship project offers a potential proving ground for an ecosystem services model.

Given adequate resources, Partners projects could be greatly expand to enhance habitat for a broader array of federal trust species that utilize the Maine Woods.

RTCA could play an expanded role in developing and implementing river and recreation initiatives that evolve from the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative and are supported by surrounding communities.

We anticipate that stewardship agreements with forest landowners will be for extended durations to ensure that the conservation objectives are successfully achieved and the public receives lasting benefits. Payments would be made specifically for management activities that extend beyond requirements of existing laws and conservation easements. To achieve the greatest possible impact, it would be highly desirable to pool available funding from existing stewardship programs and administer it as a single comprehensive effort, rather than have numerous programs operating independently. In doing so, it would be easier for landowners to participate and more cost-effective at meeting the full range of stewardship objectives.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Initially, Keeping Maine's Forests proposes to test this approach as part of the pilot project(s). The Manomet Center for Conservation Science has expressed strong interest in leading a pilot initiative to develop a payment for an ecosystem services program that would compensate landowners for actions taken to sequester carbon, protect water resources (beyond what is required under existing law), maintain forest biodiversity and make the forest more resilient to climate change. Manomet's efforts are a perfect fit for Keeping Maine's Forests - as are national efforts being pursued by USDA's Office of Ecosystem Markets and the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative. Once the model is working well, it could be expanded to other areas.

Such an initiative would further the objectives of all the federal stewardship programs described above and could potentially be pursued through funding from one or multiple programs involving the U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

If the important tradition of public recreational access to Maine's forest lands is to continue, new mechanisms will be needed to reward landowners who make their lands available for public recreation. Ideally, Maine could develop the inaugural effort of the Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentive Program authorized in the most recent Farm Bill or utilize funding from an already established NRCS program.

Creating a stewardship program that provides landowners with fair compensation for the public benefits derived from the forest allows landowners to focus their financial resources on producing timber and increasing the productivity of their land base which, in turn, will benefit the long term health of the state's forest products industry. A landscape-level approach to managing recreation, wildlife and environmental services across property lines also promises to be more cost-effective and successful in serving public interests than is the present mosaic of individual efforts.

To implement both the land conservation and stewardship components of the Keeping Maine's Forests Initiative will require substantial federal, state and private support over an extended period of time. Keeping Maine's Forests recognizes that a number of existing federal stewardship programs are critically important to Maine farms, woodlots and tribal lands. Funding for the Keeping Maine's Forests should supplement, not reduce or reallocate, funding from these existing programs.

Keeping Maine's Forests brings this proposal to USDA and DOI knowing that a substantial share of federal funding is essential to its success and appropriate due to its national significance. Furthermore, a major commitment to conserving a vast landscape of forests, lakes, rivers and mountains in the East would restore some equity for federal land conservation programs that, understandably, have allocated major resources to the western states.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

However, Keeping Maine's Forests also acknowledges that this is an initiative that is vitally important to the people of Maine and accordingly requires that there be a commensurate commitment from state and private interests. In keeping with the sense of partnership embraced by this proposal, Keeping Maine's Forests proposes that the cost of the land conservation component of the initiative be shared between federal agencies and state and private sources.

Keeping Maine's Forests is seeking \$25 million of federal funding to initiate the pilot project phase of the initiative with additional contributions to occur from state and private funding sources. This request is in addition to the funding Maine currently receives through existing federal programs including Forest legacy, LWCF, NAWCA and NRCS stewardship programs.

While the estimated cost of the potential pilot projects is substantial, the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative represents one of the most cost-effective opportunities for land conservation that exists in the country today.

The greatest strength of Keeping Maine's Forests is the diversity of forest interests that have come together to pursue a common vision for the Maine Woods. We now seek to involve the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to further strengthen this endeavor. Through a strategic and creative partnership, Keeping Maine's Forests offers an opportunity for making federal conservation and stewardship programs more relevant and cost-effective than ever before and to make the Maine Woods a model for landscape conservation.

It requires a greater federal investment in The Maine Woods which can in turn leverage state and private contributions.

The Keeping Maine's Forests initiative would greatly benefit from efforts that identify high priority conservation areas and appropriate sites for future development to ensure that conservation initiatives do not, inadvertently, preclude important opportunities for economic development necessary to maintain sustainable communities.

The implementation plan for the pilot project phase of Keeping Maine's Forests would focus on the two areas discussed above: Conserving the Forest Landscape and Enhancing Forest Stewardship (with a parallel effort undertaken on enhancing the forest-based economy and rural communities). Expertise in each subject area would be recruited to assist with development of an implementation plan. For example, a work group developing the stewardship plan might include representatives from the Cooperative Forest Research Unit, Manomet Center for Environmental Science, managers of large timber holdings including tribes, NRCS and USFWS stewardship experts, along with others.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mr. President Yes our national parks are of great concern and value to me. In August 1999 I spent a few days of my honeymoon at Yellowstone just so I could spy an wolf. It was an experience of a lifetime. Please ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe clean and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems ensure wildlife conservation maintain public access to parks and open spaces reduce the impacts of climate change and protect our cultural heritage. Strengthen the capacity for federal regional state and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife plants and rivers beyond park borders. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active healthy outdoor activity that will help them lead long healthy lives. Thank you.

I'll keep it short. Our national parks are one of the last places that I can go to seek mental physical and spiritual renewal. They are the true temples of God's own making and not man made heated and air conditioned energy hogging boxes that we call a church. The last places to walk amongst see smell hear and touch the divine. Please do all you can to help others to experience them and to save them from our selfish ways that threaten their future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Whenever I tour our great country the places which I choose to visit first are the units of the national park system. These parks provide me with substantial open spaces unmarred by damaging land uses such as grazing mining or logging activities. In order to improve the park system I urge the following improvements: The parks system should be protected and preserved according to the findings produced by the National Parks Second Century Commission respected individuals who developed a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been in existence for over 40 years yet funding is always well below the 900 million authorized. The fund must be fully funded. This program should be fully funded in order to support and protect our parks seashores forests and waterways across the country. As our population continues to increase we need more parks for people to enjoy. There are still segments of our country and history which are not yet represented within the park system. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country and protect remaining natural areas before they are lost to development. National parks often protect only portions of critical watersheds and wildlife corridors. We must provide for complete corridors in order to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and breed successfully outside as well as within park boundaries. Therefore there must be cooperation between other federal and state agencies as well as private landowners since wildlife does not understand the concept of ownership boundaries or property lines. From an economic perspective national parks are generators of local jobs. According to the recent study by the National Parks Conservation Association for every dollar of federal money invested in national parks there is a four dollar return in economic value to the public. This means that jobs are created where there are national park units. Even in 2009 a recession year visitation to the national parks increased by nearly 4 percent. Parks generate local revenue even in tough economic times. The national parks are very popular. Americans and foreign visitors travel great distances to visit them and spend substantial dollars to do so. They must be protected with adequate funding and proper protections so they are not "loved to death"

My comment regarding National Parks is that the ridiculous provision that allows people to carry loaded guns in National Parks should be reversed immediately. There is no reason why anyone needs a loaded gun in a National Park. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We love and respect our National Parks! They are a source of peace and soul restoration. They show how the Planet should be without the intrusion destruction and manipulation by humans. By setting aside these special places we have said this matters. This does not produce oil coal timber or food crops. This is only for the life forms that call it home and for those of us who appreciate the blessing to visit. We want your administration to do the following: Provide funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund! The money that belongs there has not been so directed. Provide for wildlife corridors utilizing state and federal lands. Many species are cut off by conflicting authority and land use. Encourage and support NEW parks! Once the land is used for commercial enterprise it is lost. The great minds like John Muir and Teddy Roosevelt understood the importance of these special places. As the population has soared the demand increases for quiet and restoration of mind and body. We have learned that every dollar invested in a National Park supplies four dollars of economic value to the public. One sees how the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone for example have brought millions more visitors who spend in the local stores and shops. There are many other suggestions by groups and individuals which I hope you will also consider. Bottom line: We love our Parks we need our Parks we can never have too many! They are one of the best things our country has done!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year. Your administration needs to take the following steps: ---Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew the national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Use the billion dollars in revenues from oil and gas leasing that have accumulated in the Land/Water Conservation Fund unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as needed to support parks seashores forests and waterways across the country rather than just another broken federal promise. The Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks should be classrooms for discovery and learning for all students. Programs to allow teachers from school districts to spend some classroom hours teaching Science and Conservation would excite many to volunteer help in the summers. Those who go on to College classes should use actual studies of ecology/conservation in the parks to benefit the world. Such programs could be continued year around. The Department of Education should work with the Park Service to have hands-on summer work experience. Youth/Teen Rangers will reduce the need for more full time Rangers and supply p/t jobs during the busy season. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities suburbs and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers preserve open space and develop trails and greenways. This great program is under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. Work with the Legal Systems to provide hours of Community Service for wayward youth and adults a way to learn and help at the same time as taking responsibility for their actions. Those who cannot come up with fine money for the courts might work it off in hourly park work. It works here for our community very well as kids/teens love to be in the outdoors and are learning respect responsibility for their community. All the road/sidewalk flowerbeds and tiered floral terraces in open areas and in the parks look wonderful !! --We could use more parks for people to enjoy closer to each community. The National/State Park system with assistance from the areas teachers and senior citizens might also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of their area of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. We here have the Nachusa Grasslands the kids during school classes collect seeds for reseeding. --Provide the oldest form of energy available windmills for water supply and power for parks. This is less invasive in wildlife corridors for birds animals humans than a train going through the territory or a power plant. This does not disrupt wildlife natural foods habitat or range areas. We need cooperative efforts between federal state and local agencies and private landowners because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future. Thank you for considering my comments

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I LOVE how you and your family have visited national parks as part of your vacations. The parks are an enormously important resource of our great nation and we must all work industriously to preserve them for generations to come. I support increased funding to protect these treasures of beauty and history. Thank you for all that you are doing.

Preservation NOT conservation.

Dear President Obama Allow teachers and administrators to use the great outdoors to engage students in learning. The following article is an outrage. It shows that many of the mandates coming from the Department of Education use One Size Fits All Mandates without regard for local issues and local knowledge. There is so much more to learning than test scores. Educators will stop teaching and administrating in minority ESL and poverty communities when they are penalized because social and economic factors influence test scores to a greater degree than pedagogical programs do. Articles such as the following are an outrage. This is as conservative and rigid an educational policy than I have ever heard of. PLEASE RECONSIDER. A Popular Principal Wounded by Government's Good Intentions Caleb Kenna for The New York Times By MICHAEL WINERIP Published: July 18 2010 BURLINGTON Vt. -

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family and I are cosigners of this petition to improve and support the National Park system because we believe strongly in the protection and also "enjoyment" of our national parks. As a child my first exposure to them in the 60's made lasting impressions on me as to nature the beauty of this country and protection of our precious unspoiled regions. The majesty of our National Park system is a true shining bright spot in our country and an advantage that Americans created for themselves that led the way to a worldwide movement to imitate us. Our national forests protected lands and especially the uniquely American concept of vast protect "public" land set aside just because it exists and was worthy of protection and able to add a joy to our lives that nothing else could do should not be allowed to wither. We have deplored that under the previous administration the National Park funding has been ripped apart. Parks suffer from closed facilities lack of maintenance rising fees etc. all to fund wars overseas that you were unfortunate enough to inherit and are literally starving our country's economy to the breaking point. My wife and I made decisions years ago when we married to make certain things in our own lives sacred and non-negotiable. To us the National Parks are one of those aspects of being "American" that should be funded "first" above majority of what we do otherwise which of course changes as time goes on. The parks though stay the same as they are timeless and will surely outlast our own species. We truly appreciate all you are doing to turn the tide in our country toward the future and more enlightened lives. We also appreciate how you have managed to handle the wars that you inherited from your predecessors. However there are some things that should be truly transcend other politics and even foreign policy and that is quality of life here at home. I'd be hard pressed to think of a more deserving recipient of our taxpayer dollars than our public parks forest and lands. The light in a person's eyes viewing the Grand Canyon Lower Falls on the Yellowstone River Zion National Park and any of our other great parks cannot be easily duplicated. Please as you go about the business of leading this country back to the task of fulfilling it's long held promise consider the huge role our National Parks play in what it means to be an American and to be human above all.

I never recognized how unique and invaluable our National Parks are until I traveled to Europe. Europeans everywhere I went asked me if I had ever seen the Grand Canyon or been to Arches in Utah or Yosemite or Yellowstone. Although these places are underappreciated by many Americans it is clear to me now that they bring prestige to the USA on a global scale. Every national park that I've been to has as many foreign visitors as Americans. This surprised me at first but now I realize that foreigners travel to the USA specifically to see some of the most incredible natural landscapes in the world. Since we live in a country so abundant with natural beauty Americans tend to take this for granted. However the beauty that is protected by our National Park System transcends all boundaries of race culture and time. Everyone can find peace and overwhelming beauty by visiting these areas. Please take all measures necessary to strengthen the NPS and encourage all Americans to experience these wonderful places to the fullest with minimal impact to the natural world. This is truly a place for everyone to enjoy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing to give my support to the National Park System one of the few federal bureaucracies that provides an efficient and necessary service to the American public. Although my wife and I are senior citizens and haven't attended a National Park in a few years I can remember many vacations of camping picnicing sight seeing and day use excursions with our children in the National as well as the state parks. The park system is a wholesome relatively inexpensive way for everyone to enjoy the wonders and beauty of the United States. While I want to see the National Park System kept up to date for all Americans I do not want our taxpayers to have to incur further debt to do so. Instead I would recommend that either existing stimulus funds (already earmarked for federal departments) or cuts in other areas be utilized. As a taxpayer (one of the only 50% of our citizens who pay taxes) I believe that our tax burden is already too high and will become unreasonably high when we undergo a huge income tax increase on Jan 1 2011 and the taxes you said didn't exist in the healthcare bill that hardly anyone read before passing it and the proposed cap & trade tax you want to push onto unwilling taxpayers and the myriad of other taxes that will go into effect during the next two years of your reign. President Obama the majority of Americans are not with you on the tax borrow spend and print money program you are on. If your goal is as is most progressives to enlarge government and to control as much of our lives as you can supposedly to our benefit then we are not behind you. We want a president not a dictator and we want a president who will stand up for America and who

Please fully fund the expansion of the National Park system. In Maine Acadia National Park is overflowing with its success and overused with its yearly visitor count. We need to fully support those parks closer to the east coast in comparison to the better known and larger western park system.

Due to the fiscal crisis being felt nationwide funding for our national parks and park staffing has suffered. Though not an outdoorsman myself I appreciate nature and its right to co-exist with man. I believe that priority should be given to preserve open spaces not merely national parks.

Cleaning up trails and improving National Parks would be wonderful service opportunities for the LEGIONS of your people that cannot find work because of the recession. Let's get them off the video games and outside doing something useful that everyone benefits from...Some may like it enough to pursue work in related fields!

Please support the National Parks. Fund them keep them maintained keep them in the public trust. Thank God for Teddy Roosevelt. Thank God for those who continue to support these parks. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama: I believe our National Parks deserve your administration's cultivation and protection. It's rewarding to see the varied and well thought-out directions the National Park Service hopes to pursue with your support and congressional help. The outlay of funds required to preserve and expand our parks reasonably needs to be as generous as our budget planners can possibly include each year. Nothing can replace or repair lands that have been turned over to ever more ambitious developers; you could probably see some of those effects when you and your family visited in the Asheville area this spring. I'm glad you also got to see some of the best uses we are making of our great outdoors even close to the city. It certainly hinges on leadership that is not hungry for power or dollars both public figures and thoughtful private landholders. Making this one of your presidential legacies would signal that America values ethical practices for its people and its places of beauty and renewal. Thank you for considering these thoughts.

re-establish a Civilian Conservation Corp and put unemployed guys and gals to work in our parks and on our trails. We are still benefitting from FDR's CCC back during the great depression. But include females too and have a good mix of minorities who have an especially hard time finding a job.

More funding for existing and new National Parks; much less funding for the war machine.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of the great expanses of open land upon which native americans lived which pioneer families settled which riverboats navigated; all now reduced to token national and historic parks. This is an unfortunate thing but nothing we can do anything about except to preserve what little of this heritage remains. Forget connecting Americans to these places. They are Amerca. Keep corporate enterprise out especially the British (once and for all) except as necessary to maintain the integrity of the locations. Give the casino mongers fast food dealers and trash entrepreneurs a one way ticket to China. Thank you for your attention to the real America.

I love America's National Parks Monuments and Battlefields. They are something I cherish. Last week I was at the funeral of my father-in-law at Indian Gap National Cemetery. We had a 7 hour wait for our flight from Philadelphia back to Albuquerque and spent most of it at Valley Forge. As a child my dad who was a college professor took us on vacations with National Parks at the center of each trip. I learned a great deal from ranger talks and hikes and the small learning centers at each park HQ. Some of my fondest memories are from times spent in National Parks. It is my wish that the National Park system be fully funded so every inch of each park is kept open for people to explore while protecting the land for future generations. The NPCA tells me that there are funds in the Land and Water Conservation Fund that are not spent for their intended purpose. Please remedy that problem. As a taxpayer and voter I am in favor of setting aside new lands and monuments for the National Park System. I want the history of the USA and the rich beauty of the land preserved for myself and for the future. Thank you for your time.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We NEED parks. And parks need FUNDING!

Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future. Thank you.

My comment is not really one that cites every part of this issue but I just want to say: Our National Parks are part of the pride of America. Please do not ignore this in favor of other more pressing issues. I am a senior citizen and I still want to go on a trip to see all of our national parks. I would hate to think about a United States of America not having any National Park to be proud of. And the rules should be very stringent for all of us when we visit our National Parks. We all need to help to keep these places special. Neat clean and beautiful. Rules are good even if I do not like them at the time.

Growing up in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia I grew to love national parks and relished my time spent in them. They are America's treasures. Please renew our commitment to national parks and ensure that funding is available for them. Please take into account experts' visions for national parks too. Here at the Kanawha State Forest we're concerned about a mining proposal near the forest's border so please restrict such activities.

As a regular visitor to the National Parks I want to urge you to do as much as you can to preserve these special places by providing sufficient funding for maintenance and enlarging the parks when necessary. When you commit resources to the parks you are investing in a heritage that we have in common as Americans. I hope you will support legislation that is before congress that will help us do that.

Parks are what makes America the most beautiful country in the world. please keep the parks in mind when it comes down to funding and protection from mining and off roaders. Thank you.

Please do all that you can to preserve and expand our national parks. It is so important to have wild places where animals can live out their lives free from humans. And it is important for humans to have places to go that are wild so that they can appreciate the beauty of nature....and sometimes become better human beings! I don't think guns should be allowed in National Parks and I wish our National Forests and other lands were better protected from mining ranching and all other endeavors that exploit the public lands for private profits. I think you are a good man and I am so glad you are our president. As long as you keep doing what you know in your heart is the right thing for the American people the people WILL SUPPORT YOU. May I suggest that we get some campaign finance reform passed so the Dems can stop worrying so much about fund raising and spend more time on legislating for the people?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please take action to make the necessary funds available to safeguard our National Parks. Please take care of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Please continue to preserve large areas of Public Lands & Waters to secure the health of our "eco systems" and keep them out of foreign hands. Improve opportunities to use our National Parks to get our children back to enjoying active healthy outdoor activities. They have sat in front of TV's and computers long enough. Thank you!

I would like to urge you as President of our great country to fully support our National Parks for the benefit of our people and our visitors from abroad. I personally have learned so very much about our history by visiting National Parks throughout my 36 years on earth. When I think back on my childhood and early adult life my most vivid memories are always those spent with my family at places like Ninety Six SC Castillo De San Marcos FL Fort Frederica GA Gettysburg PA ...the list goes on and on I very much appreciate our national parks and know that many many others do as well. I can think of no better place that you can spend time outdoors spend time with family and/or friends learn about history and about nature all in the same location and all for what is usually a very reasonable fee or even free (paid by taxes) As do many other people these days I have a great many friends from around the world. I have close family in South Africa and in the UK Canada and Australia and many friends in these places and others. One statement almost without fail that they have to say about our country is how very much they appreciate America's willingness to preserve historic sites. Please next time you are visiting with someone from abroad ask them what they think about our national parks...then ask their kids. I hope you have a fantastic day and will consider continuing to support and promote our national treasures which are our national parks. With love from our home to yours...

I really care about our National parks and over the years our family has gone to many. I like that the preserve the natural world places of quiet and also give us opportunities to learn more about our history. I hope you will work to preserve them. National parks seem like a wonderful place to use lots of labor if you could get that funded. They are a wonderful asset to our country. People from all over the world travel there. We have seen many different groups. Thank you for the good work you do and have done.

We just returned from a month-long road trip which included stops at several National Park sites. Whether it's a well-known site such as Yellowstone or one of the lesser-known parks the National Parks are a special collection of America's beauty and history. They provide a wonderful way for families to connect to the outdoors and cannot be overlooked by your "America's Great Outdoors" initiative. Please ensure that our National Parks get the funding and tools they need to continue to preserve and protect these very special places and history both large and small. There's nothing like returning to a National Park with your children and knowing that someday they'll be able to return with their children. Thanks for reading.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have just come back from ten days in Glacier National Park. It was truly an adventure of a lifetime. The National Parks are wonderful places to experience the grandeur and beauty of this country. They are also the best way to leave the hectic pace of our everyday lives and reflect on the things that are really important to us: our families and our country. I have been visiting the parks for almost sixty years and during that time I have been able to share with my children and my grandchildren my love for these natural wonders. They too are hooked. Please ensure that these wonderful places have the funds necessary to provide the rangers necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Also, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) should be permanently and fully funded to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Remember every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. Please also follow the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. Thank you for considering my comments.

Your efforts to get people reconnected with the great outdoors and especially our parks is an important stand. Thank you! I understand a Commission developed a plan to protect parks and connect more Americans to them. Heed their advice. Ken Burn's beautifully described "America's Best Idea" in his television special. I hope with the wonderful health care and financial reforms you have won you can also be our hero with the National Parks.....to provide permanent and mandatory funding. I understand a recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. That sounds like a winner to me. Thank you for all you are doing and for thinking about my comments.

President Obama I am an avid tree hugger by nature. Trees have always been my refuge from the insanity that surrounds me. Trees calm the discontented spirit and reconnect me with the spirit of the earth. No I am not an American Indian by birth but do feel I am by the spirit. Though I fight with many orgs. to keep our country green and clean I also disagree with some of their stances. In teaching our children; I believe we should be teaching them what is naturally available to eat and what is poisonous when we take them to our parks. Yes I do believe this should also be a "nature curriculum" (???) in our schools. I am not fully knowledgeable on this to teach but believe it should be because of our ever-impending doom to destroy ourselves. It is taught to green berets and marines etc. for survival techniques...why not our children??? As for the bridges planned for the Everglades...the NPCA does not tell us what their 'Alternative 6' agenda is but do state that they know this construction is "not viable because of challenges created for tribes in the area." I urge you to please listen to these tribal considerations. And do all you can for them to keep what they have left. And improve their situations any where you can... all across America. Northwest Indians have had their water contaminated by corporations and storage of toxins on their lands for years. They have been here longer than any of us and still are ignored. Yet they have had the knowledge to live with the earthwe should be listening to them more than we do.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is important that the recreational riding community work to make sure the federal land management agencies have adequate funding to maintain trails and recreational facilities. This includes making sure Congress knows the importance of such funding to equestrians both at the national level and from the grassroots. All recreational riders should let their elected representatives know how important adequately funding the federal land management agencies recreational programs are to them.

Form national and regional work group to move the 21st Century Conservation Corps idea forward. The work groups could include both federal and corps representatives and experts to identify specific actions that can be taken within current policy, program and budget authorities; as well as to work on making recommendations for specific changes and actions that must be taken to broaden the scope and scale of current efforts.

Develop career pathways from Corps to Career - There are both programmatic and administrative issues that can be addressed to create a more explicit career pathway from Conservation Corps into employment in natural resource management. The Conservation Corps introduce many young people of color to this employment sector; but more explicit career pathways need to be constructed to bring more young people of color into permanent federal employment. There are a number of ways this can be done:

Set an administrative priority to determine who best to include Corps experience as qualifying experience'

Develop more "second step" internship type program experiences to allow interested corps members to move into these internships roles.

Use Cooperative Agreements - The success of a 21st Century Conservation Corps requires partnerships with federal agencies that are best defined through the use of cooperative agreements to explicitly acknowledge the multiple goals resulting through partnerships with corps accomplishing the needed work while developing the youth participants. This process needs to be streamlined to more quickly solidify partnerships. (This issue was well-covered at the listening sessions in California- and is a significant barrier if not addressed.)

Establish a pilot landscape conservation and restoration program that focuses on landscape-level conservation, restoration, and maintenance of working lands. Accomplish this by broadening the application of current administrative authorities and programs while redirecting budget priorities. Two of these pilot programs should be Crown of the Continent and Chesapeake Bay.

Propose new legislation, modeled after the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, to protect natural values such as biodiversity on critical non-federal lands near and adjacent to national parks. The legislation should include conservation incentives for private landowners within these "heritage areas."

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Administration should require federal agencies to integrate climate change adaptation science into decision making. Agencies should collaborate in developing a science-based national strategy, to be applied within individual agency plans, that minimizes adverse impacts from climate change on natural resources. Departments and agencies must shift budgeting to prioritize these efforts.

Federal agencies with responsibilities in a shared ecosystem should be required to manage collaboratively to preserve the health of lands, waters, and wildlife. The Administration should provide standards based on ecosystem principles for resource management agencies. Encourage restoration of key species on federal lands within their native range.

Update the National Park Service's "criteria for national significance" to recognize the ecological value of "restoration areas" in which national park units play a role. Focus resources on restoring degraded lands and waters while creating jobs in ecologically significant landscapes such as Chesapeake Bay.

Issue a Solicitor's Opinion that clarifies the provision of The Redwoods Act which states that agencies may not take actions that degrade the resources and values for which a park has been established. Clarify that this provision applies to agency actions occurring outside, as well as inside, park boundaries.

Create a small grants and technical assistance program, administered by the National Park Service, to support collaborative conservation efforts designed to restore healthy landscapes and provide recreational and educational opportunities in and around national parks.

Conservation has been practiced for many decades and preached for many more, yet only in recent years has it become plain that we cannot afford to conserve in a haphazard or piecemeal manner. No part of our conservation program can be slighted if we want to make full use of our resources and have full protection against future emergencies.

President Harry S. Truman

Yet, as the National Parks Second Century Commission found, our country is barely scratching the surface of our national parks' tremendous potential. Using the substantial contributions that parks already make as a springboard to achieving its aims, the America's Great Outdoors initiative (AGO) can foster a legacy that connects all Americans with the rich heritage that national parks represent.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yet, as the National Parks Second Century Commission found, our country is barely scratching the surface of our national parks' tremendous potential. Using the substantial contributions that parks already make as a springboard to achieving its aims, the America's Great Outdoors initiative (AGO) can foster a legacy that connects all Americans with the rich heritage that national parks represent.

53% Associate national parks with America's Great Outdoors, before learning anything about the initiative. 80% Believe national parks should be the centerpiece (43%) or an important focus (37%) of the initiative. 88% Say it is "extremely important" (69%) or "quite important" (19%) to protect and support major parks such as Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and the Everglades—despite concerns about the current economic situation and the federal budget.

National parks must receive additional funds in order to meet AGO's educational, recreational, and collaborative goals.

The America's Great Outdoors initiative must include the funding necessary for national parks to contribute fully.

The President's budget must call for more funding for park operations. Operational funding should be increased by \$100 million over fixed costs each year until the operating shortfall is eliminated.

Provide full, permanent annual funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (\$900 million) and Historic Preservation Fund (\$150 million). Full funding should come from non-discretionary resources, not be provided at the expense of park operations and critical natural and cultural resource programs.

Additional capacity can unlock the Park Service's full ability to support collaborative conservation and community-based projects.

Expand programs that enhance and build an appreciation for our national heritage in communities outside national park units. Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance should receive three successive increases of \$5 million, to bring the total program allocation to \$24 million within three years. The Underground Railroad Network to Freedom should receive its fully authorized amount of \$2.5 million.

Launch a new multi-year public-private partnership that leverages non-federal dollars by committing federal matching funds of \$100 million per year, building on lessons learned from the Centennial Challenge, together with a campaign to further connect Americans with their national parks and restore the parks for their next 100 years.

National parks should be leaders in connecting youth, schools, and communities with the great outdoors.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Whether it is the science of climate change at Glacier National Park, the technological breakthroughs of the Wright Brothers, the engineering advances at the St. Louis Arch, or the trajectory calculations of Civil War projectiles at Gettysburg, there are strong intersections with the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) disciplines in our national parks. Generous private sector contributions significantly support STEM learning, and national parks need to be better positioned to attract more of that funding to engage teachers and students in learning based on America's most compelling natural and engineered wonders.

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and Department of Education should develop a strategy for connecting schools with experiential, place-based learning opportunities in national parks, modeled after successful park-based initiatives.

Harness the interest of the private sector to help national parks use new technology to reach and interact with a wider range of the American public, especially youth. This could be a focus of the public-private partnership proposed in recommendation #1b above.

Working with community-based organizations, educational institutes, park "friends" groups, cooperating associations, and community service leaders, identify and disseminate best practices in service learning, particularly for youth from underserved areas and populations.

Make national parks a consistent option in American education with changes in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), including provisions related to eligible partners, teacher training, and civic education.

Expand and enhance the National Park System.

Expand the National Park System to better reflect the diversity of America, create more accessible recreational opportunities, and better connect parks to surrounding ecosystems on which park wildlife depend.

Establish a task force to map out a national strategy that identifies areas critical to preserving America's natural and cultural heritage, and provides widespread access to the outdoors and to activities, education, and work related to the outdoors and conservation. Restore National Park Service authority, staffing, and funding to develop a strategic plan for growth and a set of criteria for expanding the National Park System, following the guidance of the National Parks Second Century Commission.

Use the President's authority under the Antiquities Act to designate new national monuments under National Park Service management to preserve natural areas and better represent important cultural themes.

Integrate national parks into a larger landscape of conservation, restoration, and recreation areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Implement the 21st Century Conservation Corps (21CCC) by leveraging the experience, expertise and scope of the national network of existing Conservation Corps/SCA where the federal government plays a coordinating/project management role and the partner organizations mobilize the young people and operate the programs

Use of cooperative agreements: The federal land management agencies should implement the 21st Century Conservation Corps through partnerships with the existing infrastructure of non-profit and local/state government organizations such as Conservation Corps/SCA that have significant experience engaging young people in public lands service. To do so, agencies should use 'cooperative agreements' versus 'contracts' to purposefully acknowledge that youth service activities involve more than just completing the work, but also engaging and educating youth, instilling work and life skills, and orienting youth to public service careers.

Public Lands Service Corps Act (PLSCA). The full House and the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee have already passed the PLSCA. Once passed by Congress and signed into law hopefully this session the Administration should request and Congress should grant a full appropriation. The PLSCA and, if it is not funded, its predecessor the Public Lands Corps Act provide a legislative vehicle for funding the 21st Century Conservation Corps.

The Department of Labor can target portions of its WIA funding towards work projects on public lands.

The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs can designate funding to engage younger Veterans in conservation projects on public lands.

The Corporation for National and Community Service should ensure that the public lands portions of the Serve America Act are featured prominently in its strategic plan and in its grant making.

Build ecosystem resilience in order to limit or eliminate non-climate stressors so that species have a chance to survive in a climate changed environment.

Reduce timber cutting intensities: (1) Limit logging levels on the ONF, MBS NF, and O-W NF to no more than those prescribed in the Pacific Northwest Forest Plan of 1994; (2) Limit logging within the OESF and other State lands in terms of both extent (acres committed to cutting) and intensity (maximize rotation age) as well as to ensure consistency with the marbled murrelet recovery plan and other critical habitat requirements on the OESF.

Reduce the size of the existing road system: (1) Fully implement Legacy Roads Removal Initiative (LRRRI) and other funding sources on national forest land to permanently close and obliterate roads; (2) Construct no new roads on any ownership. Ensure existing culverts allow fish passage.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Limit mining to valid existing activity. Abandoned mines do continue to produce toxic effluent (arsenic and heavy metals) that require expensive clean up at significant federal expense. An example is the Rainy Prospect in Quartz Creek of the MBS NF where a June 2008 report studied the clean-up costs for this mine as a Superfund site under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).²⁶ The estimated cost for the recommended alternative is over \$500,000.

Limit energy development, including run-of-river hydroelectric projects, that impact fish, river values, recreational and other riparian values.

Decrease off-road vehicle use to the maximum extent practicable. On the westside Cascades, limit use to existing levels of activity to prevent further damage to vegetation and water quality. However, on the eastside, where most ORV activity takes place in the region, reduce ORV use to levels that will lower resource damage and user conflict by conducting formal, scientific studies to define the impacts of motorized recreational uses on wildlife and other values for both the summer and winter time periods. The Travel Management Plan (TMP) ought to require scientific studies of impact.

Limit conversions of coastal areas, waterways, and forested lands to development because of the impacts on habitat resilience. Do not allow private forest land in the Teanaway area of the O-W NF to be converted from forestry uses to residential developments.

Support the revision on Shoreline Management Act local (county level) management plans to ensure that they incorporate climate change and adaption elements.

Identify and implement key elements in the Puget Sound Partnership Action Plan that reflect climate change.

Implement recovery plan for all ESA listed species (Orca, Salmon, Rock fish, etc.).

Address the multi-year restoration effort that will be vital to restoring sensitive coastal wetlands, fisheries, and rebuilding the economy of the Gulf in wake of the BP oil spill disaster

Ensure that existing and proposed Gulf restoration plans and protection efforts are integrated to reflect climate change adaptations and prioritize non-structural and ecosystem based approaches

Incorporate adaptive management for reassessment of projects and plans currently underway in regards to restoration

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Establish an independent, third party team of scientists and technical experts to conduct short and long term sampling, monitoring, and analysis to help establish sound science for an effective ecosystem restoration effort

Protect, clean up, and restore wetlands and barrier islands along the Gulf Coast to provide resilient habitats and protect coastal communities

Restore and protect wetland and cypress swamps, including the Bayou Bienvenue Wetland Triangle, offering storm protection, recreation, and natural beauty

Set aside marine protected areas in the Gulf of Mexico to enable recovery of overfished species

Secure funds to purchase 10,000 acres of coastal cypress forests in Louisiana

Secure initial funds for lands acquisition and ecosystem restoration of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Canal

Obtain funds to protect 10,000 acres in the Pearl River and Pascagoula River Basins and buy off federal leases within the Gulf Islands National Seashore

Limit the application of dispersants used in the Gulf and direct a portion of the fines and penalties BP is responsible for to research and document the short and long term impacts of the oil/dispersant mix on endangered and threatened species and habitats

Block new offshore oil and gas leasing in the Gulf of Mexico

Ensure that extractive industries replace, and or restore impacted landscapes and resources

Direct a portion of offshore royalties to Gulf States to support restoration projects

Work for the reintroduction of extirpated species (aquatic and terrestrial) and develop ecologically effective populations of strongly interactive species such as beaver, prairie dogs, tasseled-eared squirrels, mountain lions, and were feasible, wolves.

Work for the development of an effective, revised ESA recovery plans for condors and native fish species.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increase coordination across the several land mgmt agencies (NF, NP, State, municipal, and tribal lands) to improve daily management and to facilitate major planning efforts

Develop science-based blueprints for building resilient habitats and natural systems carbon sequestration.

Management decisions at all levels are expected to include strong science-based, documented rationale

Control pests or disease, may be appropriate in certain circumstances based on the best available science as noted in bullet above

Update national park management plans so that they include climate change features.

Expand existing core areas on Federal lands Maximize protection on Federal lands-eight national monuments, six national forests, thirty-two wilderness areas, and six national parks.

Strengthen natural systems to safeguard communities from climate change.

Provide interim protection for six national forests citizen's proposed wilderness areas:

Dixie National Forest: 55 units (1,196,000 acres)

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests 43 units (370,000 acres)

Manti-La Sal National Forest: 49 units (983,800 acres)

Fishlake National Forest: 43 units (1,146,000 acres)

Coconino National Forest: 11 units (93,800 acres)

Kaibab National Forest: 5 units (60,000 acres)

Seek passage of the nine-million-acre America's Redrock Wilderness Act.

Seek special designation (NCA or National Monument) for the North Kaibab and adjacent areas.

Retain roadless/undeveloped land in undeveloped condition.

Protect and restore the ecological function of wildlife corridors across the landscape; including the Kaibab-Paunsagunt, Utah High Plateaus, Zion-Markagunt, Pine Valley-Zion, Mogollon Rim, East and West Tavaputs and the Abajo-La Sal wildlife linkages.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect and restore springs and wetlands through land use management planning opportunities.

Protect and restore native species in natural patterns of abundance and distribution through agency land management planning and wildlife recovery efforts.

Pursue revision of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan for effective recovery of the species throughout suitable habitat within the ecoregion

Pursue Wild and Scenic River designations for all eligible and suitable rivers.

Build ecosystem resilience in order to limit or eliminate non-climate stressors so that species have a chance to survive in a climate changed environment.

Protect and restore old growth forests

Reduce the size of the existing road system through the Travel Management Planning Process and other forest planning opportunities.

Protect the Grand Canyon watershed from uranium mining through permanent mineral withdrawal for Kanab Creek, Kaibab-Paunsaugunt wildlife Corridor, House Rock Valley, and the Tusayan Ranger District (Kaibab National Forest)

Work to ensure that the O-W NF forest plan update (in progress) includes climate change features. Monitor that the MBS NF and ONF will also follow suit when their forest plans are updated

Expand existing core areas on Federal lands-Olympic Peninsula:22 As a result of intensive work done on the Olympic Peninsula, we are proposing to maximize the protection on Federal lands for climate change, i.e. Olympic National Forest (ONF) and Olympic National Park (ONP). It is hoped the Administration would actively support these efforts.

Retain all roadless and other undeveloped land in an undeveloped state. Add 134,000 acres of Wilderness on ONF by expanding existing units and adding new units. These areas are intended to maximize the inclusion of old growth forests.

Expand Olympic National Park (ONP) by 38,000 acres on a willing seller basis

Protect aquatic values by designating about 400 miles of wild and scenic rivers on Federal and other public land.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Expand existing core areas on Federal lands-North Cascades:23 There is a need to maximize protection on Federal lands that include Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (O-W NF), Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (MBS NF) and The North Cascades National Park Complex [National Parks and National Recreation Areas] (NCNP) and Mt Rainier National Park.

Retain the 1,700,000 roadless and unroaded acres in an undeveloped state. Designate the majority of these areas as Wilderness by expanding existing units and creating new units. Maximize inclusion of old growth forest that will also maximize carbon sequestration.

Designate a 22,000 acres Addition to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness in the MBS NF as defined in existing legislation (HR.1769 and S.721).

Maximize the inclusion of threatened and endangered species habitat, particularly including salmon habitat

Expand North Cascades National Park (NCNP)

Protect aquatic values by designating all eligible wild and scenic rivers on Federal and other public land.

Designate Illabot Creek as a wild and scenic river on the MBS NF as defined in existing legislation.

Create corridors that link 'snowcaps to Puget Sound' so as to focus on lower elevation habitats

On Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF) and other State lands, for example, Loomis, Loup Loup and Naneum State Forests managed by the WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to: (1) Maximize protection of remaining old growth and mature forest for threatened, endangered, and other sensitive species; (2) Recognize resource values other than timber with appropriate daily management direction; (3) Create new Natural Resource Conservation Areas (NRCA's-equivalent to State Wilderness system) on State lands to maintain or improve habitat resilience.

Extend State forest land ownership where private forest lands are threatened with conversion to non-forest uses. Use fee title and conservation easement tools for conservation. Support Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to raise the bar on ecological protection of both State and private land.

Work with US FWS and DNR, to establish and implement a marbled murrelet recovery plan on State forest land.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect all corridors to maximize the movement of North Cascades wildlife across the I-90 corridor and the US 2 Corridor and other relevant corridors by (1) acquiring non-federal lands with high wildlife habitat values and adding to the appropriate NF; (2) Retain and expand management direction of the Northwest Forest Plan on all three NF's within this eco-region;

Manage Federal lands to maximize wildlife habitat productivity by reducing the road system as well as scheduled timber cutting;

Prevent the transfer of other public lands to private entities where future development would adversely effect wildlife;

Identify and protect corridors between significant blocks of federal and other public lands where wildlife movements now exist and for future movements in a climate change environment. These corridors are being identified in State agency connectivity studies.

In crafting a 21st century strategy for large landscape conservation, the Sierra Club strongly urges the America's Great Outdoors initiative to:

safeguard our public lands and other habitats from the impacts of climate change by adopting climate-smart management policies for all our federal lands and limiting non-climate stressors like logging, off road vehicle abuse, and energy development. Also give states, tribes, and private landowners the support and incentives they need to more fully incorporate their lands into integrated large landscape conservation programs;

protect large core areas of wilderness and other protected areas and connecting corridors that give species the space and connectivity necessary to adapt as the climate change;

require federal agencies to manage public lands to maximize natural systems carbon sequestration by protecting public forests, wetlands, coasts and grasslands and reducing or eliminating activities that disturb the soil. Provide incentives to states, tribes, and private landowners to protect their forests, open space and farmlands to store carbon and simultaneously preserve wildlife habitats.

prioritize efforts to reconnect children and youth with the natural world and the great outdoors.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In an era of climate change, not only must we be thinking about managing our lands differently, we must think about protecting lands differently. The old model of drawing lines on a map and protecting an area is not sufficient for a warming world. Certain species of plants and wildlife have begun migrating further north and higher in elevation, numbers of caribou, moose, and bighorn sheep are dwindling in some areas, and fish kills resulting from rising water temperatures are becoming more common. It is the job of land, water and wildlife management agencies to anticipate and react to these changes and determine which areas will become vital habitat in the future. The agencies must then actively work to secure protections for these habitats to give fish and wildlife all the help they can adapting to a changing world.

We need to aggressively implement climate smart management solutions on our public lands.

This is not to suggest that all is lost. What it does mean, however, is that safeguarding America's Great Outdoors in this new era requires the inclusion of new and different management approaches to conservation. The importance of this task should not be underplayed.

To safeguard America's Great Outdoors resource planning processes and resource management plans themselves should include the conduct of resource vulnerability assessments and identify specific management actions that conserve the best remaining fish, wildlife and native plant populations, increase population size and habitat in isolated populations, reduce outside habitat stressors, conserve and reconnect core and other crucial habitats and restore migratory life histories.

President Eisenhower established the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge – then referred to as the Arctic National Wildlife Range – on December 6, 1960. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this historic occasion, we should honor the region's natural and cultural values by working to ensure that future generations will be able to experience and enjoy them too. As a step towards more permanent protections, the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge should be designated as a National Monument and the area should be permanently withdrawn from oil and gas leasing.

In addition to naming new National Monuments, land and resource management agencies should be given the necessary encouragement and tools to improve their efforts to conserve and reconnect core and other crucial habitats and restore migratory life histories.

The health of the patchwork of federal, state, tribal and private lands that make up America's outdoor heritage requires maintaining and restoring connectivity to allow wildlife to maintain their established migration patterns and disperse in response to changing landscape conditions brought about by climate change. Implementing and enacting policies that give wildlife this freedom to roam is essential to successfully accomplishing the intent of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Between them, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management oversee close to 195 million acres of forested lands. Around 49 million acres of these lands are carbon rich forests that are more than 100 years old but lack permanent legislative or executive branch protection (many of these forests enjoy administrative protection under the Roadless Rule which governs the national forests. But this rule is under legal challenge and has been undermined by the previous Administration, demonstrating its lack of permanence).

As the U.S. asks other countries to stop degrading their carbon rich forests we need to demonstrate leadership and should apply the same rules to our federal forests here at home. Though the U.S. is not now proposing extensive logging of older public forests, these valuable carbon stores could be cut and lost in the future under current management direction. To ensure that we do not undermine climate mitigation strategies and to lead by example on the global stage, we must immediately safeguard the carbon storage value of these older forests by taking decisive action now.

Conduct of vulnerability assessments will empower and inform land managers to: Identify those species and habitats most likely to be in need of management actions to mitigate the impacts of climate change; develop adaptation strategies tailored for those species and habitats in greatest need; foster collaboration with other agencies and organizations to develop and provide a shared understanding of impacts and management options; and, target scarce resources in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Stop new offshore oil and gas leasing and development in areas previously not leased or drilled: the eastern Gulf of Mexico, off the coast of Alaska, and the Pacific and Atlantic coasts.

Designate some of our most vulnerable and special places, such as the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, as National Monuments.

Actively support full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the federal government's primary tool to fund land acquisition.

Submit relevant Wilderness recommendations to Congress and support the passage of legislation to designate new Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers

Issue an Executive Order directing land management agencies to revise policies that hamper Wilderness reviews. Specifically, rescind the existing "No More Wilderness" policy within the Bureau of Land Management and extend immediate Wilderness Study Area protections to BLM lands with wilderness character. Also, adjust the Forest Service FSM criteria for defining 'what is roadless' so as to expand the potential reservoir of lands available for Wilderness recommendations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Develop and implement a clear regulatory framework that reinstates strong federal protection for wetland habitats by rescinding existing guidance (post-Rapanos case decision) and restoring guidance that better protects isolated wetlands and small streams in a manner consistent with recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

Issue guidance for implementing the June 15, 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Energy "[R]egarding coordination among federal agencies and states in identification and uniform mapping of wildlife corridors and crucial habitat.

Uphold and strengthen the Roadless Rule for national forests and lift the Tongass National Forest exemption.

Adopt and implement strong new Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management planning rules that incorporate climate-smart management, including directives to protect core areas, establish corridors, and reducing non-climate stressors.

Propose rule making by the Department of Transportation that facilitates the construction of wildlife crossings as part of federally funded transportation projects where appropriate.

Establish a national carbon trust to protect old growth forests and other carbon rich ecosystems.

Applying the right programs in the right places, and developing new conservation curriculums can simultaneously support more sustainable rural economies that create jobs producing the food and protecting the natural resources that America needs. These programs can also ensure that fish, wildlife and the recreation that depends on them can adjust and prosper in a warmer world.

Lower elevation areas provide the crucial winter range, transitional habitat, wetlands and riparian areas utilized by many of America's wildlife species and these areas are dominated by private landholdings. In fact, almost 60 percent of forest lands in the United States are privately owned⁶ more than 900 million acres of agricultural lands, 39 percent of America's land area, cover our national landscape approximately half of species managed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act have at least 80 percent of their habitat on private lands⁸ riparian areas, while estimated at less than 1 percent of ecosystems in the western United States, provide habitat for approximately 80 percent of native wildlife species at some point in their life cycle. support passage of the Community Forestry Act to allow the retention of private forest lands in forest uses.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support and promote comprehensive conservation tax incentives legislation. Several existing tax incentives fail to reach all potential beneficiaries because of various limits.

Permanently authorize the conservation tax incentives, enacted for 2 years in the 2008 Farm Bill.

Expand the adjusted gross income (AGI) deductibility cap to 100 per cent for donations of conservation easements on lands enrolled in state recreational access programs; and donations of access easements (long term) or agreements (short term).

Classify lands used as hunting and fishing leases and clubs in the same manner as working farms and ranches to allow them to qualify for the current 100 per cent AGI deduction allowance.

Increase the carry forward period from 5 to 15 years for donations of access easements, thereby providing a more valuable tax cut for landowners.

Establish a more consistent approach for valuing land associated with tax breaks. For example: A wetlands area of high conservation value may be deemed "worthless" for real-estate development and therefore unrecognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as the basis for a tax incentive.

Support and promote an Upland Conservation Act. Such legislation would provide a companion law to the North American Wetlands Conservation Act by coordinating upland wildlife conservation the way NAWCA does for wetlands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Issue updates to the timing and amount of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payment rates. The Farm Bill governs how CRP payment rates rise or fall based on market information. The Administration should support and promote policy that utilizes these provisions to encourage additional conservation and recreational access by:

Increasing the rental payments to CRP enrollees who donate or sell recreational access easements on their CRP lands, enter into access agreements, or enroll their lands in a state recreational access program.

Promoting and supporting added incentives to programs like CRP and conservation easements to encourage landowners to allow public recreational access on their lands.

Reviewing CRP rental rates on a more frequent basis to ensure competitiveness with alternative uses.

Considering new incentives for keeping properties with the best wildlife habitat enrolled in the CRP program.

Providing incentives to maintain the continuity of large landscapes; for example, by creating conservation co-ops to manage lands divested by timber companies and other large landholders.

Create programs that identify lands and important wildlife habitat that are at risk of fragmentation due to future estate tax liabilities and place them in easements or conservation programs that can keep the lands intact and maintain their importance to wildlife

Provide expanded conservation and recreational tax incentives, exemptions and transferable credits that could be enacted in the years remaining before the inheritance tax expires (i.e., allow reappraisal of easement and exempt increased value, if any, from the inheritance tax).

Support and promote policies that reduce landowner liability for providing recreational access to their land.

Create and implement marketing strategies to better communicate the availability of existing programs designed to provide educational outreach and technical assistance for private landowners.

As part of the America's Great Outdoors initiative we urge the Administration to coordinate and expand efforts to eliminate Nature Deficit Disorder among children, youth and the general public by removing barriers that prevent them from experiencing the great outdoors and providing incentives and safe access to enjoy the natural world.

Establish a multi-agency coordinating council with representation from agencies overseeing public lands, health, education, transportation, infrastructure, environment and related sectors, the White House and the First Lady's Let's Move campaign

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Establish an advisory board for the coordinating council comprised of leading organizations, business and youth leaders from the above sectors and representing diverse constituencies working to connect children and youth with the natural world

Support passage of the Moving Outdoors in Nature Act (as included in the Healthy CHOICES Act (HR 5209) and/or stand-alone legislation) to support national and state level strategies that connect children with the great outdoors through multi-sector policies

Support and provide incentives for greening initiatives in and around urban, suburban and rural areas, like community and rooftop gardens, schoolyard habitats and natural playgrounds.

Eliminate park deserts where they exist and improve the safety and attractiveness of parks.

Coordinate with planning and transportation agencies at all levels to establish green and safe routes, including walking and bicycling paths, to parks and natural spaces from the places where children and youth spend the bulk of their time, including schools, libraries, public transportation stations, community centers and places of worship.

Extend public transportation routes to visit outdoor spaces within and outside of our urban centers to make the "great outdoors" more accessible to an increasingly urban population.

Support staff positions in urban, suburban and rural parks to develop programming and facilitate partnerships with schools, non-profits and other youth-serving entities capable of bringing children and youth to the parks

Tailor solutions to a changing world where many parents no longer have the time or know-how to feel comfortable taking their children into the great outdoors. Look to the Children & Nature Network's Nature Family Clubs as a model.

Partner with schools, non-profit organizations and other youth-serving entities that are both trusted by parents and capable of providing youth with meaningful and safe outdoor experiences

Coordinate with transportation agencies at all levels to provide incentives for schools, non-profit organizations and other youth-serving entities to visit our National Parks, Forests and other public lands

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increase funding across agencies to administer programs to improve and increase participation in education, recreation and service opportunities on public lands with an emphasis on engaging children and youth from communities traditionally underrepresented in the great outdoors

Expand and improve the visibility of career ladder opportunities for youth across agencies including internship and mentorship programs, entry level jobs and career opportunities, and an easy to navigate jobs portal for youth interested in an outdoor career path.

Better coordinate the dissemination of internship, mentorship and career opportunities with schools, non-profit and other youth-serving entities that can help with recruitment.

Support passage of the Public Lands Service Corps Act (HR 1612; S 1442) and similar legislative initiatives to expand the Conservation Corps to put young people to work in the great outdoors, address the backlog of critical maintenance projects building up on our public lands, and prepare America's treasured landscapes to be resilient in the face of climate change.

Coordinate with transportation and planning agencies at all levels to put young people to work building the critical infrastructure needed in our urban environments to connect parks and natural spaces with schools, community centers and other places where children, youth and families spend their time

Continue creating opportunities like America's Great Outdoors that give youth a voice in discussions about their future and their world and ensure that youth suggestions are given ample weight in the report. Establish a youth council to advise the administration on issues pertaining to youth and the outdoors to elicit ongoing participation.

Design targeted media and marketing campaigns to make the great outdoors relevant to underrepresented populations, including children, youth and their parents, and communities of color. Engage non-profit and corporate partners working directly with youth and underrepresented populations to develop and increase the visibility of the campaigns.

Identify and engage appropriate role models particularly in communities of color, to inspire young people, diverse populations and other underrepresented communities to get outdoors and develop Public Service Announcements aimed at making the outdoors relevant. Partner with celebrities and athletes that can help carry the message

Ensure outreach initiatives integrate 21st Century communications tools, including social media, and are designed to reach their desired target populations; one size will not fit all

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support schools, non-profits and other youth-serving entities that are working directly with underrepresented populations

Engage the public health community to conduct studies of national significance on the various health impacts that outdoor play, programming and green infrastructure have on children and youth. Support passage of the Moving Outdoors in Nature Act (as included in the Healthy CHOICES Act (HR 5209) and/or stand-alone legislation) which would authorize the Centers for Disease Control to conduct a study of national significance on the health impacts of outdoor programming.

Engage the education sector to determine to what extent education in the outdoors improves academic performance and willingness to learn. Support passage of the No Child Left Inside Act (HR 2054; S 866) which authorizes studies of national significance on the academic and behavioral impacts of outdoor learning.

Support and invest in federal and private sector research to determine societal impacts of outdoor time on children and youth and to identify best practices to improve infrastructure, programming, outreach and engagement that leads to greater connections to the natural world.

Disseminate findings of key research to decision-makers, stakeholders and the general public to build more support for programs and infrastructure that connect youth with green spaces in their communities and the great outdoors.

Leverage funding streams to support coordinated inter-agency research on children, youth and the great outdoors.

Prevent development of key coastal lands and habitats and build resilient habitats principles into all management plans for parks, refuges, and forests.

Work with coastal communities to help restore nature as a primary means of protecting community infrastructure from climate change and sea level rise.

Generate funding and support for acquisition of key lands to establish Vermillion State Park in Minnesota. Stop proposed sulfide mine near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness on the Superior National Forest

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Improve all the Sierra Nevada national forest management plans to address climate change and create resilient habitats by protecting large landscapes, implementing climate smart management techniques, and reducing stressors. Adopt a Giant Sequoia National Monument Management Plan that eliminates logging and manages the monument like the adjacent Sequoia National Park. Stop the clear cutting and habitat destruction by Sierra Pacific Industries in the Sierra foothills

More than 85 per cent of the region's forest lands are privately owned, with a rapidly increasing threat of fragmentation and development. The sheer size of the current forested landscape provides a unique opportunity to practice conservation in way that enhances the resiliency of key habitats across the region to lessen the impacts of climate change. In order for a comprehensive forest conservation program to succeed, it must encompass the broad mosaic of private, state, federal and tribal lands and waters. It will also require partnerships between federal, state and tribal agencies and private interests to acquire key habitat areas, obtain conservation easements and promote land stewardship incentives.

Update recovery plans for Canada lynx, Atlantic salmon and other species managed under the Endangered Species Act to better account for management needs in a changing climate.

Support expansion of the Silvio Conte National Wildlife Refuge in Vermont to connect with the important watershed of the Connecticut Lakes/Connecticut River.

Support expansion of the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge to encompass identified priority wildlife habitats in Northeastern New Hampshire and Western Maine.

Provide financial and technical assistance to efforts to safeguard lands comprising the Adirondack / Tug Hill habitat corridor

Administratively protect all remaining roadless areas on the Green and White Mountain national Forests

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund so that key habitats can be acquired from willing sellers.

Issue a Presidential Proclamation that recognizes the region as being nationally significant in efforts to address climate change because of its habitat and carbon sequestration values.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Building on the efforts of the Arctic Landscape Conservation Cooperative and the Arctic Climate Center create a science based blueprint for increasing the resiliency of habitats and sequestering carbon region-wide and to drive agency management and habitat acquisition decisions. This plan should help prioritize the most important areas to focus on for limiting non-climate stressors such as oil and gas drilling or mining.

Limit non-climate stressors through various land and resource management plans including: Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan; The National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPRA) Area Wide Plan; The Gates of the Arctic National Park Resource Management Plan

Issue an administrative minerals withdrawal for the areas in and around Teshekpuk Lake, located in the NPRA;

Provide administrative protection for the Utukok Uplands special area, Teshekpuk Lake, Deese Inlet and Coleville River within the NPRA, from the exploration and development of coal resources;

Safeguard the Arctic coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by designating it a national monument and withdrawing the area permanently from mineral development.

Rewrite the 5-year plan for offshore oil and gas exploration to prohibit new leasing and drilling in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas.

Encourage the DOI to provide leadership in developing planning models for various agencies on a new approach to land management that takes climate change into account.

Increase monitoring to assess how species respond to climate change and management interventions.

Work with DOI to educate the public and lead a cultural shift in how we view land management in this new era. Examples of land management practices include: Ecologically based habitat manipulation (such as prescribed burning), captive breeding and reintroduction, and control of pests or disease

Incorporate climate change planning, resilient habitats, and adaptation into new and on-the-ground direction in State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPS)
o The SWAPS will be updated in 2011, which presents a key opportunity to see that it focuses funding for acquisition of lands and conservation easements and prioritizes corridor protection, connectivity, and habitat protection in light of changing climate.

Continue to address the effects of climate change in national forest plan revisions similar to plans for the Bridger-Teton National Forest, Shoshone National Forest, and Pinedale Bureau of Land Management draft management plans

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Work with private landowners to help bridge vital connective corridors between large landscapes in the region

Incorporate planning to take a more comprehensive approach to protect corridors and connectivity areas as part of the planning process since important state and private forest lands adjoin or are intermingled with each other

Protect large areas of wildlands and surrounding buffer areas which are linked to other core areas by protected corridors, allowing species to move to more hospitable habitats as the climate changes, thereby increasing their chances of survival.

Increase the amount of protected lands and provide stronger protections for surrounding areas such as Grays Lake Wildlife Refuge in southeast Idaho

Create new or expand existing wilderness areas like the Palisades WSA

Retire oil and gas leases on surrounding areas like Centennial Range.

Limit human induced stressors on an ecosystem that increase the threat of species extinction including habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, invasive species, and over harvest

Control other non-climate stressors including ill-conceived development, ill-conceived and non-coordinated management plans for wolves, unnecessary human caused deaths of grizzlies, overgrazing, mining, logging, and off-road vehicle abuse

Work with the Forest Service and others in on Bear Aware programs.

Work with the DOI and others to move our nation beyond harmful fossil fuels that contribute to the loss of white bark pine and other critical habitat

Remove exotic plant and animal species from the Everglades and other Florida land and waters.

Work for the reintroduction of Florida Panthers north of the Caloosahatchee River so their connected habitat will be protected from the Everglades to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in south Georgia

Work for the designation of critical habitat for the Florida Panther and revise the USFWS recovery plan accordingly so it protects both existing occupied habitat in the Everglades, and connected habitat to the north as described above.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Update national park management plans (Everglades, Dry Tortugas, Biscayne and Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary) so that they include climate change features.

Create storm water treatment areas and storage areas in the central Everglades to restore natural flow to the River of Grass.

Elevate Tamiami Trail across a minimum of 6.5 miles in the southern Everglades and remove existing canals wherever possible to allow the continued flow of the River of Grass to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay, thereby restoring sediment buildup and resilience to rising sea levels.

Work to ensure that plan updates for the Apalachicola, Osceola and Ocala National Forests include climate change features.

Protect and restore existing wetlands and expand the spatial extent of the Everglades as a means to increase carbon sequestration.

Prohibit new development on coastal barrier islands and encourage restoration of mangroves, beach dunes and other features which protect coastal areas from rising sea levels and increased tropical storm activity due to climate change.

Prioritize protection of coral reefs and reef fish species in Biscayne Bay and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary which are imperiled by the double threat of climate change and pollution impacts.

Provide an adequate and reliable source of public funding for Everglades restoration and the creation of protected wildlife corridors and marine protected areas.

Assist the State of Florida in its efforts to acquire 180,000 acres of U.S. Sugar's farmland in the Everglades Agricultural Area and restore most of this land to natural wetlands.

Expand the Florida Panther's habitat north of the Caloosahatchee River

Work with State and local governments and private land trusts to develop a longterm funding and land acquisition plan to create large, contiguous wildlife corridors in south-central Florida for the recovery of the Florida Panther, Florida Black Bear, Sherman's Fox Squirrel and other endangered species. Such corridors should fill in gaps to connect existing blocks of federal, state and other public lands to maximize movement and migration of wildlife in response to anticipated climate change impacts. The coordination should include a component related to crafting appropriate management plans and long-term management mechanisms and arrangements for monitoring and enforcement.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Preserve agricultural land surrounding wildlife corridors as a means to create buffers limiting urban encroachment on protected areas and endangered species.

Set aside marine protected areas in the Gulf of Mexico to enable recovery of overfished species.

Coordinate land purchases through the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other federal programs with targeted lands in the State of Florida's Environmental Lands Acquisition Program.

Set final numeric nutrient standards for nitrogen and phosphorus in Florida's lakes, rivers, streams, springs, canals and coastal waters (as proposed by EPA).

Prohibit new recreational off road vehicle (ORV) use in the Big Cypress National Preserve, BCNP Addition lands and the three national forests in Florida. Reduce or eliminate ORV use where it interferes with the natural flow of water and damages species' habitat.

Prohibit new rock mining in the Everglades or the Everglades Agricultural area and halt activities that pose a threat to water quality and inhibit water flow.

Assess the damage from oil spilled from the Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico to fisheries and endangered sea turtle and mammal species, and develop new management, recovery and critical habitat plans as needed

Direct the US Army Corps of Engineers to conduct and implement a new area wide Environmental Impact Statement for phosphate mining in the Peace River Basin.

Direct the US Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a full environmental impact study for 404 permit decisions that would destroy Florida wetlands.

Maintain the ban on offshore drilling in the outer continental shelf surrounding Florida's coastline as per requirements of GOMESA and other federal laws.

Fully carry out fisheries management plans and coastal and marine spatial planning initiatives and enforce catch limits for overfished species in the Gulf of Mexico.

Limit expansion of biofuels and biomass production in Florida to existing disturbed lands and agricultural areas, leaving forested areas untouched for this purpose.

Allow no new housing developments in primary or secondary habitat of the Florida panther.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Limit new development approvals to existing urban areas to ensure habitat resilience and to prevent further destruction of Florida's vanishing wetlands.

Pre-existing development approvals in rural areas should be built using conservation subdivision design principles.

Current threats are not gloom-and-doom prescriptions they are signs that the traditional protections we have in place are not sufficient in the face of climate change. Some continued climate change is inevitable, but we have a small window of opportunity²¹ to avoid the worst projected scenarios by doing two things: 1) reduce global warming emissions (80 percent by 2050) to slow and stop global warming and 2) reduce the vulnerability of species, lands, and communities to climate change already in motion. The following vision is our view of how to increase habitat resilience on the Olympics Peninsula, Puget Sound, and the North Cascades.

Work for the reintroduction of selected species-such as Fishers in ONP

Work for the designation of critical habitat for bull trout and develop the associated recovery plan.

Limit or eliminate expansions of water storage facilities where important values are threatened. A proposed Bumping Lake expansion on the O-W NF would inundate important stands of scarce old growth forest and unlock stored carbon.

Work for the development of ESA recovery plans that include the marbled murrelet (westside), lynx (eastside), salmon and steelhead. List new species such as the wolverine.

Support actions that will result in the early removal of the Elwha Dam(s) as soon as possible. Develop a plan to re-establish Pacific Salmon and Steelhead in the upper watershed.

Increase coordination across the several land mgmt agencies in WA State- (NF, NP, State, municipal, and tribal lands) to improve daily management and to facilitate major planning efforts.

Management decisions at all levels are expected to include strong science based, documented rationale

Control pests, disease or invasive species, as may be appropriate in certain circumstances based on the best available science as noted in bullet above.

Partnering with local governments to preserve land might be one of most important roles of federal government

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increase in land adjoining National Parks, National Forests

Further tax benefits to donating land owners- Consider giving life estates if cabin on property

1. Fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund for conservation on private lands- Only fully funded once in 45 yrs- Offshore Oil Drilling should really have to pay for damages and opportunity to improve lands across US

2. Expand Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests- Create wilderness areas in 5 study areas for wilderness and rivers

3. More blue trails like Hitchcock Creek in Rockingham

4. Make federal tax incentives for conservation easements permanent and more expansive, retroactive to 01-01-10, when they expired- Support innovative and expansive State and Local programs that expand land preservation efforts

The Tennessee Council of Trout Unlimited urges the full implementation and funding the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is imperative that we take the effort now to preserve the Great Outdoors for future generations. Clean water, clean air and adequate access are very necessary to insure future availability of quality environmental and recreational opportunities.

The America's Great Outdoors initiative should build on federal programs that work and integrate innovative local programs into a new, smarter conservation and recreation plan that protects, connects and restores our land and waters, and the natural legacy we leave our children and future generations.

Provide full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at the promised and authorized level of \$900 million a year. This fund – paid for by revenues from offshore oil drilling – is used to protect parks, forests, oceans, refuges and local recreation areas. But it's only been fully funded once since it was created 45 years ago. Without full, dedicated funding to LWCF, critical land and water conservation needs and opportunities across Tennessee may be lost forever.

o There should be full operational funding for the National Park Service. Providing Parks the funds needed to serve visitors and protect resources is a tiny investment in our national heritage, and provides economic benefits and jobs in struggling communities nationwide.

o Close to 1,000 acres need to be purchased to complete Obed Wild and Scenic River on the Cumberland Plateau. Because the park is a long narrow river gorge, any development at its boundary disturbs the pristine recreational visitor experience and biological diversity of this protected river.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increase the opportunities to connect Americans - especially our children – to the Great Outdoors o The Public Lands Service Corps Act, H.R. 1612 as amended in the Senate, would provide service and learning opportunities on public lands for young Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. In fact, The Public Lands Service Corps Act would employ young people in full time, paid, service positions.

Invest in public land and support local economies. Protection of public lands, and the scenic and recreational amenities they provide, supports our local economies.

Encourage the kinds of public/private partnerships that have proven to be so effective in Tennessee and across the country. Communities are coming up with home-grown, collaborative solutions to conservation challenges and they should be supported by the federal government.

o The enhanced tax incentives legislation needs to be renewed and made permanent. Since the enhanced legislation was passed in 2006, land trusts across Tennessee have seen a major increase in the number of private landowners interested in protecting their farms and forests. The enhanced legislation expired in Dec. 2009.

Enact changes to the Federal estate tax to encourage farmers, ranchers and other landowners to donate easements. To ease the burden of the transfer of lands from one generation to the next and thereby provide continuity of ownership to assure conservation, Congress should allow a deferral of estate tax otherwise due for lands used for farming and land used for conservation. A version of this proposal has been introduced as HR 3524. In addition, current law provides an estate tax exclusion for land that is covered by a conservation easement. However, that provision was enacted some time ago and needs to be updated to reflect current land and economic values. HR 3050 would increase the current 2031(c) estate tax exclusion amount to \$5M for land value subject to conservation easement.

Provide an incentive to investors to fund tax-exempt bonds to be used for the specific purpose of land conservation. One approach would provide for the issuance of a "Forest Conservation Bond" to provide tax-exempt financing for conservation land with timber resources. Revenues generated from the management of the land would be used to repay investors. This proposal has been introduced as HR 3302/S.1501. Another approach would extend the use of the currently authorized Qualified Forest Conservation Bonds. This program provides a tax credit for investors to stimulate investment in bonds that are used to acquire land for forest conservation purposes. This approach was used in the Montana Legacy Project. By authorizing these Bonds for use elsewhere in the country, Congress could unleash the power of private investment to fund land conservation.

I ask that anything proposed along this line , be subject to , public input , scoping by the public , comment periods, proposal of alternatives, EIS scrutiny and more public comment . This pretty much is what is done in the travel management process. It seems to work pretty well.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Working initially within existing authorities and budgets, the President's Council on Environmental Quality should create an operational America's Great Outdoors Initiative with support from the Office of Management and Budget and with the leadership of the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency

For Landscape Partnership Projects, designs a from-the-bottom-up competition through which coalitions of Federal, state, local and tribal governments and non-governmental organizations apply for designation as America's Great Outdoors landscapes. Selected sites would then be eligible for Federal catalyst and coordination funding, receive priority support from several Federal programs, and benefit from the ongoing cooperation and assistance of Federal agencies to accomplish landscape objectives.

For Large Watershed Projects, CEQ would establish a framework for consistent, long term Federal support and for the coordination of governmental action to achieve watershed goals

For Metropolitan Greenspace Projects, the Department of Interior would lead a competitive process to select metro areas for Federal agency assistance.

Establish a multi-agency catalyst fund for high priority large scale projects by pooling agency resources over three year blocks of time.

Change the operation of cost share and reserve programs under the Farm Bill to encourage targeting of at least a portion of these funds to America's Great Outdoors projects to achieve measurable impacts on the watershed and/or landscape scale and to better support private land conservation by ranchers, farmers and forest land owners.

Ensure the rigorous use of the mitigation protocol (avoid, minimize, offset) across Federal programs including the Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts.

Adopt administrative and operational changes to allow a far greater level of interagency cooperation and cost effective program delivery at the landscape level

Adopt legislation that includes coordinated changes to the tax code to encourage private land conservation.

Use the America's Great Outdoors report from the agencies to develop and release a plan for an operational program. This plan should include specific goals for the first five years and beyond.

Issue an Executive Order that designates lead agencies, sets out the framework for the Landscape Partnership and Metropolitan Greenspace pilot projects, requires parallel processes for Large Watershed Projects, and establishes a working group to create a framework for evaluating project success against the five year goals.

Within the boundaries of existing law, task CEQ and OMB to develop procedures for a new level of interagency cooperation and budgeting for America's Great Outdoors projects.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect ecosystem integrity and connectivity. Ecosystem fragmentation impairs the survival of plants, fish and wildlife and the natural systems on which they depend, as well as the many benefits healthy ecosystems provide to human communities.

Restore and protect water resources. Water quantity and quality to sustain habitat and for human use are dependent upon whole watershed conservation strategies.

Provide access to high quality outdoor recreation for all Americans. The health and fitness of children depends upon having safe places to play; we believe that family life is enhanced by access to outdoor relaxation and adventure in places both close to home and in remote natural areas across the country.

Assist fish, wildlife and other natural resources and human communities in adapting to climate change. The conservation and forward-thinking management of large, connected landscapes will be a key factor in helping people and the natural systems on which we depend to be resilient to a changing climate. For example, the protection of large watersheds and their wetlands is essential to mitigating the impacts of flood and drought that result from changing weather patterns.

Sustain the working farms, ranches and forests so important to our economy and our environment. Private owners hold 70% of land in America; these working lands provide important wildlife habitat, are a foundation of much of the American economy, and are integral to our culture.

Protect, maintain and restore the health and biological diversity of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and resources. Nearly half of the country's population lives in coastal counties and millions of visitors enjoy our nation's seashores each year. The ocean, our coasts and estuaries, and the Great lakes are critical to the social, ecological and cultural fabric of our country.

Enhance the economic and environmental viability and the quality of life of metropolitan areas and reinforce the connections of urban areas and the surrounding countryside. Federal, state, and local parks, greenways, trails and natural areas in or around urban metropolitan areas are essential to economic development, buffering cities from some of the impacts of global warming and fostering the health and well being of the American people.

Take into account the needs of people and nature

Recognize the importance of diverse citizens participating in decisions that affect the places where they live and work whether in rural or urban areas

Achieve a new level of collaboration and cooperation among government and tribal agencies

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Recognize that success requires a long term and consistent commitment of resources

Use competitive processes and pilot projects to get the best efforts up and running quickly

Employ rigorous priority setting and focus on high priority areas in the expenditure of limited resources

Actively encourage young people to play an important role in creating their own future

the President's Council on Environmental Quality, with support from the Office of Management and Budget, should direct the establishment of an America's Great Outdoors Initiative Office led jointly by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture that also includes the participation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of Defense including the Army Corps of Engineers. This office would administer the Landscape Partnership Program.

CEQ with support from OMB should oversee the management, budgeting, tracking and evaluation of projects by departmental lead agencies.

CEQ with support from OMB should oversee the creation of an Urban Greenspace program led by the Department of the Interior with participation from EPA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Transportation.

Public and tribal agencies, NGOs, and local communities have come to realize that piecemeal conservation yields diminishing returns and that we should be working to conserve large natural landscapes that are defined by the needs of fish and wildlife and the way people live, work and play in these places. This category of places should also include estuaries and coastal land and seascapes.

There is a groundswell of place-based, collaborative efforts to sustain large landscapes; federal funding and programs should be enhanced to empower these efforts. Large landscape efforts range from several hundred thousand acres to entire watersheds and large ecosystems. Some of many examples include: Northern Everglades, Alabama River/Mobile Delta Corridor, Central Appalachians, Hudson Valley, Penobscot River Watershed, Maumee Basin of the Great Lakes, Upper Peninsula (Michigan) Forests, Crown of the Continent, East Side Oregon Forests, the Pioneers (ID), Colorado Plateau (UT, CO, AZ, NM), Longleaf Pine Initiative, Keeping Maine's Forests Initiative, and the Northern Sierra Partnership.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative should commit money, people, interagency coordination, and cooperative decision-making to priority sites. These sites should be selected through a from-the-bottom-up, competitive process that supports community coalitions that have come together around landscape scale conservation goals. (Community coalitions might include the local branches of federal agencies, state and local agencies, tribal governments, non-profit organizations, Resource Conservation Districts, business and landowner organizations and other citizens groups).

Federal agencies should support local, collaborative efforts rather than be the top-down driver of these efforts. Maintaining the delicate balance between Federal support and local and community initiative is important to long term success.

The program should be based on the use of existing authorities, but can be improved by legislative and policy changes discussed below. Federal land acquisition and designation would continue to be important tools within the framework of landscape coalitions, as would easements to prevent the fragmentation of working lands.

Launch an operational America's Great Outdoors Initiative (FY12) by inviting a small number of initial pilot projects that exemplify the goals and outcomes of the program (see below) to participate in a pilot competition. Rapid action should be an important criterion for selection as a pilot project.

Conduct an application process and criteria for selection for the next round of projects.

Develop multi-year project agreements

Monitor progress and make recommendations for a full scale program.

CEQ (with support from OMB) should coordinate only the start up of the program, after which it should be institutionalized in the agencies.

Accelerated designation of lands for special status (Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Areas, National Estuarine Research Reserves, etc.) where the landscape partnership plan recommends such designation

A commitment of ongoing interagency cooperation within the project area

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, Mississippi River, Gulf of Mexico/Louisiana Wetlands, California Bay Delta, Greater Everglades, Colorado River. These specific places are often talked about in the context of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. All of them, however, already have some level of multi-agency Federal and state involvement. Some, like the Chesapeake Bay and the Everglades, have been underway for many years, but they have proceeded slowly with considerable difficulty and with varying levels of funding. Others, like the Gulf of Mexico, have never been funded comprehensively and require accelerated investment and cooperative action. Large amounts of money, invested in targeted and strategic ways, over a long time period are required to accomplish restoration of these areas and in most cases there is also a significant regulatory component required to reduce water pollution and prevent further habitat degradation.

Formally designate or re-designate a lead agency and a lead person within that agency to direct the restoration effort.

Create or continue an interagency state/Federal council or task force to make policy decisions and ensure operational coordination. The council should be staffed by the lead agency with support from other participating agencies.

Create a single citizens advisory panel and a single scientific advisory panel for each project

Re-affirm project objectives.

Adopt a five-year multi-agency financing plan including specific provisions for shared and pooled funding to accomplish project objectives.

Identify a single agency to compile criteria for and monitor progress on all of the named projects so that progress can be measured to consistent standards.

Identify an agency to compile and disseminate best practices and lessons learned from all projects and develop a plan for cross-agency sharing of resources and tools to produce cost-effective results.

The accelerated use of watershed scale wetlands mitigation and other ecosystem scale approaches to mitigation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act

Enhanced funding through EPA Clean Water Act Programs such as the National Estuary Program

The ability to pool Federal funding and to use those funds more flexibly to meet the objectives set out in landscape plans

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A separate competitive program should be conducted by the Department of the Interior as the lead agency for metropolitan greenspace projects including sites with cultural and historical features. We believe strongly that this should be an important part of the initiative

An interagency council working with the Department of the Interior as the lead agency to develop and shape the program. In this case the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency should also be members of the council. (The Department of Transportation can play an important role by encouraging state agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations to develop and incorporate ecosystem-based regional "green print" analyses of Regional Transportation Plans. These would identify critical natural resources, agriculture and working forest lands, and recreation spaces. Federal transportation funding could be provided for regional conservation planning).

As is proposed for the Large Landscape category of projects, program and financial incentives should be available to the metropolitan greenspace projects selected in a competitive process including the availability of flexible planning and coordination funding.

The Administration should advance and promote policies, programs and initiatives that successfully engage youth in meaningful connections with natural landscapes. Coordinated through the Department of Youth in the Department of the Interior, special emphasis must be focused on engaging urban and underserved communities of color, and collaborations with private entities that can demonstrate a proven track record.

Create long term strategies to support an employment "pipeline" for the next generation of conservationists, with special emphasis on initiatives that provide sustained contact with nature from adolescence to college/graduate school, through education and paid job opportunities in natural resource management, interpretation, outreach, etc.

Engage diverse audiences in experiences in the great outdoors through targeted outreach and communications initiatives to make outdoor experiences more culturally relevant.

Conduct research to understand and remove the barriers preventing youth from underserved communities from connecting with the great outdoors -- provide both fiscal and programmatic opportunities for the implementation of solutions at all levels.

Employ and Empower Youth on natural landscapes through volunteerism, community service opportunities, employment and other means by building upon the Department of the Interior's 21st Century Conservation Corps program. Support passage of the Public Lands Service Corps Act (H.R. 1612 / S. 1442) and similar legislative initiatives that would expand the capacity for service work on federal, state, local, tribal and private lands, build and maintain the necessary infrastructure to connect youth with the great outdoors, engage and employ youth, especially youth from communities of color, and diversify our conservation constituency.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increase Access to and Promote Urban Green Spaces, particularly in low-income communities with significant health disparities, by eliminating park, playground and natural space deficit, providing adequate funding mechanisms for outdoor infrastructure, increasing safety in parks, creating safe routes to the parks, playgrounds and natural spaces, including better connecting green spaces with public transportation routes, sidewalks and bike paths. Promote a communications strategy in local urban areas to bolster awareness and engagement with urban green space

Strengthen Outreach to Communities of Color at all relevant agencies by integrating 21st Century communications tools such as mapping devices, iPhone applications, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and other tools that will increase the visibility of our parks, playgrounds and natural spaces. Federal agencies should design targeted media and marketing campaigns to reach communities of color and invest resources in developing partnerships and identifying appropriate role models within these communities.

Engage Youth in the Outdoors during the School Day and in After School Activities by collaborating with the Department of Education and local school leadership to engage school children in outdoor learning opportunities and active time outdoors at school. Support the establishment of schoolyard habitats and gardens, leverage programs that connect school children to both public and private lands before, during and after the school day, and support environmental education legislation including the No Child Left Inside Act (H.R 2054 / S.866) that would provide funding for outdoor and field-based learning and train teachers to provide quality environmental education to students.

The rapid pace of climate change is itself a direct threat to the long term sustainability of natural systems in the United States as we know them and their associated benefits to human communities (ecosystem services). Fragmented and otherwise degraded ecosystems are less able to withstand and adapt to new climate impacts. Current science and policy suggest that watershed or ecosystem scale approaches are essential to help make natural habitats more resilient to the impacts of climate change and to ensure that those systems are optimally storing and retaining carbon.

Climate-informed conservation and restoration projects can also help foster more resilient human communities such as through the protection of water supplies and the restoration of wetlands to mitigate storm damage. Thus how a landscape project affects and is affected by climate change should be a criteria for project selection and project design.

Establishment of USGS Regional Climate Centers to synthesize climate change impact data, and to collaborate with the network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, can inform landscape level strategies for managing climate change impacts.

Develop a new competitive grants program within the state-side assistance program.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Further leverage state, local and private funding by enhancing the importance of such funds in project selection criteria.

Allow cooperative use with other federal funds to accomplish large scale projects.

Allocate a significant portion of the fund (\$100M-200M per year) for a small number of large-scale, transformative landscape projects.

Develop a new program of competitive grants to fund conservation easements held by qualified land trusts that advance specified conservation goals (such as federal trust resources, wildlife corridors, connectivity of federal and state conservation lands) and promote the economic sustainability of working agricultural landscapes. Allow 3rd party holders of conservation easements similar to Farm Bill programs (FRPP and GRP) in those cases where federal agencies determine the project will advance landscape goals.

Change the operation of cost share and reserve programs under the Farm Bill to encourage targeting of at least a portion of these funds to AGO projects to achieve measurable impacts at the watershed scale. Making the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative Program (CCPI) operational will facilitate this. Some of this can be accomplished administratively, but explicit provisions should be included in the 2012 Farm Bill. Maintaining or increasing funding levels for Farm Bill cost-share, reserve and easement programs (including the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program) is essential. Ensure that forest land owners can participate. Grassland programs need more attention.

Expand the size of the Forest Legacy Program and make grassland projects eligible for Legacy funding.

Allow for technical assistance funding for third party providers under the Farm Bill.

Adopt legislation that includes coordinated changes to the tax code to encourage private land conservation including (See Appendix I for more detail):

Make permanent the enhanced income tax deduction for donated easements.

Reduce or eliminate capital gains tax for transactions involving the sale of land or an easement for conservation purposes.

Provide an income tax credit for donation of funds used for the acquisition and stewardship of conservation easements by qualified land trusts in AGO project areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide an incentive to investors to fund tax-exempt bonds to be used for the specific purpose of land conservation.

Adopt new Principles and Guidelines for water resources projects and whole river approach to conservation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Create an Ocean Trust Fund to provide additional dedicated funding for research, conservation, and restoration of coastal areas, estuaries and nearshore waters.

Ensure the rigorous use of the mitigation protocol (avoid, minimize, offset) across Federal agencies including an ecosystem or watershed approach to mitigation decisionmaking.

Streamline the continuing authority programs of the Army Corps of Engineers and create an LWCF-like aquatic restoration program in WRDA that would provide streamlined aquatic restoration grants.

Adopt administrative and operational changes to allow a far greater level of inter-agency cooperation and cost-effective program delivery at the large landscape level

The ability to share and pool funding to accomplish overall objectives

Multi-year and landscape scale budgeting

Changes in land acquisition process including third party easements

New techniques for inter-agency cooperation including authorities for cooperative inter-agency agreements

Coordinated and streamlined appraisal review for federal land acquisition

Use the report of the agencies to develop and release a plan for an operational initiative. This plan should include specific five-year goals.

Issue an Executive Order that designates lead agencies, sets out the framework for the pilot Landscape Partnership projects and Metropolitan Greenspace pilot projects. requires parallel process for Large Watershed Projects, and establishes a working group to create a framework for evaluating project success against the five-year goals.

Within the boundaries of existing law, task OMB and CEQ to develop procedures for a new level of interagency cooperation and budgeting for AGO projects.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In a time of soaring federal deficits, this renewed commitment to conservation will require increased funding. But much can be done by more effectively targeting existing resources and by making conservation and restoration spending more reliable, predictable and responsive to on-the-ground needs.

The additional investment in things like full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund is extremely small in relation to other Federal expenditures and in comparison to the immense permanent benefits derived from that investment.

Reduce or eliminate capital gains tax for transactions involving the sale of land or easements for conservation purposes. By eliminating Federal capital gains on conservation transactions, Congress would both encourage those landowners who cannot afford to make a gift of land or an easement to sell for conservation by improving their net after tax return from a sale for conservation. In addition, the reduction in the tax would enable other Federal, state and local acquisition programs that buy land for conservation to stretch their limited dollars to accomplish more conservation results. A version of this provision has been introduced as HR 1447.

Provide an income tax credit for donation of funds used for the acquisition and stewardship of conservation easements by qualified land trusts. By providing an income tax credit for cash donated from private parties for the specific purpose of acquiring conservation easements or for stewardship expenses incurred with managing an easement program, Congress would stimulate private investment in land conservation. The tax credit could be targeted and applied to landscapes and watersheds designated by AGO processes. Tax credits have proven to be very effective tools to generate capital to be used for specific purposes.

In middle Tennessee, we are not blessed with the major acreages of National Forest lands that can be found in East Tennessee. For that reason, we need to take advantage of the public lands that we do have. One such un-tapped resource that I would like to bring to your attention is Natchez Trace Parkway. The Parkway ends in Davidson County, just west of Nashville. North of the well known arched bridge over Highway 96 in Williamson County, the NPS owns about 800 acres. Our club has hiked over these woods and feels that mountain bike trails would be a perfect fit with the other uses of the Park property. We have even drawn draft trail maps just to test how much trail could conceivably be built in this area. We feel that this area could easily accommodate 40+ miles of mountain bike trail. Another 4 miles of trail could be built south of the arched bridge ending at the first pull-off parking lot. This trail would be invisible to motorists along the parkway while at the same time providing a valuable outdoor recreational destination for many middle Tennesseans. The area has a natural topographic relief of about 250 feet, so the trails could challenge seasoned riders while also providing easier routes for beginners. Another interesting item of note is that no new parking facilities would have to be built. The area already has large parking lots in place. We would not be proposing to use existing trails that are in use by horse riders.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Another local project that deserves to be completed is the Rails to Trails trail that presently exists from Nashville to Ashland City. Corridor exists and that trail should be completed all the way to Clarksville. My neighbors are an older couple that continue to stay active. While mountain biking is more action than they want, they love to ride the Rails to Trails routes.

One thing that we would like to voice our support for, is changes to NPS policy that would allow local park Superintendents to make more decisions regarding inclusion of mountain biking trails into their parks, without the existing tremendously cumbersome bureaucracy. I am told that Bush administration agency officials agreed to this change. But these changes were put on hold and remain on hold by the existing administration.

A major issue has just come to a head in the Cherokee National Forest in the vicinity of the proposed Corridor K highway route in southeast Tennessee. Both the northern and the southern routes of this proposed highway will destroy existing important and heavily used mountain biking trails. While it initially appears (to me) that the northern route will do less damage to our trails, we request that agencies involved agree to replace these lost trails with new mountain bike trails in the same vicinity, and to provide new connectors to trails that are cut off by the construction. This situation is made more complex by the recently proposed Tennessee Wilderness Act of 2010, in that this Act seeks to expand the Big Frog Wilderness. If a southern route is chosen and trails are eliminated from the Tanasi Trail System the Act may make it difficult or impossible to construct replacement and connector trails in the same area.

1. Which route would allow the Corridor-K project to move forward, with the least destruction of trail? From initial examination it appears that the northern route would be the least destructive alternative, which appears will require the least amount of variation from the current route, and seems to affect less miles of trail. Judging from the map that would seem to be option 4,5,7 or 20,5,7 would be most desirable. Of course, we would need to see better maps and get the opinions of as many people in the mountain biking community as possible before making a final choice for which route we (the mountain biking community) would prefer.

2. What will be done to mitigate trails eliminated as a result of the Corridor-K project? It is my position, that for every mile of trail destroyed by the project that an equal or greater number of miles of replacement trail be constructed in the same general area. Any replacement trails should be tied into the existing trail network from which mileage was eliminated. Further, all replacement trails should be constructed so that they might be open to the public at the same time or before the current trails are bulldozed.

3. Until we are able to confirm a final Corridor-K route, the Tennessee Wilderness Act of 2010 should be placed on hold until a location for replacement trails is confirmed.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As we state in *Wildlands and Woodlands*, changing or moderating this trend of forest loss will require nothing short of a major revitalization of state, private, non-profit and, yes, federal partnerships. To give you a sense of the scale of the challenge, think of it this way. If 50 years from now the New England landscape is to look much like it does today (with 70 percent or more of the landscape forested), we will need to at least double the pace of forest conservation region-wide (Foster et al. 2010). The USDA Forest Service projects that without such an effort, population growth and low-density development may permanently reduce forest cover in large parts of the region by 40 to 63 percent. Central to a New England forest conservation effort must be expanded incentives and full recognition of the roles and rights of private landowners, for we are all indebted to many of them for their voluntary maintenance and management of both working woodlands and protected wildland reserves.

America's Great Outdoors Initiative should build on the many important federal programs that support the conservation of working forests in New England and beyond, including increased funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy, and Farm Bill programs such as the Conservation Reserve Programs and the new Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program.

The Initiative should also underscore the need to renew the federal income tax incentive for donated conservation easements, and to support the expansion of new and traditional markets for forest products and services. These are all necessary efforts but not sufficient to reverse the trend of forest loss in New England. A Great Outdoors Initiative that embraces New England forests as a region of national significance would help safeguard its natural green infrastructure and secure the social, economic, and ecological resilience of the region in the face of future change.

Establish a New England Forest Heritage Initiative to develop a portfolio of incentives and authorize funding for forest conservation pilot projects that meet the particular challenges of New England's increasingly parcelized landscape. High on the pilot project priority list should be landscape-scale aggregation efforts built on voluntary easements from willing private landowners, such as the Western Massachusetts project spearheaded by the New England Forestry Foundation. Priority should also be given to projects that leverage the benefits of forest conservation for secure and clean water. As one of the most heavily forested and densely populated regions in the U.S., New England provides an important testing ground for unifying conservation, economic development and the transition to a more sustainable future. Developing such an initiative as a public-private partnership is consistent with both the Harvard Forest *Wildlands and Woodlands* vision and the New England Governor's Conference Blue Ribbon Commission on Land Conservation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Develop energy and climate policies that include provisions for the carbon-storing benefits of forests not only through carbon markets accessible to large landowners with the resources to adopt this complex legal instrument, but also through programs that support broad landowner participation in regional conservation easement programs funded by the proceeds from auctioned carbon allowances or climate mitigation funds. Current research from sites in New England suggest that a heavily forested acre in New England absorbs on average between 600 pounds and 1.5 tons of carbon each year even as the forest matures, whereas an acre of developed land generates roughly 50 tons a year (Raciti et al. In prep; Foster and Aber 2004). Indeed, protecting forests from conversion to development is one of the most important measures we can take to mitigate future human-driven climate change.

Redesign the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forest landowner assistance programs to better reflect research on the assistance needs of private landowners by developing more diverse options for conserving and deriving economic benefits from working woodlands and wildlands. Effective assistance programs are essential to conservation and sound forest stewardship in this landscape shaped by the voluntary actions of approximately 873,000 family forest owners. National surveys suggest that peer-to-peer landowner outreach networks that engage fellow landowners and address a wider range of interests through woodland councils or regional conservation partnerships are more effective than prevailing service models focused on management plans and harvesting. A redesign effort could be undertaken as part of the existing Northeastern States Research Cooperative that was created through the Northern Forest Stewardship Act, which calls for programs that promote the dissemination of existing and new information to landowners and natural resource managers.

A Great Outdoors Initiative that emphasizes the permanent conservation of the private working woodlands and the wildlands that define New England and serve the nation would build on the region's rich conservation history. This is a history that dates back nearly 400 years and sets a high bar for conservation with the first public park in the English-speaking world (the Boston Common), the first regional land trust in America (The Trust for Public Lands), and the work of conservation luminaries such as Henry David Thoreau, George Perkins Marsh, and John D. Rockefeller.

- Fully fund programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (specifically the Civil War battlefield Preservation Program), the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and easement tax incentives.
- Provide the NPS with funds to acquire properties within its congressionally authorized boundaries.
- Creation of a clearing house of Federal programs to review projects on sites that encompass a mix of cultural, historical and environmental values. On these multi-purpose sites whose preservation furthers a number of initiatives, allow funding eligibility from several programs and allow funds from other federal programs to be used as match.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Public Law 88-29 is a remnant of the ORRRC era that authorizes the Sec. of Interior to coordinate and develop effective programs relating to outdoor recreation. It may provide some immediate flexibility for reinvisioning and revitalization through administrative actions consistent with PAGO conclusions.

Perhaps the single most important change that could occur for the conservation of urban and rural riparian corridors would be conceptual amendment of US Army Corps of Engineers and related regulations. (1) Rather than continuing the archaic practice of giving preference to self-perpetuating engineering projects [channelization, levees, flood retention structures, etc] that disrupt environmental systems and “natures services”, they should only be allowed when floodplain conservation and/or stream restoration is not a viable alternative.

Corps and FEMA programs related to floodplain regulation are also archaic in that they are inconsistent with stormwater quality management goals, so filling to raise surface elevations and/or the introduction of impervious surfaces should be prohibited.

The Corps and their partners [EPA & FWS] in the management of the wetland regulation (Section 404) program need more explicit authority to require buffers around jurisdictional wetlands for water quality and aquatic species protection.

The Corps and their State partners in the management of the non-point source (Section 401) program need more explicit authority to extend certification coverage beyond stream channels to include all public waters [wetlands, etc] to provide more complete system protection for water quality and aquatic ecosystem function.

Limiting or even prohibiting continued development within floodplains would have beneficial water quality and ecological effects, but it would also reduce the ever increasing vulnerability of life and property to river flooding hazards. Flattening this curve will have long-term positive economic effects at the local, state, and national levels. Nevertheless a great deal of past development, encouraged by Corps engineering projects and FEMA subsidized insurance, remains vulnerable to recurring flood cycles. Some local governments utilize post-disaster funding to acquire and remove damaged structures from flood prone areas. More local governments would consider and undertake such activities, if there were a more robust national program with sufficient funding for matching grants to incentivize pre-disaster acquisition and removal of structures. After-the-fact enthusiasm should be projected for this programmatic approach, and significant funding over many years will be required to correct the failure of past policies. Such program should have significant dedicated and continuous revenue from multiple sources, and the reclaimed lands should be conserved and managed in perpetuity for their environmental/ecological system values and appropriate public use. Perhaps part of the program budget could come from a major assessment (fixed amount or percentage) added to each annual subsidized flood insurance policy premium, as well as a nominal assessment added to all other homeowners and corporate building insurance policies to take advantage of scale.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For several years the IRS has had a temporary “enhanced” charitable deduction for the donated value of conservation easements on working farm and forest lands. The program has been successful at its intended purposes, and should be made permanent.

The NC Conservation Tax Credit, and the twelve other variations on the program that followed in other states have proven successful at leveraging more conservation activity at less cost. Consideration should be given to changing the IRS charitable donation for the gifting of real property value for conservation purposes to a tax credit

Green Infrastructure is a current “hot topic”. The foundation of the term is its relationship to systems function. The City of Raleigh addressed this in their recently updated Comprehensive Plan, by including greenways in its definition of linear public infrastructure along with roads, sewers, and potable water systems. This reinforces the holistic characteristics of these systems and the negative impacts of their fragmentation. Further, some engineered systems, such as stormwater, sometimes forget to include their natural components that can benefit from and function best where conserved. Unfortunately, attention is most often given to techniques, such as green roofs, rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement, etc, rather than a better understanding system function. S3561 & HR 4202: Green Infrastructure for Clean Water Act has the potential to address the weakness. If it is ratified the EPA will be charged with its management. Hopefully its research, guidance, grants, etc will identify and advance the greenways concept, as well as conservation and appropriate public use of riparian corridors in the urban systems context.

The characteristics of the western US [majority of Federal public lands and lowest total population & density] and the eastern US [least Federal public lands and greatest total population & density] require considerably different approaches for resolving conservation and appropriate public use issues.

The USDOT has several existing programs and grants that can advance greenways. With the pending reauthorization of the Transportation Act there is an opportunity to make refinements.

the National Recreation Trails Fund receives its revenue from off-road motor fuel taxes. Yet, the annual authorization arguably under funds the demand and potential benefits of the grants program. A significant increase in appropriations to states for distribution through grants is justified.

CMAQ funds are directed to projects intended to mitigate traffic congestion and improve air quality. They can be directed to non-motorized transportation projects, and greenways could benefit from more attention in applicable guidelines, with emphasis on their ability to improve interconnections with transit routes in urban areas.

Again, more stable and greater total funding would make the program accessible to more non-motorized transportation projects, including greenway trail facilities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is another remnant of the ORRRC era. Its funding is derived from revenues from off-shore oil and gas lease royalties. Annual appropriations are only a fraction of the authorized amount, and is completely insufficient to meet demand. It would be advantageous for this grant program to be returned to a more rational level of total funding. Long-term, as oil and gas lease program structure is reviewed and updated, more revenue will result and even larger amounts can be allocated to this fund for conservation and facilities for public recreation use.

The EPA has several programs that can promote and/or fund planning and direct conservation activities. They could do more to advocate for and educate about the need for a multipurpose systems approach and understanding of surface water protection. Surface water quality and drinking water quality programs should be based upon systems scale plans and solutions. A larger percentage of available funds should be directed to conservation approaches for incrementally reaching water quality goals. This would likely benefit the spread of the riparian greenway concept among local governments and states, as well as better direct the expenditure of available funds for conservation solutions.

The North American Wetland Conservation program is a valuable resource for addressing international scale conservation. Yet, the North American areas subject to the greatest growth pressures may be losing their conservation resource base faster than protection can occur. More could be done to promote conservation friendly development patterns and invest in more urban conservation systems. While these may not be the most pristine large landscapes, they can be reasonably viable and functional smaller habitats that can prove to be important parts of a conservation landscape scale mosaic over time. To pursue this vision, enhanced levels of funding and reordered priorities will probably be necessary.

Greenways can and should be part of the solution. With more attention to the integration of existing and evolving natural systems data into required planning exercises, pertinent relationships will become obvious and more collaborative programming will be possible. Similarly, related health data and population statistics will further inform planning. Thus, progress can be made through better integrated interagency planning exercises to meet 21st century challenges. With this improved decision-making tool, funding needs can be better justified and funds can be better directed to fulfill their intended mission

Promote markets for America's family-owned forest to help keep working forests working. Made-in-America sustainable wood products should be given priority in government building construction and other government procurement.

Support for renewable energy must include biomass from sustainable family-owned forests.

Remove tax burdens that can hinder families from keeping their land and managing it sustainably. Pending legislation in Congress such as the Thompson Family Farm Preservation and Conservation Estate Tax Act and other proposals like it, will improve the estate tax so families can avoid selling their land or liquidating their timber to pay the estate tax.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support Environmental Education in our Classrooms. We need to ensure our children are well-prepared for the future through a better understanding of the environment. Incentives and policies in education laws, such as the NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE ACT, will encourage teachers to incorporate environmental education and outdoor learning into their classroom.

Public investments should include financial incentives to encourage restoration of ecologically important forests, watershed and habitat protection and invasive species control. Government-funded technical and financial assistance through programs like the Forest Service's Forest Stewardship program to support family forest land management and programs within the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resource Conservation Services that provide assistance to family forest landowners are investments that return a multitude of benefits to all Americans.

- If there is truly a need to make this program a meaningful reality (and within 6-months), all FEDERAL agencies need to balance their budgets. How much needlessly wasted money (taxes) could be saved if redundant regulations, policies, programs, and resources are eliminated? No doubt, all taxpayers wish to eliminate needless redundancies.

- Each FEDERAL AGENCY has many regulatory & resource managers. Why don't the managers of the DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR & the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, those managers with actual and implied authority, begin eliminating redundant regulations and resources? Those managers need to start doing that immediately. Any 'foot-dragging' implies that continued abuse is acceptable (bureaucratically speaking);

- All National Parks and Monuments need to be maintained for the TAXPAYERS. With so many FEDERAL AGENCIES using TAXPAYER RESOURCES, why can't they work with each other? (The CERRO GRANDE FOREST FIRE is a good example of this nonsense...must the NATIONAL PARKS/MONUMENTS along the MEXICAN border also serve as another bad example of egotistical Federal Agency Directors? If Outdoor initiatives are truly desired, all USA federal lands along the USA/Mexican border will again be available to USA taxpayers.

- I represent only myself. As such, I don't have any 'TOOLS' (figuratively speaking). There is a CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION available to 'listen' to my concerns. These comments are not being presented as a form of duress. I am aware of some of the ways that misfeasance and malfeasance can be implemented (i.e. CERRO GRANDE FOREST FIRE);

The impressions projected at the July 17, 2010 meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, imply that the CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATIONS support any initiatives of the FEDERAL AGENCIES. To a degree, that is a good thing. Unfortunately, the Federal Government Budget is not balanced. Will Federal Government managers eliminate redundant rules, regulations, and resources within 6-months of today (to 'begin' is not the same as 'within')?

As a secondary benefit, how would the elimination of redundancies result in positive behaviors in government employees? Implementation of constructive initiatives (for both government and non-government personnel) would greatly add to a better OUTDOOR initiative program, especially at the local level

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Round Table's vision is that the Federal government will act as the catalyst for federal, state, tribal and local governments (in cooperation with private interests) to work together across America to protect, preserve, and interpret Civil War battlefields and their related historic sites.

- Direct acquisition and designation of unprotected Civil War battlefields to assure their preservation;

Assisting existing government agencies and offices, community groups, nonprofit organizations, and foundations with missions to acquire and preserve our Civil War heritage, such as the Civil War Preservation Trust, with their missions to preserve land and educate the public by providing matching funds and grants

Fully funding the National Park Service in its efforts to preserve, protect, and interpret the cultural and natural resources that already exist in its battlefields and associated sites

Providing battlefield land owners better incentives and opportunities to be effective stewards by changing Federal tax policies, which largely discourage preservation of Civil War battlefields

Encouraging states to help land owners who want to be more economically competitive with their historic land by allowing transfer of development rights and exemptions from property taxes for land under permanent conservation easements

By encouraging Federal and state governments to remunerate owners who agree to take direct responsibility for maintenance of historic features through a program of long-term contracts with these owners. This approach has the added benefit of extending the area of resource protection without removing land from either private ownership or local tax rolls

By encouraging Federal and state governments to cooperate to design and adopt a uniform recreational use statute that provides effective tort liability limitations for private owners who permit access to their land by the public seeking to view and enjoy historic battlefields

By encouraging private Civil War battlefield land holding and management organizations. This would address several problems--- that there are a large number of significant battlefields that are not protected, that governments all have severe budget problems and are not likely to create many new park units, and that there are regions with significant local resistance to additional Federal or state land acquisition

Encouraging the establishment of a "friends" group for all significant battlefields, whether protected or not, to develop community support for preservation and to articulate and advocate for the needs of "their" battlefield to government or private organizations that can help bring about preservation

Continuing the work done by Federal, state, and local agencies to generate authoritative information on the location and significance of battlefield historic features. This information is critical for local governments to effectively integrate battlefield protection into local plans for educational, economic, and environmental development

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Encouraging local governments to work closely with battlefield park authorities and private owners to protect sites through coordination with state or local plans for open space or recreation areas, zoning, historic districts, and other land uses and educating affected communities about the value of retaining the basis for an additional local industry-- heritage tourism, which brings job and revenue

Using heritage education lesson plans and outdoor educational activities for local schools to build local consensus for, and awareness of, battlefield preservation over the long-term. The National Park Service and National Trust for Historic Preservation heritage education program "Teaching with Historic Places" is an excellent model for use in local schools to teach the significance of Civil War sites, including battlefields.

Encouraging the hands-on involvement in preservation by an engaged public, particularly, young people, so that they can fully appreciate their Civil War heritage.

we believe the Initiative should commit substantial resources for the preservation of both existing and unprotected battlefield land as a lasting legacy of the Civil War Sesquicentennial. By doing so, the Initiative will simultaneously be conserving valuable open space and outdoor classrooms for this and future generations.

Land management and conservation efforts can at times be controversial issues. I applaud the Administration's efforts to encourage public involvement in land conservation and take into account the ideas of the people living in and around our public lands. Secretary Salazar has repeatedly emphasized the importance of public participation in this initiative, and I hope that efforts to engage local communities will continue.

The Star Tribune is to be commended for opening a dialogue on the status of what is arguably Minnesota's most precious resource: its water. Anything that will promote awareness is helpful. But time is running out. What's needed now is action – statewide.

Returning to your original question for this hearing – “How can the federal government be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation?” – The answer is that President Obama must take charge of his environmental policy. He must make clear that the goal without exception, consistent with his “yes, we can” campaign rhetoric, is to preserve and protect the environment, including wildlife, public lands, water and air. He must ask any and all officials in the Interior and Agriculture Departments and EPA who do not understand, or do not want to implement, that mandate to depart immediately and replace them with more enlightened officials.

Gather and share information to improve the science and governance of large landscape conservation. Establish a common, coherent database on the science of large landscapes, and develop an annotated atlas of governance efforts to clarify who is doing what and what needs to be done.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Encourage a network of practitioners to build capacity. Catalyze collaboration through a network akin to the Land Trust Alliance to identify best practices and advocate for policy reforms. •

Establish a national competitive grants program to catalyze, enable, coordinate, and sustain promising efforts. Facilitate homegrown partnerships, improve coordination among ongoing efforts, and recognize the most promising approaches to large landscape conservation. •

Improve the policy toolkit to achieve large landscape conservation. Strengthen incentive-based tools for landowner conservation and improve coordination and participation by federal and other governmental agencies. •

Facilitate innovative funding opportunities to support large landscape conservation. Maximize and focus the use of existing federal and state programs and authorities that can be implemented quickly and without new funding; combine existing funding sources to target large landscape conservation projects; require in-kind or matching funds from nonfederal sources to leverage resources, including local, state, private, and philanthropic foundations; employ existing and new tax incentives, tax credits, easement purchase programs, and management agreements to encourage private lands conservation; and use some funding for the planning and coordination of strategies to conserve watersheds, ecosystems, greenways, and corridors.

Likewise, the lack of scientific information and databases on the conditions, trends, and disturbances within large landscapes makes it difficult to set priorities, identify gaps in terms of what is being done and what should be done, and explore opportunities to link existing and emerging efforts. All of this baseline knowledge is critical to facilitate the advancement of well-designed and well-managed large landscape conservation initiatives. Clarifying the nature and scope of these projects, including both scientific and governance factors, will also help frame this important body of work in terms that will resonate with policy makers and the people who inhabit these places

A key challenge in this context is to integrate the resources and expertise of federal agencies in coordination with state and local land use and other planning processes and with the energy, enthusiasm, and actions of grassroots efforts. The goal here, at least in part, is to test the proposition that more can be accomplished by encouraging federal agencies and other entities to focus collaboratively on a common set of large landscapes.

A related need is an explicit strategy to promote and support a variety of experiments and innovations, recognizing that there is no single model for large landscape conservation. The challenges are to harness the vision and activism of emerging efforts and combine them with the resources and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments. This is easier said than done given that bureaucracies thrive on standardized approaches and tend to resist challenges to the status quo.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Creation of new funding sources can occur through both authorizing legislation and the annual appropriations process. However, creation of new sources of mandatory spending not subject to annual appropriations often requires identification of offsets equivalent to the proposed spending.

The first steps in developing a long-term strategic framework for large landscape conservation are to (1) create a common and coherent scientific database; and (2) prepare an annotated atlas to identify existing initiatives, priorities, and gaps. There is currently no single body of scientific information on the state of large landscapes, although the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is in the process of launching a scientific assessment of the conditions, trends, disturbances, and treatments for selected ecoregions, regardless of jurisdictional authority. This effort will embrace both terrestrial and aquatic resources, and should produce data that can be used by many large landscape conservation initiatives.

The long-term goal should be to encourage various agencies within the federal government to work together in building and maintaining these scientific assessments. For example, the U.S. Geological Service (USGS) science centers, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) landscape conservation cooperatives, and the Forest Service's recently announced "all lands" initiative could contribute to this critically important task.

Given the decentralized nature of large landscape conservation initiatives across North America, it would be extremely valuable to create a network to bring them all together. Assuming the recommendation to map large landscape initiatives is implemented, the resulting atlas will provide a solid foundation for creating such a network to support the following objectives. • Build awareness and understanding of the diversity of approaches to catalyze, enable, and sustain large landscape conservation initiatives. Understand and refine the key elements of success. • Develop skills and acquire tools, including the capacity to identify leaders; convene diverse people across political and jurisdictional boundaries; mobilize and engage private landowners and the business community; formulate and assess future scenarios; and monitor and evaluate progress. • Share stories and learn from one another. • Document and evaluate what is or is not working and why. • Promote innovation. • Examine alternative governance arrangements. • Secure the necessary financial resources. • Link theory, practice, and policy through dialogue and deliberation. • Interact with other practitioners, government agencies, universities, foundations, and nongovernmental organizations. • Strengthen linkages among initiatives to provide the building blocks for coordination and integration of these separate conservation efforts.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These resources or services could be provided in a variety of ways, such as workshops, conferences, publications, Web sites, and online social networking. Other suggestions are to create a “Placebook”—the equivalent of Facebook—for large landscape conservation, or to establish an organization akin to the Land Trust Alliance. The primary objective of such a network or alliance is to improve large landscape conservation projects by providing some or all of the resources and services identified above. A secondary objective is to build a national constituency to advocate for large landscape conservation into the future. A leadership forum for 25 or 30 key leaders from both established and emerging large landscape conservation initiatives could test these ideas. The forum might also include government agency officials, foundation officers, and scholars from appropriate colleges, universities, and professional associations as guests to inform and invigorate its work.

Participants in the national policy dialogues agreed that the most effective way to achieve large landscape conservation is through homegrown approaches that meet local, regional, and national goals and aspirations. Federal and state agencies have resources, knowledge, and the capacity to help coordinate such efforts, and they are already responsible for lands and water bodies that often become the focus of large landscape conservation. Linking homegrown efforts to broader state and federal capacities will likely generate the most effective action on the ground.

This type of program will require some federal funding, such as a set-aside fund to directly support or reimburse large landscape conservation partners for the development or maintenance of administrative services, governance activities, and dissemination of information necessary for the implementation of a national competition. This funding could be provided over a startup period of some specified timeframe for a particular project.

The U.S. departments of Agriculture, Interior, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Council on Environmental Quality, should all be involved, given their respective duties and responsibilities for land, water, and communities (including jobs and infrastructure). One way to implement this recommendation is to appoint staff from various agencies to serve as liaisons within designated large landscapes to coordinate across agencies and governments, and in Washington, DC, to coordinate budgets and so on.

Utilize Existing Federal Grant Programs. The Department of the Interior currently funds coastal and at-risk species conservation initiatives through its Coastal Program, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, and other grants. Other departments and agencies have similar grant programs to support conservation partnerships that target public, private, tribal, and other lands and waters, and support consortia of individuals, groups, or agencies who agree to work on habitat restoration or protection strategies identified as priorities. Such support could include technical assistance, such as biological and habitat assessments, inventories, project coordination, monitoring, mapping, grant writing, and habitat restoration expertise.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Clarify Federal Authority for Cost-sharing Arrangements. Large landscape conservation could benefit from clear federal agency authority to negotiate and enter into cooperative arrangements with any state or local government, tribe, public or private agency, organization, institution, corporation, individual, or other entity to carry out public-private cost-sharing for conservation activities. These agreements could include functions and responsibilities relating to habitat improvements on public or private lands. Under current Interior Department programs, the federal share for a project does not exceed 50 percent and is provided on a matching basis.

Amend Tax Codes. Some Department of Agriculture conservation grant program funds are not taxable, and similar provisions under the Internal Revenue Code could be amended to include all cooperative assistance programs that conserve threatened or endangered species, or protect or restore sensitive habitat. In addition, the incentives for private landowners to participate in large landscape conservation efforts would be improved by allowing tax credits for conservation easements to supplement similar credits already authorized for fee simple conservation transactions.

Identify Top Priorities and Set Common Performance Metrics. Among the activities that federal agencies can undertake are the use of state and tribal wildlife action plans to help identify priorities and focus investments through state comprehensive conservation plans as required under the FWS State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program. The FWS joint ventures partnership model for migratory bird conservation, for example, offers a framework that could be adapted to other conservation goals within a landscape-scale conservation setting by developing partnerships among federal, state, tribal, and local government agencies with nonprofit organizations and private individuals to identify priorities for land acquisition and conservation on both public and private lands. Another opportunity is the Market Environmental Registry that provides a multicredit environmental registry to facilitate ecosystem market development. The Chesapeake Bay restoration effort and the Willamette Partnership in Oregon are using this registry to develop multicredit ecosystem regional programs. Federal and other support for this kind of metrics development could provide a basis for monitoring and evaluating performance of large landscape conservation.

Facilitate Multiagency and Public-Private Coordination. Federal lands often anchor conservation partnerships that transcend the boundaries of an individual agency, but some agencies have limited authority to contribute funding or other types of assistance to other federal, state, local, public or private agencies, nonprofit organizations, private individuals or tribes to carry out activities that directly contribute to achieving conservation or natural resource goals. Clear authorization for federal agencies to engage in resource management, conservation, or restoration activities on nonfederally owned lands could facilitate landscape-scale conservation initiatives. Where initiatives include private lands, conservation activities would be conducted only with the permission of the landowner.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Use of agency funds could be required to clearly and directly benefit the federal land management unit or other federal environmental responsibility by contributing to their programmatic and performance goals. For example, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management pioneered the use of Service First authorities in which they co-located their offices and undertook some joint planning and management. This policy could be extended to other federal land and resource management agencies to facilitate large landscape conservation. In other cases, federal agencies may need authority to provide assistance to nongovernmental organizations to advance the mission of a federal agency and its management units (such as a park, refuge, or national forest).

As noted earlier, agencies also need clear authority to enter into cooperative agreements with nonfederal partners, provide funding for public purposes, and distinguish such agreements from traditional federal acquisition of goods and services through competitive contracting procedures.

Authorize Federal Agencies to Issue Combined Permits. At a landscape scale, some activities may require Clean Water Act or other permits. One way to facilitate large landscape conservation would be to provide a means to combine permits to achieve water quality or other goals on a watershed or ecosystem basis. For example, in the Tualatin Basin in Oregon, water managers worked with the Environmental Protection Agency to combine four wastewater treatment permits and one stormwater permit into a single permitting action. In the Menominee Watershed in Wisconsin, multiple stormwater districts within and among six watersheds in the Milwaukee metropolitan region collaborated to establish a group permit that covers eight entities. While both of these examples occurred in urban areas, the clustering concept could be applied to permitting requirements associated with large-scale conservation and restoration.

Develop Guidelines to Integrate Consensus-based Recommendations into NEPA Processes. Where large landscape conservation includes federal lands, procedures for developing and evaluating actions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) could facilitate interagency and public-private conservation. For example, the Department of the Interior developed administrative rules to clarify how to incorporate consensus-based management options into NEPA documents for public review. The Council on Environmental Quality or individual agencies might consider developing similar guidelines as a tool to foster large landscape conservation partnerships, keeping in mind potential constraints imposed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act and other laws and rules (Bates 2006).

Direction from the Office of Management and Budget, the Congress, or individual departments could prioritize many existing funds to provide more focus and greater funding for landscape-scale conservation.

It is imperative to develop and implement innovative public-private funding arrangements to improve the effectiveness and conservation. While such initiatives may warrant additional sources of funding, the following principles should help garner political support at local, state, and federal levels, as well as within the philanthropic and private sectors. These principles should also inform and govern the competitive grants program described earlier.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To implement these principles, policy makers and others should focus their attention on both the structure and sources of funding.

Provide Multiyear, Multiagency Funding Commitments. Large landscape conservation often requires a multiyear sequence of projects and sustained actions to achieve restoration and conservation goals. Moreover, conservation responsibilities are often distributed among multiple agencies. Annual, individual agency funding currently constrains the capacity to coordinate, plan, and execute phased project components.

Transition the Land and Water Conservation Fund to a Mandatory Fund. Authorized in 1964, LWCF has both stateside and federal components with a combined authorized funding level of \$900 million derived from oil and gas proceeds from federal resources. Actual combined funding has often ranged from \$120 to \$250 million, and has occasionally fallen below this range. The stateside funds are typically used for projects that benefit recreation and have included land acquisition and local recreation project development. The federal funds are generally used for easements and fee simple land acquisition. Two actions could make these funds better suited to advancing landscape-scale conservation: (1) a mechanism for full (mandatory) funding to provide more resources for conservation; and (2) a competitive set-aside for landscape-scale conservation, including capacity building and governance. Transitioning this fund to a mandatory account would ensure that the original intentions of the Congress would be achieved more consistently, and it could designate that a portion of the federal funds support large landscape conservation programs.

Reform the Conservation Spending Category. Congress created this spending category in 2001 to support a number of federal and state land conservation and natural resource protection programs (including the LWCF, state wildlife grants, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund), and has subsequently added other programs to this category. One option would be to propose that this combined spending category be set at a particular level, with appropriations language specifying that some percentage be applied toward large landscape conservation initiatives. This change could be legally complicated, since some of the grant programs under this spending category have specified funding purposes. However, to support large landscape conservation, agencies may need to take a closer look at this category to determine whether it could provide a basis from which to identify dedicated funding for large landscapes.

Reorganize the Army Corps of Engineers Budget. Generally, restoration projects and traditional Corps infrastructure projects are evaluated and prioritized within a single review process. Yet these two types of projects are fundamentally different, potentially warranting different review and ranking criteria. A separate restoration budget would make these projects more transparent and provide a means of dedicating targeted annual and multiyear amounts for restoration projects, especially those related to large landscapes.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Large landscape conservation can be improved significantly by establishing a coherent database on the science of large landscapes; mapping existing and emerging governance efforts; creating a network for practitioners to build capacity; establishing a competitive grants program to promote, coordinate, and support promising efforts; providing the necessary policy tools and incentives to achieve large landscape conservation projects; and facilitating innovative funding arrangements. Implementing these recommendations will take a sustained, collaborative effort among all levels of government, philanthropic foundations, academic institutions, and the hundreds of entrepreneurs who are achieving multiple conservation objectives for large-scale landscapes.

Maximize and focus the use of existing federal and state programs and authorities that can be implemented with little delay and without additional funding

Combine existing funding sources to target large landscape conservation projects.

Provide federal funds through a competitive matching grants program for pilot projects.

Require in-kind or matching funds from nonfederal sources to leverage resources, including local, state, private, and philanthropic foundations.

Employ existing and new tax incentives, tax credits, easement purchase programs, and management agreements to encourage private lands conservation.

Use some funding for the planning and coordination of strategies to conserve whole watersheds, ecosystems, greenways, and corridors.

America's Great Outdoors Initiative can be strengthened by vigorously embracing not just natural resources but our cultural resources as well.

The President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative should include full and permanent funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF).

With full funding, historic preservation will succeed in: Saving open space.

[With full fundin, historic preservation will succeed in:] Promoting "green" initiatives. The best "green" projects retain existing buildings and utilize existing infrastructure.

[With full fundin, historic preservation will succeed in:] Developing ways to promote "heritage tourism." Tourism to Nebraska's historic sites and museums generate over \$100 million annually. It encourages travel and rediscovery of our historic and natural treasures through state and national historic parks and sites.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

[With full fundin, historic preservation will succeed in:] Expanding surveys of historic and archeological places. This includes identifying and recording Nebraska's cultural landscapes. This helps communities, local governments, tribal governments and the public to work to preserve important setting associated with historic events and the important geographical contexts of historic places.

[With full fundin, historic preservation will succeed in:] Assisting tribes in preserving places significant in traditional culture.

[With full fundin, historic preservation will succeed in:] Providing assistance to local governments to recognize the importance of historic preservation within their own growth management and comprehensive planning.

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative needs to benefit all Americans through parks, recreation, open space, and human habitat. Increased funding for existing federal programs will promote preservation and heritage tourism and encourage people to discover and explore America's Great Outdoors.

The Great Outdoors Initiative provides a wonderful opportunity to redress this environmental injustice. We call on the Administration to establish funding for Tribes on a permanent, non-competitive annual basis for the development and maintenance of natural resource management programs or departments.

An analysis of the Federal Budget for fiscal year 2011, Standing with Native American Communities, states that the Administration is committed to give Native American families the tools that they need to succeed. We strongly urge the Administration to make this critical investment in Native America's Great Outdoors.

When shaping the 21st Century Conservation Agenda, OAK recommends that the Administration advance and promote policies, programs and initiatives that foster inter-agency collaboration at all levels of government, as Nature Deficit Disorder has societal implications that extend beyond the scope of any single federal agency or department and solutions will require broadbased collaboration.

The America's Great Outdoors initiative should consider the vast array of federal, state and local policy solutions for reconnecting children, youth and families with the Great Outdoors, including in the areas of recreation and conservation, transportation and built environment, health and wellness, and education.

Connect health and wellness initiatives to outdoor recreation and unstructured outdoor play in nature, and promote solutions that encourage appropriate use of public and private lands as a means to improve the health of children, youth and families;

Create policies and further conduct research that helps to build the next generation of conservationists by connecting children and youth with the outdoors through unstructured outdoor play in nature, quality recreation, education programs and service opportunities;

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Engage diverse audiences in experiences in the great outdoors through targeted outreach and initiatives to make outdoor experiences more culturally relevant; and

Engage youth and parents to learn more about the barriers preventing children, youth and families from connecting with the great outdoors and provide opportunities for them to help shape the agenda and participate in the implementation of solutions at all levels.

Building on the Executive Order launching America's Great Outdoors, the administration should develop a comprehensive national strategy to connect children, youth and families with the outdoors:

This strategy should incorporate the four principles above and be multi-disciplinary and inclusive.

It can be best developed and coordinated by a multi-agency council, led by the White House, which engages departments, agencies, and other government organizations with wide ranging expertise on public land management, health, education, infrastructure, the environment, public service, and other issues related to this initiative.

This national strategy should be developed in close coordination with other public and private sector and non-profit organizations that are actively working at the local, state, regional, and national levels to connect children, youth and families with the outdoors.

In addition, it is essential to meaningfully engage youth leaders in developing and implementing the national strategy.

Further align conservation goals with the First Lady's "Let's Move Outside" campaign by raising the profile of our public and private lands as contributors to healthy lifestyles.

Identify strategies and deepen partnerships with organizations that can further enhance this work.

Bring together health, conservation and other experts to identify ways to align the Administration's conservation goals with the First Lady's Let's Move Outside campaign, consider the request for a Surgeon General "Call to Action" on the physical and mental health benefits of time outdoors, and create a plan to implement the relevant physical activity recommendations of the Federal Task Force on Childhood Obesity.

Support Passage of the Moving Outdoors in Nature section of the Healthy Choices Act and request funding in the fiscal year 2012 budget to pilot the initiatives outlined in the bill.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Moving Outdoors in Nature (as included in the Healthy CHOICES Act (HR 5209) and/or as stand-alone legislation) supports development and implementation of state strategies that connect children with the great outdoors through multi-sector policies (recreation and conservation, transportation and built environment, health and wellness, and education) including those that: 1) support outdoor recreation programs, 2) promote public health initiatives, 3) create community-based natural play areas, 4) develop trails and greenways to connect parks and outdoor recreation areas with places where children live, learn and play, 5) create outdoor learning environments, and 6) other efforts to connect children, youth and families with nature.

Pilot Partnership Coordinator Staff Positions on Public Lands to develop local partnerships with community-based, conservation, recreation and other partners focused on connecting children, youth and families with the great outdoors.

The Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service and Army Corps of Engineers should pilot coordination projects in fiscal year 2011 and provide dedicated staff based at local units of federal land management agencies to leverage resources, coordinate programming and promote outreach to youth and diverse communities.

Fund Studies of National Significance on Children and Nature focused on the impacts on children, youth and families participating in outdoor activities on public and private lands to advance the scientific understanding of: 1) barriers to connecting different communities of children, youth and families with the great outdoors, 2) the physical and mental health impacts of active time in the great outdoors (as called for by the Moving Outdoors in Nature section of the Healthy CHOICES Act), 3) the degree to which time in the great outdoors leads to the development of conservation ethics, and 4) other academic, behavioral, and societal impacts of outdoor programming in nature.

Increase the Number of Safe and Accessible Green Spaces, particularly in low-income communities with significant health disparities, by eliminating park, playground and natural space deserts where they exist, providing adequate funding mechanisms for outdoor infrastructure, increasing safety in parks, creating safe routes to the parks, playgrounds and natural spaces, including better connecting green spaces with public transportation routes, sidewalks and bike paths.

Support Close-to-Home Unstructured Outdoor Play in Nature by supporting passage of the National Program Promoting Lifelong Active Youth (PLAY) and Implementation Grants (as included in the Healthy CHOICES Act (H.R. 5209)), which provides resources to communities to build play spaces and increase the opportunities for close-to-home play, including outdoor play.

Provide resources to parents and caregivers that help address the barriers to allowing unstructured outdoor play.

Strengthen Outreach to Communities of Color at all relevant agencies by designing and implementing targeted media and marketing campaigns and investing resources in developing partnerships and identifying appropriate role models within underrepresented communities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is also important to ensure that outreach initiatives integrate 21st Century communications tools such as mapping devices, iphone applications, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and other tools that will provide communities of color with information about parks, playgrounds and natural spaces.

Engage, Employ and Empower Youth on public lands through volunteerism, community service opportunities, employment and other means by building upon the Department of the Interior's 21st Century Conservation Corps program.

Support passage of the Public Lands Service Corps Act (H.R. 1612 / S. 1442) and similar legislative initiatives that would expand the capacity for service work on federal, state and local lands, build and maintain the necessary infrastructure to connect children, youth and families with the great outdoors, engage and employ youth, especially youth from communities of color, and diversify our conservation constituency.

Reach out to youth through newer technologies including social media.

Engage Youth in the Outdoors during the School Day by collaborating with the Department of Education and local school leadership to engage school children in outdoor learning opportunities and active time outdoors at school.

Support the establishment of schoolyard habitats and gardens, leverage programs that connect school children to our public lands before, during and after the school day, and support environmental education legislation including the No Child Left Inside Act (H.R 2054 / S.866) that would provide funding for outdoor and fieldbased learning and train teachers to provide quality environmental education to students.

We cannot hope to accomplish this without our government's help!

I often travel and camp in our country's beautiful wild lands. That's why I am urging you to use your leadership skills to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces, including wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites.

Please Do YOUR BEST to PROTECT our Wilderness. Thank you!

Protect and expand our Wilderness

As a father and concerned citizen, - Provide Increased Access and Non-intrusive Recreational Opportunities I hope you will step up and lead in shaping a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please do the necessary to protect all of our outdoor spaces.

Let's protect the beautiful heritage that is our country.

It is important that you protect our environment and our wildlife.

What we do now impacts what outdoor activity is enjoyed by future generations. As you are shaping a bold conservation strategy, please consider include following: wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites.

Please protect all remaining roadless areas, our deserts, mountains and land abutting our refuges, national forests and refuges. Please place special emphasis on protecting lands important to coastal health in places like the Delaware Bay.

I'm a former Forest Service employee who was fortunate to have had a role in protecting some of the finest wilderness areas in America, including the John Muir Wilderness and the Ansel Adams Wilderness. Though I've returned to my native Philadelphia, those precious landscapes are still a part of me, as they will be for my children, thanks to their protected status. However, there are hundreds of places around the country that lack significant protection, and once they are lost to development, neglect, or other threats, they can not be replaced.

As a hunter, fisherman, backpacker, camper, and person that loves vast wild roadless and undisturbed places, I feel that the greatest thing that we can do is to enhance and protect our wilderness system. I also think that in areas that are used to logging or grazing, we do so in a careful and sustainable fashion that does not compromise the vitality of the future ecosystems.

Keep moving towards large solar fields and a Smart Grid

Please protect our wildlife and their habitats. Make it safe for our wolves and wild horses to roam as they should. Stop the hate against our wildlife by making the laws regarding cruelty against them harsher.

I am writing on behalf of my two granddaughters who are still too young to write. What we do today determines what kind of world they will live in tomorrow.

I am confident I can count on you to keep the outdoors a place of welcome for generations to come.

I have been a lover and defender of wilderness for most of my life... Please establish the full complement of ocean and Great Lakes marine reserves, which is sufficient to save our rapidly diminishing fisheries.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please do everything you can to protect what remains of our outdoor natural resources. As a child who grew up without money for vacations, etc., I went to parks and other 'free' places to play and 'feel alive'.

I enjoy the outdoors and follow trails, rules, etc. Please protect these areas so I can continue to enjoy these areas and so future generations can enjoy them as well.

We owe it to our children and grandchildren to protect our natural resources. If we don't take the initiative, who will?

I want America's great outdoors to be as great (or greater!) for future generations as it is now, with the preservation and careful stewardship of what we now have, and the restoration of lands and environments that have been damaged or lost.

. In spite of the media focus on right wing rigidities, i remind you of the pin that continues to hang in my car, YES WE CAN. You are in position to lead us toward a saner, healthier, social world. We in the grassroots continue to support and urge you to keep up the leadership. All people NEED our great outdoors.

Expedite all alternative energy sourcing initiatives

Implement substitution of wood with bamboo and hemp for all uses

Eradicate dumping of harmful chemicals into the water

Also, creating innovative and clean alternatives to fossil fuels would be a key element in making the above possible and economical.

Protect additional land as designated wilderness

Protect public forests from logging

Another effort that will help both people and wildlife is to encourage people in urban and suburban areas to plant native trees and other native plants to attract wildlife.

Protect the Tongass as wilderness. It's the last remaining intact old growth rainforest in the northern hemisphere.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Some of my best memories of vacations were when I spent time with my family in American's national parks. I hope to see many more. My family and I spend alot of time outdoors, going to nature centers, taking walks in the woods, etc. I hope that America's beautiful lands will be preserved, for future generations and for the animals and plants that live on the lands.

Those who deeply love Nature are the most devoted stewards of the environment. If everyone truly loved our natural environment, climate change would not even be a concern. We must teach future generations to appreciate the wonders of Nature, and to do that, we must ensure that our great wilderness areas remain unspoiled.

This year has been among the most brutal on our beautiful country's environment and we must take decisive action to correct the damage or we risk losing what we have.

Along with thousands of other americans and visitors, I regularly enjoy the protected areas of the U.S. we need to protect our water, air an land and increase the protected areas now and in the future.

Improve Watersheds by not allowing timber cutting within 100 feet of water ways or on steep slopes and Wildlife Habitat

As part of creation, I tell you this because humans are creation's voice. I ask you to also be a voice for creation and nature.

I honor anchient forests...about 10% or less of our forest in the USA. Stop those who want to only see it as economic gain!

Since I was a child I have been spending summers in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. This experience honestly created the person I am today. Taking week long trips in the backcountry taught me how to rely on myself and how to lead a group of people in a way that benefitted the entire group. Mr. President I urge you to do that now. Please consider the old Iroquois saying "In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."

we need to protect more species and more natural wonders for future generations-please protect them from the current corporate greed that is ruining our country.

please address the mountaintop removal going on in the Appalacian mountains. Over 500 mountaintops have been removed. What are we leaving our children and grandchildren?

OPEN AND UNDEVELOPED SPACE IS NECESSARY FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH OF HUMANITY, AS WELL AS THE PRESERVATION OF ALL SPECIES. PLEASE CREATE, EXPAND, AND PROTECT ALL OUR OUTDOOR SPACES.

Please continue to so all you can to protect and preserve our wonderful and great outdoor wilderness. Please!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am lucky to have open spaces near my home: the Allandale Woods and the Arnold Arboretum. My wife and I have personally seen mountaintop removal coalmining when visiting friends in West Virginia. We've been horrified by what it does to surrounding communities, their water supplies and their overall environment. It must be stopped. We must switch to a green economy and train those miners for green jobs.

Man NEEDS to preserve wilderness to save his sanity. Our minds and bodies were designed to be outdoors. Concrete and buildings only suppress our true nature and leads to depression and schizophrenia.

You have the power and ability NOW to protect, restore, and expand our great wilderness areas, so your children - and so many others - can both read about these incredible places (knowing they are safe for the future), as well as visit them.

I know growing up I used to always seek out creeks and lakes to swim in and some of the fondest memories I have is at a lake with my family. I have since taught my children to love the outdoors. It would just be ashamed if in the future you had to go for hundreds and hundreds of miles to see a tree or a forest or a lake or a creek or a wild animal. In Arkansas you have all of those things in your back yard and easy access to them. I would love for you and your administration to keep it that way for us here and all over the this great land of ours.

I am an outdoor educator in Florissant, Colorado, and I have seen firsthand what a profound impact even three short days interacting with the natural world can have on a sixth grader. In our program, students from Colorado Springs and Denver, who normally spend their days in front of televisions and computer screens, discover firsthand the healing benefits of time outdoors. They become more engaged, experience greater calmness, and establish a connection to something they identify as "greater" than themselves. They feel a part of something and become empowered. Children with behavioral problems find themselves more calm and able to pay attention for longer periods of time. Over-scheduled kids feel a profound sense of peace when sitting silently in an aspen grove listening to the leaves. One of the many problems with our plugged-in generation is that there is less and less access to wild lands. This is an issue that affects the physical and mental health of both children and adults. Public lands must be protected.

In North Carolina we added new state parks recently. But land is being developed quickly and we need to protect more of it before it is too late.

We need to preserve as much as we can of the "Purple mountains majesty," and the beauty of the North American continent for our descendants!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In 1933 FDR put a generation - including my daddy - to work restoring and preserving America's wilderness. The CCC also improved access for all Americans to National Parks, Forests, and other wilderness areas. Daddy's generation reaped the benefits of work and an improved economy. My generation got the physical health benefits of clean water and the psychological health benefits of wilderness. America's wilderness lands need restoring and protecting again. America's youth need jobs. And I want my grandsons to have the physical and psychological benefits my generation enjoyed

I just spent a day hiking the beautiful Pinnacles National Monument near Soledad, California. It was beautiful...and it needs to stay that way.

And please close the Halliburton loophole to end natural gas exploration in our National Parks and on BLM land!

Remove Ranches on Public Lands, and their Grazing rights

I urge you to make large-scale conservation of species, habitats, and watersheds a priority.

We have an historic opportunity to transform conservation for the 21st century, and leave a natural heritage legacy that future generations can enjoy, but we must act now.

Let's use our Democratic majority in Congress and the Presidency to reverse weaknesses in environmental policies brought on by previous administrations. Of key importance are oceans, lakes and streams. Please prioritize water for protection, and keep it an available right for all forms of life on the planet!

The government was intrusted with public lands by American citizens for conservation not: mining, drilling, nor logging

It has been very hard for many of us this summer with so many parks being closed down. We are supposed to be working toward making our country better for the future not selling off our wonderful reserves. I so hope the funding can be found to reopen and fix up these parks so we all once again can go for hikes and camp in our wonderful park. We need to keep adding more new nature park areas not cutting them back.

Also, I feel it is imperative to re-green our cities to the fullest extent possible by reducing asphalt cover, introducing bioswale catchments around parking lots and roadways, and by planting native plants everywhere possible to create wildlife habitat, reduce flood damage and improve livability and quality of life.

The U.S. must implement 3 things to establish a democracy: publicly-funded campaigns, election reform (a la W. Europe) and end obscene corporate lobbies!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Encourage (subsidize if needed) private lands be converted to wild spaces they were before development-agriculture-drilling-etc., instead of the opposite that has been done thus far

As a national park junkie (who travels to several national parks each year), I implore you to protect and fund additional monies for our national parks and wilderness areas. As a nation, we need to do more to protect and enhance our parks and wild lands. They provide sustenance for all creatures and give me a huge sense of pride in our country and our freedoms (to enjoy our parks and wildlands in many ways).
- - - - -
I implore you to create more wilderness areas and to continue to build - and fund - the national parks, monuments, and wilderness areas

Please make every effort to expand and protect our national treasures for future generations.

Set aside public lands for conservation

, In my lifetime, I have watched parks, arboretums, and wild places of this country disappear as the population increased. What little "wilderness" we have left is overused by competing interests. It takes little time to destroy a wild place, but it takes generations to get it back... I would like to see our government embrace the Land Ethic proposed by Aldo Leopold decades ago. I would like to see our policies for land use in this country be based not on profit or mastery but on an ethical understanding of stewardship. Specific priorities I would like to see are: - Strong laws and enforcement to protect our water, air, and land everywhere in this country. Wilderness does not exist in isolation. A CAFO bleeding concentrated pig manure into a stream or ground water will poison everything downstream.

Strong incentives to preserve and conserve land. There is no excuse for extractive, exploitive, destructive, or erosive use of public land. The practice should end. If it is not ended, then the companies that use the land should bear the true cost of maintaining and rehabilitating it. No free give-aways to profit-making companies. No one should earn a profit off public land.

Expand the amount of conserved public land, starting with habitats critical to biological diversity. - Create programs that give incentives to ordinary to conserve and preserve private land. Make these programs increase in value within communities. If a single land owner sets aside some land where migratory birds can rest, they should be rewarded, but if a critical mass of community members do the same, they should be rewarded at a higher level. - Apply these values to our dealings with foreign powers. If we preserve our forests at the cost of cutting down forests in other countries where labor is cheap and exploited, we have created a worse problem.

Support urban gardening, rooftop gardening, CSAs, and other grassroots projects that connect city dwellers with nature

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please protect America's magnificent outdoors for our children and all future generations.

Please protect these protections by making them irreversible by future administrations.

We can't afford to wait to take this action. You are the strongest environmental administration this country has had in a number of years. Please don't waste this opportunity.

Having access to the outdoors and learning about the natural world has always been an important part of my life, whether living in the Northeast, Oregon, or in Arizona. The recent loss of state funding for parks in Arizona, resulting in the temporary or permanent closure of many of my favorite beautiful, wild areas, including Red Rocks State Park, Tonto Natural Bridge State Park, and the park in Jerome, has been a horrible and scary loss for this state. Please do all you can to expand protections of natural lands and resources across the country, and to set in place policies that will protect these lands and connect our citizens to them for generations to come.

We strongly recommend that a new standard of stewardship is built into the BLM's planning, budget and management.

In particular, we believe the following actions are critical to achieve lasting improvements in how we implement conservation in the 21st century. We encourage you to make the following priorities a detailed part of the November 15th report on the Great Outdoors.

Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund

This fund created by Congress in 1966 is the single most important source of federal funding for the protection of new conservation lands and improvement of existing recreational areas to the benefit of all Americans. The program has added millions of acres to the nation's inventory of parks, wildlife refuges, forests and state recreational areas. The revenue stream, however, has been anything but reliable. Though the annual authorized spending level is \$900 million, Congress has usually appropriated far less (dipping below \$150 million during the mid-1990s). Now is the time to ensure that the Land and Water Conservation Fund becomes a true dedicated trust fund to protect these receipts from being diverted to other unrelated issues.

Enhance Stewardship of America's Most Important Places

The wildlife and water, scenic and recreational and historic and cultural values of some of America's treasured wild places - as well as the threats facing those resource values -- make some places more important to the country. We urge the Administration to create a process that involves communities, local and state government and through which a small portion of America's landscapes are identified for special attention through this effort. We believe that the following places are some of the landscapes that deserve particular federal attention through the Great Outdoors Initiative:

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As part of a smarter new conservation blueprint for America in the 21st century, the November Great Outdoors report should identify how the Administration will structure programs and focus resources in a way that more significantly targets federal activities toward these and other specific landscapes of special importance to all Americans.

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and the millions of Americans we represent, we are writing to provide you with overall policy recommendations for the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative. We believe our proposals reflect how deeply the American people value, appreciate, and enjoy our nation's great natural, cultural, and historic places.

Citizens across the country are saying that America's Great Outdoors is about protecting whole natural places and cultural landscapes -- from metropolitan park systems and national heritage sites to big wilderness areas -- as part of our natural and recreational legacy.

It is also about connecting people, especially young people, to nature and their heritage.

Finally, it is about connecting Americans to each other, understanding that the best conservation outcomes occur when people work together to protect, connect and restore private lands, working lands, and our wildest public lands and waters.

A tremendous opportunity exists for the federal government to act as the catalyst for federal, state, tribal and local agencies, as well as private landowners, to work together across America to protect a network of natural areas, recreation lands, historic and cultural sites, and productive working landscapes from the inner city to wilderness. There is an often overlooked need for the federal government to facilitate integrated planning and cooperation among all levels of government, and, particularly among federal agencies, to achieve more effective conservation of whole ecosystems and watersheds.

There Is a Broad Consensus for AGO's Desired Outcomes

Toward this end we respectfully recommend that your Administration collaborate with communities across America to create a new and popular legacy of conservation, preservation, recreation, and restoration initiatives that will become a tangible, durable and visible accomplishment of your Administration.

Across the country, government officials, conservationists, forest land owners and ranchers, and rural and suburban community leaders are increasingly working together to create large-scale landscape restoration plans. If supported by an America's Great Outdoors Initiative, these cooperative efforts can create networks of critical ecosystems, natural resources, and recreation lands from the inner city to wildlands.

Sustaining the working farms, ranches and forests that are important for our economy and our environment. Private land owners hold 70 percent of all the land in America. These areas provide wildlife habitat, are a foundation of the American economy, and are an integral part of our culture. They produce food and fiber for our citizens as well as open spaces, community forests, and ecological connections across a sometimes fragmented landscape.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Creating, expanding and better protecting shared outdoors spaces including federal, state and local parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, monuments, trails, wild and scenic rivers, and historic sites. The protection of these treasures is a fundamental value of the American people.

Provide access to high quality outdoor recreation for all Americans. The human experience of natural and historic areas is among the greatest benefits provided by our national parks, wildlife refuges, monuments, trails, rivers, blueways, and other shared outdoor spaces. Direct experience inspires people to become future stewards of natural and historic places. Your Administration has the opportunity to forge deep, broad, and varied constituencies -- traditional and new -- working together to promote sustainable enjoyment of natural places, historic and cultural sites, and fish and wildlife.

Enhance the economic and environmental viability and the quality of life of urban areas. Federal, state, and local parks, greenways, and natural areas in and around urban metropolitan areas are essential to economic development, reducing the impacts of global warming and fostering the health and well-being of the American people. State and local parks, preserves, and trails must not be seen as separate and apart from large protected landscapes and wilderness. Rather, they provide physical and conceptual links to America's great national parks, wildlife refuges, and other natural places and are portals to a national network of recreational and natural resources. Visitation to these areas is often the first step towards a lifetime of good health and appreciation of the outdoors.

Commit to new, more reliable and flexible funding for the acquisition of public lands, conservation easements, and for the restoration, preservation, and management of lands and waters to achieve the goals of this initiative. The Administration's desire to promote and support innovative community-level efforts can only be fulfilled if there is adequate, long term, and reliable funding to support the additional work that will be required to achieve the goals of AGO, including funding to build collaborative partnerships, engage youth, serve park visitors, and for the acquisition of conservation and recreation lands in fee or easement. These funds may come from a variety of sources, but their expenditure must be targeted and coordinated to achieve lasting results at the scale of whole natural or park systems.

The AGO Initiative should propose bold action now -- with tangible results -- to carry on America's rich tradition of conservation and preservation.

Recommendation: Develop a new type of administrative land-use designation entitled wildlife corridor. This new designation would be employed by all federal land management agencies through land management plans. The binding standards and guidelines associated with this designation would be consistent across federal land management boundaries and maintain ecological connectivity between our nation's most important habitats and iconic landscapes -- our National Parks, Monuments, Wilderness areas, Forest Service lands, National Wildlife Refuges, National Landscape Conservation System lands, and other crucial wildlife habitats.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In order for these newly designated corridors to be protected, the America's Great Outdoors Initiative will need to fund programs and legislation that prioritize wildlife corridors for current and future generations. Accordingly, we recommend that new funding sources be allocated to the protection of wildlife corridors that have been chosen by agreed-upon criteria and qualities set forth by America's Great Outdoors and the stakeholders you represent.

Some of this scenario, such as the Tribe's data collection and concentration of energy development as well as the Governors' MOU, is currently a reality. The new land designation with binding land use standards across agencies and cooperative agreements are not yet a reality.

America's Great Outdoors (AGO) has a unique opportunity to be a leader by creating this new wildlife corridor land designation. AGO can utilize ongoing work, such as BLM's Ecoregional Assessments, to help identify corridors and then create and apply designations through land management plans and executive order. An important component will be inviting partners to join in wildlife corridor protection by providing funding and incentives through the Farm Bill, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Transportation Bill, Climate Bill, Energy Bill, and several internal DOI programs such as the Partners for Fish and Wildlife.

The protection of wildlife corridors maintains the integrity of our past century's conservation investment and ensures that American citizens can be connected to the natural places they need for health and recreation. To not connect, to not protect, will jeopardize not just wildlife but the values in life that we Americans have enjoyed for more than two centuries.

An opportunity exists for the Administration to address this paradigm shift proactively by building upon existing incentives and considering the development of complimentary new authorities.

To achieve success, it will be necessary to unite a broad and diverse coalition of government entities, conservation, environmental, sportsmen's, farming, forest and ranching organizations, and the private sector behind a common goal: to enable landowners across the country to keep more of their own income in exchange for providing significant ecological, economic, and recreational benefits to their communities and states

Recommendations

Expanded Deductions for Conservation Related Donations:

By placing a premium on the donation of easements, these tax incentives bolster voluntary land conservation while protecting the livelihood of farmers, ranchers and forest owners. Permanent extension of the benefits will allow time for the education and outreach necessary to build awareness and acceptance of conservation easements and provide legal certainty for those wishing to undertake long-term projects, which often involve estate planning and multi-generational decisions.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In addition, extension of the expanded deductions will level the playing field for donors at all income levels, allowing landowners with moderate incomes to get the same deductions that donors with higher incomes already realize for the exact same donations; ensure on the ground conservation by requiring donors to meet existing Tax Code requirements for conservation related donations; and expand and increase opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Recommendation

Include permanent extension of the expanded deductions in the President's FY 2012 Budget Proposal.

Tax Credits for Fish and Wildlife Protection, Restoration, and Enhancement

Recommendation

Work with the Department of Treasury to develop and transmit legislation to Congress authorizing a conservation tax credit. While the administration should consider a broad spectrum of potential tax credit mechanisms, we would like to offer the below concept as a means to initiate and guide the discussion.

An income tax credit, capped at 50 % of the fair market value of the donation and with a ceiling of \$5 million for individuals and \$15 million for corporations, for the donation of easements that result in multiple high yield public benefits.

To receive the credit, the donated easement would be required to qualify as a 'conservation related donation' under existing tax code requirements and be certified by a federal or state wildlife, land management or environmental agency as resulting in:

- i. Quantifiable and significant benefits for greenhouse gas sequestration (i.e. preservation of grasslands or forested areas and/or no till requirements.)
- ii. A requirement that the property subject to the easement be utilized to facilitate the emergence of conservation, water quality or carbon trading markets and/or the provision of woody biomass to refine cellulosic ethanol.
- iii. Expanded access for hunting, fishing and other wildlife dependant recreational activities on the land subject to the conservation easement or adjacent public lands.
- iv. The creation or protection of vital habitat, such as:
 - habitat for one or more threatened or endangered species,
 - fish or wildlife migration corridors or
 - crucial stopover habitat for migratory waterfowl.
- v. Critical enhancements to management continuity of adjacent public lands.
- vi. The protection of significant historic and cultural landscapes and/or artifacts.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To Control for historic opposition to similar measures including cost, protection against changes to the tax code, and the difficulties associated with emerging natural resources markets, the credit would be developed using a tiered approach:

- . First, legislation would be developed to authorize a fixed term (3-5 year) competitive credit, or payment in lieu of a credit, that would be capped for the first year.
 - i. Grants would only be awarded to applicants whose proposed projects 'score' the highest when vetted using the above criteria.
 - ii. Subsequent legislation would be proposed authorizing the credit (as described above) for ten years.

Additional New Programs and Authorities

Expansion of the class of donors eligible to receive uncapped deductions beyond qualified farmers and ranchers to include conservation donors of easements on priority parcels. To receive the expanded deduction, a conservation easement donor would be required to make a donation that qualifies as a 'conservation related donation' under existing tax code requirements and be certified by a federal or state wildlife, land management or environmental agency as resulting in:

- vii. The creation or protection of vital habitat, such as:
 - habitat for one or more threatened or endangered species,
 - fish or wildlife migration corridors or
 - crucial stopover habitat for migratory waterfowl.
- viii. Expanded access for hunting, fishing and other wildlife dependant recreational activities on the land subject to the conservation easement or adjacent public lands.
- ix. Critical enhancements to management continuity of adjacent public lands.

In addition to the specific proposals outlined above, we also recommend that the Administration create a Private Lands Conservation federal advisory committee (FACA) charged with developing conservation and outdoor recreation tax incentives and policy proposals. Made up of experts in the field from the conservation, outdoor recreation and tax finance communities, the FACA would be charged with developing consensus recommendations that would guide the federal government in the area of private lands conservation and recreation issues.

A 50% capital gains exclusion for conservation related donations that further the goals of programs such as NAWCA and State Wildlife Action Plans.

A "New Market" tax credit for conservation credits related to the protection, restoration, and enhancement of habitat for priority and/or declining species and other fish/wildlife species.

Expanded conservation related deductions, exemptions, and credits that could be enacted as incentives to keep family owned private lands intact when inherited.

An incentive to integrate conservation projects into the Troubled Asset Relief Program toxic asset land disposition process.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Investment, or new market tax credits that would incentivize development of improved technologies for utilizing woody biomass for cellulosic ethanol. The credit would apply to all stages of a project including the removal of woody biomass and its transportation. IRS guidance or legislative report language confirming that private land forestry meets the definition of "Agriculture" for purposes of qualifying for expanded deductions.

The creation of a full time political appointee or high-level FTE at the Treasury Department tasked with the domestic conservation tax portfolio.

How best to develop the baseline data and related standards for targeting future tax incentives to agreed upon criteria for federal priorities.

Below we suggest steps the Administration could champion to take this conservation work to a new level, and empower land trusts to greatly expand their conservation impact. The Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) program provides an excellent model for this. By encouraging collaborative partnerships between state and local agencies, nonprofit land trusts and private landowners, GOCO leverages commitments from all partners to create broadly-supported, cost-effective, highly leveraged conservation. GOCO also recognizes that strong partnerships require strong partners by providing capacity building grants to local conservation organizations.

1. Create permanent tax incentives for conservation by private landowners. Such incentives have helped America's land trusts protect more than 10 million of acres of significant wildlife habitat, productive working lands, and historic landscapes. By leveraging the generosity and conservation spirit of America's farmers, ranchers and forest owners and the locally-grounded, entrepreneurial efforts of land trusts, such donations and bargain sales can make land protection work on a large scale, at modest cost. Foremost amongst such ideas are:

Make an enhanced income tax deduction for donations of conservation easements a permanent part of the tax code (H.R. 1831/S. 812).

Expand the estate tax incentive for donations of easements (H.R. 3050/S. 3640)

Prevent the estate tax from forcing the fragmentation, sale and loss of family-owned farms, ranches and forests by deferring estate tax on such lands (H.R. 4575/S. 3664).

2. Provide full and dedicated funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Forest Legacy Program, and provide for more flexibility in their use. We believe that creating a competitive grants program to directly support locally-driven partnerships that are achieving nationally important goals is an important way to leverage conservation funding and encourage collaborative partnerships that bring many hands to solve conservation problems, and build broad community and political support for their work. Funding the purchase of land and easements by land trusts can solve many conservation problems that federal acquisition alone cannot.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

3. Commit significant new funding for the important easement programs in the Farm Bill, and reward applicants who are part of a strategic initiative. The Farm and Ranch Land Protection grants program is a great model for collaborative conservation, with landowners often donating a large share of the cost and land trusts and state governments taking on the stewardship responsibilities for its easements. The Grassland Reserve Program promises similar benefits, on an even bigger scale, if provided adequate funding. Giving special preference to applicants that are part of a larger landscape initiative plan, public or private, can make this program even more effective.

As private forest owners face difficult economic times that put great economic pressures on land use, public policies that promote robust existing markets for forest products, emerging markets like renewable energy and carbon, favorable tax policies, and public investment in conservation are vital to maintaining working forests and the rural jobs they support as a vital part of our working rural landscapes.

As existing markets weaken or disappear, goods, services and uses associated with working forests are becoming less competitive with other economic uses of private forest land over time. While some conversion from forests to other uses is acceptable to accommodate a growing population or to optimize land use, it is critical to develop policies and programs that help working forests remain competitive with other land uses and thereby help sustain the many benefits they provide as part of our nation's natural resources infrastructure. This is especially critical as we advance our efforts to meet our nation's growing need for renewable energy, climate change solutions, a healthier environment, and familywaged jobs in rural communities.

While traditional markets and the jobs they provide are critical, they must be augmented by new and emerging markets that will spur forest investment and help diversify and strengthen the job base in rural economies going forward. The Forest Service report mentions that USDA's Office of Environmental Markets is working to create and expand markets for environmental services from forests, such as carbon sequestration, clean air and water, and wildlife habitat. We appreciate the attention to these markets, which are still undeveloped and in need of much work to make them helpful to forest owners in the future. At the same time, we need to invest in today's emerging markets that can provide meaningful benefits to forests and wage-earners alike in rural communities throughout the country.

One of these markets is the use of forest biomass as a sustainable and renewable source of electricity, heat, and fuel. Biomass is a plentiful energy source that can add value to forest lands that doesn't exist today. We applaud Secretary Vilsack's support for biomass energy and its role in helping to sustain working forests and jobs in rural communities. However, we are concerned that this important marketplace is threatened by policies at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), like the PSD Tailoring Rule, that equate renewable biomass energy to fossil fuel energy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We strongly agree with the President's and Secretary Vilsack's vision of unlocking the potential of the forests and farms comprising our nation's working landscapes to revitalize rural America as a source of enduring economic and conservation benefits, and we are prepared to work closely with the White House, USDA, EPA and other parts of the Administration to achieve that vision. We ask that, as part of this partnership, the White House, EPA and USDA work closely together on immediate steps to improve the PSD Tailoring Rule and other related policies and to minimize regulatory burdens and uncertainty in any NPDES permit requirements. Such efforts are critical to ensure that our private forests are allowed to play the positive role they should play in providing a clean and domestic source of renewable energy, good paying jobs in struggling rural communities, and conservation benefits enjoyed by millions of Americans.

1) Adequately fund effective conservation and recreation programs:

Guarantee full and permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF has an effective record of protecting important lands and recreational assets, yet has only been fully funded once in its 45-year history.

Increase funding for the Recreational Trails Program, the only federal program that is focused solely on providing states and local organizations funding to expand recreational trails.

Ensure ongoing funding for trail construction and maintenance through the Corporation for National and Community Service. NCS has been one of the primary sources of engaging young people in stewardship and providing much-needed construction and maintenance of our nation's trails.

2) Leverage local skills and knowledge with federal partnerships and support:

Expand the use of the Challenge Cost Share program for trail building and restoration to make funds available for use on federally funded easement lands held by state government, local governments, or land trusts, where deeds guarantee public recreational access.

Employ the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to create new close-to-home recreation opportunities and conserve land and water. Significantly boost support for this program, which aligns well with the goals of the AGO initiative.

3) Send America's youth outside:

Integrate environmental and experiential education with federal curriculum requirements, since schools play such a primary role in the lives of youth.

Partner with informal educators to provide lasting outdoor experiences for youth and to engage whole families.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Prioritize transportation infrastructure that creates connectivity and access to local and regional outdoor resources by public transportation, cycling, and walking.

4) Protect the land, water, and air that make America's treasured landscapes great:

America's Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions are home to treasured outdoor resources within easy access of millions of people, and these landscapes should be prioritized for federal investment. Supporting both landscape level conservation and integrated land and water trail systems will have a lasting positive impact on the people, economies, and natural resources of the region. For example:

Protect the country's natural resources and people recreating outdoors from air pollution impacts. Those recreating outside, especially children, are more at risk from poor air quality and the Air Quality Action days that often plague the Eastern U.S. in the summertime from high ozone and fine particulate pollution. Reduce these impacts by finalizing the re-consideration of the 2008 ozone NAAQS, setting the levels to 60 ppb for the 8-hour primary and 7 ppm-hr secondary standards.

The Hudson River Sloop Clearwater's (Clearwater) recommendations entitled "The Next Generational of Environmental Leaders: Local Solutions for National Challenges" are important; and I write to support them. A direct result of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative and subsequent listening sessions in the Hudson Valley, these recommendations represent the voice of the youth of the valley—the next generation of environmental leaders.

We must ensure that our next generation of leaders can succeed and, with the AGO, we can solidify the groundwork for success for our children. Together we can inspire, educate and activate the next generation of environmental leaders!

A. INSPIRING: SUPPORTING NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE

Create more useable open spaces close to home and a realistic integrated public transportation infrastructure to generate improved access to those living in urban communities.

Support the Hudson Valley National Park designation to highlight the new national park model including urban and rural green space.

Coordinate effective and replicable links between municipalities, nonprofits and schools working in the same region to maximize efforts for a community-based organizing of feedback, thereby prioritizing needs for our youth getting outdoors where it counts—in neighborhoods and families.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support programs such as the Hudson River Estuary Program who provide resources for educators, students and families to learn about the Hudson, including outdoor programs, lesson plans, posters, education centers, exhibits, interpretive signs, and descriptions of key river issues.

B. EDUCATING: THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS

Enhancements and modifications to school curriculum to include substantive experiential opportunities to learn in nature, from the very beginning of a child's education.

Incentives for schools to take alternative hands-on field trips to national and state parks, farms and nature preserves, and waterways to engage and increase participation in environmental education programs, especially in underserved communities.

Support healthy lifestyle choices by teaching our youth about green-living options, such as home-gardening and exercise through inclusion in academic curriculum and in alternative programming in school and after school.

Funding for programming for kids to learn the importance of environmental protection.

C. ACTIVATING: URBAN LEADERS AND GREEN CITIES

Provide structural support and reinforcement on a federal level for programs that create youth development opportunities with tangible incentives for increased recruitment and performance rates in inner-city communities. .

Designate green career paths by creating apprenticeships and internships for our youth in fields such as environmental education, farming, renewable energy, agriculture, and urban planning.

Create and publicize more jobs for high school and college-aged students in local and state parks, farms, and forests as caretakers of the land and utilize their abilities to connect and mobilize their community groups to increase participation.

Support leadership roles through projects in environmental justice cities.

Train community leaders, teachers and young adults to achieve local conservation and land use goals, adopt emission reduction strategies and prepare for the effects of storms and flooding and expand opportunities for citizen connection to the river through boat launches and preserving open space linked to river scenery.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

NatureBridge believes that a key to making the President's Initiative successful is connecting the next generation and generations to come to America's truly great outdoors. We believe that the National Park Service (NPS) will be able to reach more youth, more efficiently, with more powerful programs by better integrating long-term program providers and proven partners such as NatureBridge into NPS education and interpretation programs and processes.

With NPS support, NatureBridge and other long-term partners can work together to quickly and substantially increase the number and quality of environmental and cultural education programs offered in and around our National Parks. Administrative changes within the National Park Service could greatly improve the cohesiveness and effectiveness of these relationships and help ensure the success of the President's Initiative. NatureBridge supports the NPS taking the following steps:

Simplify and standardize partnership agreements and institute a "proven partner status."

Standardize administrative requirements and employ a more uniform approach to working with partners that operate in multiple parks.

Include and engage nonprofit partners in operational leadership (multi level) training opportunities and in already existing National Park Service training.

Streamline approval processes to fit the pace of business in the 21st Century, improve mission-related results for everyone, and save donor and taxpayer money

We encourage you to designate recreation as a unifying theme. Recreation may be the best way to achieve one of the primary goals of the AGO Initiative—reconnecting Americans (and youth in particular) to the outdoors. Indeed, as our nation's population continues to shift towards urban settings, we are no longer required to have significant interactions or relationships with the natural world. If connecting to the outdoors is a choice, then recreation can be used to make that choice more compelling for Americans. Sustainable outdoor recreation can further a variety of other policy goals, such as conservation, youth and volunteer engagement, and economic vitality—particularly in rural areas. In the event that recreation is not ultimately designated as a unifying theme, we encourage that the special role of recreation be addressed in an explicit and detailed manner in the report.

One theme common to all of our meetings last week was the desire to identify potential AGO Initiative ideas that were reflective of the current (and expected future) federal budget environment. We believe that the following concepts could thrive in such an environment:

- Develop an Executive Order directing the major federal land management agencies to incorporate the basic goals of the AGO Initiative into their resource management efforts. This approach allows individual agencies to rely upon existing, agency-specific wisdom to work toward one goal, and incentivizes interagency communication.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

- Fully fund the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program and replicate the RTCA model wherever appropriate. RTCA is a minuscule part of the federal budget, but every dollar invested in the RTCA program is maximized by the partnerships built between recreation organizations, state and local government agencies, and federal land managers to develop trails, conserve rivers, and provide valuable close-to-home recreation opportunities for millions of Americans.

- In conjunction with the creation of a National Recreation and Conservation Corps, create a youth corps ambassadorship program in high schools and colleges throughout the country, working to engage these young people in community service and volunteerism centered on conservation and outdoor recreation.

- Leverage volunteers. Volunteer capacity is being left on the table throughout the country. Model a federal program after the Colorado Outdoor Stewardship Institute. For example, use USDA forest officials to train regional volunteers who in turn manage abundant local volunteers across the country.

- Landscape-level planning and execution on outdoor recreation infrastructure. The federal government can lead in the development of a national strategic framework, working regionally to identify the key projects—the missing pieces of the puzzle—that encourage the conservation, management, planning, design, and enhancement of the physical infrastructure needed to experience America’s great outdoors in a sustainable manner.

The active outdoor community contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy. This macro-scale number (and numbers from other segments of the recreation and tourism industries) not only deserves better branding from an agency point-of-view, but needs to be highlighted on the regional and local level in both urban and rural communities across the country. Outdoor recreation is a vehicle of outdoor engagement, but equally important, the recreation economy represents a burgeoning source of sustainable, green, domestic jobs and a significant contribution to GDP in virtually every community across America.

Partnerships between the public and private sectors are essential to AGO, and this fact was reinforced during our meetings with you last week. Given the myriad facets that create the outdoor industry, and the fact that outdoor recreation is essential both to reconnecting Americans with the outdoors and the creation of a 21st century conservation agenda, we believe our industry can be a vital partner to the federal government in the success of AGO. Strong, actionable leadership in Washington around AGO creates opportunities for us to assist in a number of different ways. For example, if a central clearinghouse of recreational use information is facilitated by the administration, we can coordinate every avenue of the active outdoor industry to supply its content.

There are a number of possibilities for the active outdoor industry to partner with the federal government to achieve the tenets of AGO. If the administration creates an opportunity for the outdoor recreation community to help, we will throw our efforts behind such leadership.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We support President Obama's vision for the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to build on the bipartisan conservation legacy of his predecessors -- President Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. As chief steward of America's abundant natural resources and diverse cultural legacy, President Obama referred to "a breathtaking legacy of conservation that still enhances our lives," in announcing the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

TCF encourages the Obama Administration to build on over 100 years of American conservation leadership by leading the effort to provide permanent and dedicated conservation funding that will enrich the lives of current and future generations of Americans. Through this initiative, President Obama can build on the groundbreaking conservation legislation signed into law by Teddy Roosevelt and his successors during the early twentieth century to conserve historic sites, eastern forests, migratory birds, and to establish the National Park Service. Over fifty years later, President Johnson signed legislation into law establishing the Land and Water Conservation Fund, National Wilderness Preservation System, National Trails and Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Fifty years after this effort, President Obama has the opportunity to leave a legacy on par with his predecessors and to ensure that our nation's conservation legacy will grow and lead the world in its scope and vision.

Land and Water Conservation Fund. Established by Congress in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a visionary and bipartisan program that uses a small fraction of federal revenues from offshore oil and gas drilling leases to reinvest in permanent natural resource protection. The House of Representatives recently passed the Consolidated Land, Energy and Aquatic Resources Act (CLEAR Act; H.R. 3534) to provide \$900 million annually for LWCF funding to conserve our nation's outstanding natural resources for future generations. The Senate is considering a similar provision in its version of the bill.

Because of the significant public benefits from state and federal land acquisition, we encourage the President to make full and permanent funding of LWCF a top priority. The Conservation Fund seeks the Administration's support for full and permanent funding of the LWCF through the current legislative vehicles moving forward in the House and Senate. In addition, we also encourage the Administration to supporting full and permanent funding for the LWCF through the President's Fiscal Year 2012 Budget submission to Congress in February 2011.

By securing permanent and dedicated LWCF funding, the Administration will provide lasting economic benefits to communities, protect water quality, promote recreation, and help landowners achieve their conservation goals for their lands through working farms and ranches. The Conservation Fund is a member of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition, an informal partnership of national, state, and local conservation and recreation organizations working together to support full and dedicated funding for LWCF to address a shifting pattern of land ownership that is providing significant opportunities to conserve large tracts of land.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In the event that Congress reauthorizes this statute, we encourage the Administration to take advantage of this authority and aggressively implement the program by selling lands deemed eligible for disposal to generate funds which will be used to acquire key properties from willing sellers to benefit the National Landscape Conservation System, National Forest System, National Wildlife Refuge System, and National Park System. The FLTFA program complements LWCF funding, land exchanges, and other federal tools to expand recreational access to the public.

The Weeks Act Centennial. Next year, the U.S. Forest Service and our nation will celebrate the 100th anniversary of one of the most successful land conservation efforts in the United States – the Weeks Act of 1911. By authorizing federal funding to purchase forest land for conservation, the Weeks Act conserved 6 million acres of land in the eastern United States and has helped lead to the creation a network of conserved lands in 26 states.

As we approach the centennial of the Weeks Act, TCF encourages the Administration to commemorate the Weeks Act by developing a legislative package of proposals that builds upon the success of the original Weeks Act. We recommend this package include a new dedicated fund modeled on the success of FLTFA that allows the USFS to sell tracts deemed eligible for disposable and no longer consistent with USFS ownership through a robust public process, with proceeds from these sales going toward high-value conservation tracts. In addition, TCF has identified a need to provide new funding, to complement the LWCF, to focus on acquiring and restoring cutover land. This may include enhancement of existing Weeks Act National Forests through restoration and acquisition of targeted properties.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). The NAWCA program has been instrumental in protecting millions of acres of wetlands habitat in North America. Authorized at \$75 million annually, the demand for this program far exceeds the program's current capacity. The Fund has utilized NAWCA grants to conserve important wetlands systems across the country, including recent projects in Florida, Michigan, Texas, and Montana. The Fund encourages the Obama Administration to continue its support for robust funding for the NAWCA Program in the annual budget, with strong consideration given toward ramping the program up to \$75 million annually in upcoming budget cycles.

The nationally significant Harriet Tubman National Park Initiative is a tremendous opportunity to align historic, cultural, and natural resource conservation, protecting and promoting the inspirational life of a great American. As national interest in Civil War era history and the African American experience grows, especially with the approaching sesquicentennial of the Civil War in 2011, it is the ideal time for establishment of the park and for the associated opportunities to conserve vital natural lands on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The Conservation Fund, along with our federal partners including the FWS, NPS, and the State of Maryland, are playing a leadership role in the Tubman initiative by supporting legislation to establish the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad and National Historical Park.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Western River Corridors. Through the work of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), TCF has worked with local partners to conserve key river corridors in eastern Idaho and south-central Wyoming. In many areas, the USFS manages the higher elevation forest lands to provide recreational opportunities in the upper reaches of the watersheds. In the lower elevations along the main stem of the Upper Snake/South Fork in Idaho and the North Platte River in Wyoming, the BLM has taken the lead to conserve sensitive riparian land to benefit fish and wildlife and provide recreational access at a time when river frontage faces growing threat of subdivision. Dedicated LWCF funding, along with FLTFA funds, can help preserve these important resources and benefit local communities while providing new opportunities for recreation and access to these important river systems.

The Conservation Fund recommends that the America's Great Outdoors Initiative place strong emphasis on the core concept of green infrastructure in shaping decisions about the lands we need to conserve and the lands that can be developed moving forward. The U.S. Forest Service and FWS in particular have supported the idea of an interconnected network of natural areas and open spaces that, collectively, conserve natural ecosystem values and functions, such as clean water and air, fish and wildlife habitats, and other essential elements of human well-being. Factors including the continuing growth of the American population – with constant demands on the nation's water, energy, housing, food and fiber supplies; the need to respond to the growing certainty and impacts of climate change; adapting to the impacts of climate change and ensuring our natural systems are healthy and resilient as we head into the future – are but a few of the many reasons to utilize and integrate the green infrastructure approach into conservation decision-making at the federal, state and local levels.

Green infrastructure assessments provide an organizing tool to guide and rationalize decisionmaking across a conservation landscape. Whether the goal is to plan for new renewable energy facilities such as utility-scale wind and solar installations; determine the transmission corridors that will be necessary to avoid conflict with terrestrial and avian wildlife; or identify mitigation needs in coastal areas threatened by the loss of the coastal marshes that serve as nurseries for our fisheries and protective areas from storm surge and flooding impacts – green infrastructure assessments ensure science, policy, and planning methods at all levels of government are interwoven together to inform and guide conservation efforts on-the-ground.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Conservation Fund is supporting the ongoing efforts of the conservation community to reinstate the enhanced tax deduction for conservation easement donations. Tax incentives for conservation easement donations have helped The Conservation Fund and other land trusts across the country conserve millions of acres of important wildlife habitat, productive working lands, and scenic open space. By leveraging the generosity of America's farmers, ranchers and forest owners, such donations and bargain sales can preserve working landscapes for a fraction of the cost of federal acquisition. By allowing modest income landowners to deduct more of their income over more years, the enhanced easement incentive simply provides them the same benefits they would have been entitled to had their incomes been larger. With the expiration of the enhanced easement incentive at the end of 2009, fewer landowners will receive tax benefits from the generous donation of development rights on their land. The Conservation Fund joins with the Land Trust Alliance and thousands of other organizations across the country in supporting the reinstatement of the enhanced easement incentive and making this incentive permanent in the future.

A century ago, Teddy Roosevelt made history by implementing a bold conservation vision when he created dozens of new national forests and designations to protect wild places. President Obama has the opportunity to carve out his own modern, scientifically driven, community-sustaining legacy that protects nature for the next century and helps connect people – especially our youth – to nature and our awe-inspiring landscapes.

Since Teddy Roosevelt laid the groundwork for protecting many of our most iconic conservation lands, we have learned that key natural areas need to be more than individual islands of protected lands – they need to be connected, and in some cases restored. A legacy of protecting nature must also create new restoration jobs, both in urban and rural areas. And, it must include programs that encourage people to get out and experience nature and learn.

America's Great Outdoors should be about protecting open space, large landscapes and natural places – from city parks to national parks, wildlife refuges, waterways and wilderness areas – as part of our natural heritage. It is also about better connecting people, including our children, to nature. And it is about connecting people to each other, acknowledging that the best conservation outcomes occur when people work together to protect, connect and restore urban parks, private lands, working lands and our wildest lands.

In some cases, this means keeping wild lands wild. In others, it means restoring degraded landscapes or providing incentives for private landowners to protect nature and all its benefits on private lands, while honoring traditional activities. In all cases, we need to encourage the public, including our youth, to experience public lands.

Only by taking an ecosystem-wide, landscape-level approach on our public and private lands, can we begin to maintain systems that protect for future generations our clean and abundant water supplies, wildlife, and opportunities for families to enjoy nature together.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To accomplish the vision for America's Great Outdoors, The Wilderness Society recommends that the Administration focus on five priority areas: Working at the landscape scale; making more contributions to our system of protected areas; restoring watersheds and wildlife habitat on public lands; enhancing people's connection to the land through recreational opportunities; and adequately funding conservation programs.

We can only protect nature for the next century by acknowledging and then managing at large, connected, ecosystem-based scales. Large-scale landscapes are necessarily diverse in their size, geography and biodiversity – they can range from the Crown of the Continent, North Cascades or the Everglades – and they are areas that are of sufficient scale to provide habitat for the range of native species and to provide the full range of benefits to human communities. Public lands are essential to large-landscape conservation as they are often our healthiest and wildest landscapes, but working farms, forests and ranches are also critical components. Because of the size and scale, these efforts will be more complex and address a broader variety of public and private land values and economic interests. Only by working at a landscape scale can we begin to address issues like the effects of climate change on our water, wildlife and residents.

Develop a pilot program that applies to existing administrative authority and programs at a broader scale. This would include a self-nomination process for landscapes to compete for additional focused funding and interagency cooperation at the landscape scale. Community-level groups would collaborate to participate in these ventures and provide local vision and leadership in partner with agency efforts.

Issue a series of Executive Orders and administrative policy changes that build from previous orders that would mandate agencies to better coordinate across their jurisdictions, especially on large-scale issues such as climate change. Part of this effort would include working with local communities on new programs, and new land designations for their landscapes, as well as creating new monitoring and other educational programs that would involve children and adults.

Core wildlands are also the cornerstones of large landscape protection. Citizen and community led efforts to permanently protect our nation's wildest lands offer strong examples of collaboration, bringing diverse stakeholders together to reach common agreements and community-oriented solutions to conserve public lands. While wildlands designation efforts need to balance community needs and interests, they also need to consider national interests. Some of our most treasured landscapes today – including Glacier and Grand Teton national parks – were opposed by local interests when they were proposed, but enjoy much local support today. These protected areas also often serve as core wildlands that are the cornerstone of large landscape conservation.

Act on collaboratively developed recommendations that have public support to designate new national monuments and other administrative protections, and work with Congress to create new or expanded national parks and wildlife refuges, and expand the National Landscape Conservation System.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Enact administrative protections within land management agencies to further the protection of key public lands, such as the Forest Service Roadless Conservation rule and working through the planning process to designate lands to be managed for conservation purposes.

New protective designations and acquisitions, whether by private landowners through easements or by public agencies, should be informed and guided by a strategy that builds ecosystem resiliency in a warming world, including connecting land fragments into larger coherent units and protecting habitats critical to species adaptation.

Expand the restoration activities on Forest Service lands by expanding programs such as the Forest Landscape Restoration Act and efforts to reclaim roads on Forest Service lands, and improve water quality.

Involve students and community residents in monitoring programs and create new opportunities for CCC-type work crews to help in restoration activities.

Decommission old, unneeded logging roads that are degrading watersheds and fund the Legacy Roads and Trails Initiative at a minimum of \$150 million annually.

The land management agencies should be required to assess, report and account for the anticipated impacts of climate stress at least at the regional scale, and make land management plan revisions accordingly.

Restore and increase funding for improvement to non-motorized trails and other recreational facilities, including restoring wilderness trails, developing a roads-to-trails program, and better connecting youth to the outdoors by creating jobs. Trail construction or restoration efforts also offer opportunities for private/public partnerships.

Better connect youth, schools and communities to public lands with specific programs targeting youth and increasing access for youth to our public lands. This would include building new formal partnerships with youth and educational groups and developing programs for youth to be involved in both work, monitoring and recreational activities, and remove some existing barriers for youth groups to experience our public lands.

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million per year and dedicate funds to the program; fully fund the Forest Legacy program at \$250 million a year, and fully fund the Community Forest and Open Space program at \$75 million a year.

Develop budget clarity for the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System and fund operations and maintenance of the National Wildlife Refuge System at \$580 million a year.

Protecting nature for the next century means implementing an ecosystem-wide, landscape-level conservation vision that rivals the scope and scale of Roosevelt's initial vision. Landscape-level conservation will necessarily be more complex than the conservation work of the 20th Century and must address a broader variety of public and private land values, from keeping working lands and jobs intact to permanently protecting our most precious remaining public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Only by taking such a landscape-scale approach to public land management can we begin to maintain systems that will protect for future generations our clean and abundant water supplies, wildlife, and opportunity for families to enjoy nature together. This is a form of homeland security that helps us lead healthy lives and ensure we can sustain the quality of life we enjoy today for future generations.

This large landscape approach is incentive-based, stakeholder-oriented, designed to reduce and streamline bureaucracy, while encouraging innovation. It maximizes the use of existing administrative authorities that can readily be brought to bear with little additional funding or delay, where we can achieve tremendous impact on the ground and in communities.

Any effort to focus on landscape-scale conservation will require strong leadership and partnerships from agency staff and neighboring community leaders. Federal agencies will need to share, collaborate and leverage their collective work, creating opportunity for leadership to emerge from the communities. Community collaboration will be key to the success of these efforts, and should be supported by agencies and elected officials. Since federal agencies will ask stakeholders to collaborate, agency personnel should take the same approach to working with other agencies.

Any smart, science-based vision for large landscape-scale conservation in the 21st century must incorporate activities for special places that are large, inter-connected and multi-jurisdictional. By their nature and complexity, these areas have multiple purposes and multiple stakeholders. One key element of success will be developing strong collaborative efforts among the full spectrum of stakeholders. While this work will occur at various scales, another key element of success is whether stakeholder activities take into account the broad array of values large landscapes contain, from maintaining working lands and restoring and stewarding public lands, to protecting wildlands and wildlife. This approach requires working seamlessly across public and private boundaries. In urban areas, city parks may be connected with waterways or greenways and ultimately, where available, to public lands in ways that promote family outdoor activities.

Implementing a large landscape-scale conservation vision will include using a mix of tools, including many existing authorities and programs. But it will also require bold leadership from this Administration to prioritize existing authorities and programs and align them so that they enhance our “green infrastructure.” Green infrastructure is the support system nature provides to society, which includes clean air and water, recreation and education opportunities, and jobs. Investing in our green infrastructure invests in the foundation of a sustainable economy and livable communities for the 21st century. It also fundamentally promotes large, landscape-scale conservation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Administration should take a two-pronged approach to better manage at larger scales. First, the Administration should develop a series of national pilot projects that illustrate how implementing existing programs and authorities at a larger scale can foster greater efficiency, leverage more private investment and jobs, enhance the payoff for collaboration, leverage federal investment, and encourage better local planning that will save taxpayer money in the future. These pilot projects will demonstrate new conservation tools and protections that will bring future conservation success.

Second, the Administration should implement a series of policy changes that can be applied systematically across all federal agencies that manage our land, water, air, education and transportation programs. So far, the lack of experience with a landscape approach, or lack of a vision for landscapes and poor coordination, has resulted in missed opportunities to protect and connect lands and to connect people with nature. Our green infrastructure has degraded over time, costing federal agencies and communities real dollars in lost value.

The key to success in these approaches is operating at large scale. In the greater Los Angeles area, this means working at scales that connect the proposed San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area to neighborhoods and families in East LA with improvements along the San Gabriel River. In the Crown of the Continent in Montana, it will help foster better forest management and provide landowners with incentives so that water quality, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities will be enhanced across a broader landscape. In the North Cascades, it will tie the snowcaps in North Cascades National Park to the whitecaps of Puget Sound by recognizing the value of water stored in high mountain environments to the rivers and marine watersheds of the Sound, and to the people in the numerous urban and rural communities of that watershed. In each case, there would be direct benefits of green jobs and better educational and recreational opportunities to connect people with nature.

Selection of pilot projects will help jumpstart large landscape scale conservation and help the America's Great Outdoors initiative field test some of the more complicated aspects of multi-jurisdictional coordination, and multi-stakeholder participation. These real-world examples will show tangible results, creating public support for furthering a coordinated and comprehensive landscape-scale approach in other regions.

The selections should be made through a competitive process, based on a self-nomination process according to specific criteria, with clear incentives for being selected (process outlined below). Criteria should cover the entire array of possible landscape values, from job creation, land restoration and getting people outdoors, to wildlife and wildlands protection. Proposals that address the most criteria and involve the broadest array of stakeholders should be given added weight.

Once selected, an interagency federal taskforce would be appointed to focus on how to leverage existing federal programs across the broader landscape. These efforts would help direct federal programs and activities toward developing a "green infrastructure" that creates more jobs, improves air and water quality, leverages private, state and local investment, and inspires people to care about nature, as well as set aside our most precious lands for permanent protection.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This approach is best informed by the recent Forest Service process implementing the Forest Landscape Restoration Act. Under this Act, forest interest groups were given clear criteria and incentives to collaborate around forest restoration projects. In this once very contentious arena, more than 60 groups collaborated to write proposals around projects. Thirty-one of those projects were recommended by regional foresters and 10 were selected, the maximum allowed by law. This approach illustrates that the combination of clear criteria and incentives are key catalysts for encouraging people to collaborate, and can serve as a model for landscape efforts.

In the case of large landscape-scale pilot projects, the incentives will be a mix of prioritized federal funding from existing programs, synergy between programs, coordination between agencies and improved policy outcomes. The result will be stronger outcomes for conservation, including water, wildlife connectivity, forest restoration, opportunities for recreation, keeping traditional uses on working lands while enhancing conservation values, and encouraging people to connect with nature.

Issue an Executive Order establishing pilot landscape programs that apply current administrative authority and programs on a broader scale. Direct that agencies shift budget priorities to fund those programs that enhance landscape-level conservation, restoration and maintenance of working lands. For each landscape, a federal taskforce would be appointed to work with collaborative groups to implement these new approaches.

Invest in watersheds through the Cooperative Watershed Management Act, which is currently under utilized. This bill has passed Congress but lacks funding and an implementation strategy. The administration's budget should recommend full funding for CWMA and name the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the implementing agency. This bill was crafted to replicate the successful watershed restoration effort in Montana's Blackfoot Valley, which started with small projects and evolved to address watershed-wide issues. Write an implementation strategy so that successful landscape pilot projects would compete well under the bill's competitive grants program. This could result in increased funding for local watershed group staffing as well as project money, funding the groups that are actively collaborating.

Apply Farm Bill watershed programs like the Agriculture Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) programs on a regional level rather than via a producer-by-producer approach. This effort will create incentives for small-scale watershed restoration projects to move toward larger scale efforts. In addition, administrative benefits could include removing some administrative obstacles and redirecting agency funding.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Use existing authority to charge developers for permit fees in cases where the effects of their development can be mitigated elsewhere, enhancing the entire system. For example, in cases like U.S Army Corps of Engineers 404 permitting, the permittees would be required to allocate money to be spent as mitigation for damage to an aquatic system. A pot of money could be generated to help with restoration projects in the larger landscape, matching new money for such projects from private funds. Explore how in lieu of fee (“ILF”) programs can generate additional funds and be directed to pay for restoration projects that are prioritized on a watershed scale. Another example is charging developers of new utility transmission lines to help pay for mitigation in the landscape.

Develop a process where local collaborative groups and citizens can identify ways for federal programs to be made more efficient, how programs can be improved, or eliminated if appropriate.

Reward communities for adopting land-use planning that saves the federal government money in the long run, such as communities having a solid planning rule around the wildland-urban interface that will ultimately save the government in wildland firefighting costs.

Working with the Department of Education and Environmental Protection Agency, establish citizen and student monitoring programs around water and other measures. Monitoring will be a key component of measuring success and involving youth and other volunteers through programs similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps. Large landscape programs should have a solid monitoring plan in place and funded. This monitoring effort would be a direct benefit to the collaboration efforts around the landscape.

Fully fund restoration projects within the landscape. In the case of Forest Restoration projects, restoration has proven to provide common ground between diverse interest groups and a place for agreement on management of public lands. In urban areas, people can immediately experience the benefit of land enhanced by restoration.

Private land conservation will be key to success of many landscapes, and agencies should promote conservation easements in areas where they enhance conservation, including key wildlife migration corridors and habitat.

New protective designations and acquisitions, whether by private landowners through easements or by public agencies, should be informed and guided by a strategy that builds ecosystem resiliency in a warming world, including connecting land fragments into larger coherent units and protecting habitats critical to species adaptation. This gives the land, and the animal and plant species that it hosts, a better opportunity to naturally adapt to sudden disruptions such as fire or flood, and to long-term changes in temperature and climate.

The goal of these efforts would be to create incentives for people to work at a larger scale while ensuring minimum standards are met across the landscape. This would establish a “critical mass” of work that would add up to greater community involvement, education and conservation over the long-term.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While many of the above examples focus on watershed improvements, there are a host of other areas that a specific landscape could focus on, depending upon the situation. In some areas, the Farm Bill might be a central vehicle to expand the effectiveness of programs, in other areas the EPA may have the lead, perhaps working with the Department of Transportation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Department of Education, Department of Defense or another agency. On larger, wilder landscapes in the West, the focus will likely be on the Department of Interior and the USDA Forest Service to work with communities, private landowners and the NRCS to achieve large-scale conservation. It will be important for all the relevant agencies within a landscape to live up to the conservation and community collaboration goals. Success of the collaboration around these landscapes depends upon the clarity of the criteria for which landscapes are selected and clear articulation of what incentives are available to enhance success. The goal is to encourage agencies and communities to work at larger scales to address multiple issues and jurisdictions, and to create the greatest amount of synergy around programs and place.

The Executive Order should clearly communicate a process and criteria for how a coalition of stakeholders can nominate a landscape of interest. The first requirement should include a collaboration amongst a diverse group of stakeholders and the development of a common vision for how land will be designated and managed, how people will experience and learn from the landscape, and how cultural values will be conserved. The stakeholders should outline the advantages and benefits gained by taking the landscape approach. The order should also articulate how traditional uses of the land will be accommodated within a conservation strategy, including the creation of new jobs. This vision statement would address which lands merit permanent protection with a designation, such as a national recreation area, national monument, wilderness, city park, recreational access site, national park, etc. The vision should also articulate what traditional uses are appropriate on the land and how those uses are implemented with a conservation strategy in mind. The vision would express goals for the working lands and how agency and collaborative efforts can be supportive of private landowners' efforts. Also, the vision should address how collaboration adds strength to the proposal.

The above criteria are key to providing prospective collaborative groups with the necessary direction to help ensure their selection. Key elements of the criteria will include protecting biodiversity, connecting lands to each other, connecting people to land, a higher level of interagency coordination, goals for efficient management, innovation and new programs and techniques, how educational efforts are included, and how recreation will be encouraged and enhanced. The criteria should be tied to the values the collaborative group has articulated and is trying to protect. Additionally, stakeholders who nominate a landscape must be able to demonstrate several "shovel ready" projects ready to implement in the immediate future, which help achieve the goals of the nomination.

These collaborative efforts should be rewarded with incentives including targeted funding streams from existing programs that are prioritized for chosen landscapes. In addition, the federal task force will help coordinate involved federal agencies to ensure their programs support the goals articulated by stakeholders.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Establish a nationwide network of natural lands through a series of orders, authorities and programs that will protect the network, while encouraging people to connect to nature and to collaborate on programs to protect these special places and values.

Issue an Executive Order or regulation that would require agencies to include in all NEPA documents an interagency coordination statement. This would require federal agencies to explain the potential impacts of their actions on shared landscapes, whether less burdensome alternatives were available, and how they plan to mitigate the impacts. It would also require the action agency to notify affected agencies of their plans and to respond directly to comments from an affected agency.

The administration should make recommendations for designating new national parks, waterways, greenways and for protecting the wildland character of our wildest lands, and for protecting wildlife migration corridors. Each generation has made its contributions to our conservation legacy by protecting more places as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers or other designations. Strong executive action, including national monument designations, is part of this legacy, as reflected by President Teddy Roosevelt's extraordinary conservation accomplishments. This Administration should carry on that tradition and provide the leadership to continue this wildland legacy, to ensure our generation makes its contribution as well. In many cases, these special designations serve as the anchors on much larger landscapes that, when fully connected, provide for a rich spectrum of uses, including protected areas.

Instruct the Department of Education to create a new program around citizen monitoring and outdoor education. This would be done in conjunction with other agencies such as the EPA. Citizen monitoring is an effective way to engage the public with nature, blending somewhere in between work programs and recreational pursuits. Monitoring is also key to agencies gathering information to evaluate their current management actions and to support decisions on how to move forward. It builds constituencies for place, clean water, protecting wildlife and birds. Finally, citizen engagement in monitoring creates public education opportunities.

Issue an Executive Order requiring agencies to conduct joint analyses and planning across agency boundaries, with incentives to work at a larger, landscape scale. Right now, different agencies often have very different management goals and strategies for areas that are adjacent to each other. This joint planning requirement would attempt to consolidate analyses, establish common goals achievable at a larger scale, and help promote more consistent management across boundaries. An interagency coordination statement, as noted above, could help promote these efforts.

Issue a Solicitor's Opinion that no harm can come to national parks as a result of actions by other agencies. This builds off the Redwoods Act, which states that no agency can take an action outside a national park that degrades the park's resources, unless specifically authorized by Congress. 16 USC §1a-1. This would require agencies with land management responsibilities in areas around national parks to better integrate their management efforts and ensure that actions taken on adjacent property do not threaten park values.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Examine wildland firefighting costs as a possible place to reduce spending, and consider reallocating those funds toward fuel reduction and forest restoration to reduce future firefighting costs. Many Forest Service leaders admit there is waste around firefighting efforts and that the cost of fighting fires can come down. The administration should study this issue and start scaling back firefighting costs. The money saved can go toward fuel reduction and forest restoration and to reward counties for adopting land-use regulations that limit new home construction in fire-prone ecosystems.

Reform the funding for counties/communities in areas with federal lands (e.g., SRS, PILT) to provide incentives to counties to protect conservation values on public lands, which will better align public land and societal values. Examples of changes to the funding formula include increased payments for counties that take action to reduce potential federal firefighting costs through actions such as, land use plans that limit construction in fire-prone ecosystems and protecting watersheds, water quality and wildlife habitat.

Use fees generated from energy development leases on public lands to mitigate the effects of that development. When energy development occurs, the land is inevitably damaged. Establishing a special fund to mitigate those damages could help restore the affected lands and other public lands.

Consider designating “national restoration areas” focused on restoring damaged lands that could eventually become new national parks or other protected designations as part of a larger landscape effort. The major eastern national parks and the midwestern and eastern national forests were all created on damaged lands that were eventually restored. This is a great opportunity to create jobs and improve degraded lands, from urban neighborhoods to the suburbs and beyond to the public lands and wilder areas. These restoration areas would provide more than jobs; they would generate civic pride and help people connect with the land.

Wildlife facing shifts in habitat due to climate forces need greater flexibility to roam free from the stress of incompatible uses, and to intermingle with larger gene pools in order to maximize adaptability to new conditions. Federal land acquisition criteria should give value to reconnecting potential wildlife corridors, and buffering those lands with compatibly managed surrounding lands that can help wildlife adapt to a changing climate.

Because the conservation community has always come out against proposals that involve any broad efforts to sell parcels currently within the federal estate, any effort to systematically change the land ownership patterns would require a significant shift and a very well thought out campaign. In-holdings within conservation lands that pose a threat to the protection and management of conservation values could be added to the public land system as they become available for purchase or easement. Isolated federally owned lands that do not serve critical ecologic or social needs would be sold under FLTFA, while private or state lands critically important for broader ecosystem and watershed integrity, and/or to create or maintain critical wildlife corridors, would be purchased or covered by conservation easements.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Secretary of the Interior should develop a new initiative aimed at reconfiguring the federal estate in order to create large, intact landscapes that can further conservation of wildlands, watersheds and wildlife habitat and corridors. The Department should define the necessary configuration of core lands for wildlands protection, adaptation and migration. These definitions would serve as a unifying conservation and land tenure objective.

The Administration should assess the fiscal and ecological benefits of consolidating management responsibilities for the 2.4 million acres of BLM O&C (former Oregon and California Railroad grant) lands through a transfer to the USDA Forest Service.

The Secretary should encourage legislative land exchanges between the federal government and key western state school trusts lands, resulting in a transfer of lands critical to protecting wildlands and ecologic integrity to the federal government.

In ecologically important areas in the West such as critical sage grouse habitat, a long-term plan for eliminating the railroad checkerboard should be developed.

Addressing conservation at a landscape scale is critical to protecting the entire suite of values Americans value today and for future generations. Achieving conservation at the landscape scale offers significant opportunities for community-based collaborative efforts, where stakeholders can come to agreement on a common vision for their landscape. Addressing these issues is complex because most landscapes cross jurisdictional boundaries, present multiple issues and stakeholders, and require coordinated action to ensure success. But, the payoff for taking a landscape approach to conservation is the opportunity to ultimately protect the full array of values society has identified as important.

The tens of millions of acres of public lands in the continental United States and Alaska that include some of the nation's most beautiful and ecologically significant landscapes merit permanent protection. These lands are the last best chance we have to build a system of diverse conservation lands that at least approaches what the future is certain to require for the permanent physical, economic, and spiritual well-being of our people—not to mention the well-being of the land itself. The early years of the 20th century presented Theodore Roosevelt with an unprecedented opportunity to protect our national forests and create national parks and refuges. The early part of the 21st century presents our generation with another unique opportunity—the protection of large landscapes of diverse habitats and ecosystem types.

There are a variety of tools Congress and the Administration can use to better manage and protect these special places. In some cases, the administration has an opportunity to act to protect special places. In other cases, the Administration can recommend Congress to take action. These actions are crucial for the long-term protection of our wild places.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Obama Administration has the opportunity to create a wilderness legacy that protects over 10 million acres of public lands, more than any other President since the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964. Just as President Teddy Roosevelt revolutionized federal land management at the turn of the past century, President Obama could leave a 21st Century Wilderness Bequest to future generations of similar historical proportions. A foundational element of this legacy would be the comprehensive review and modernization of federal land agency policy with regard to inventorying, providing interim protection, planning and recommending additional proposed wilderness acres, and creating a new crop of conservation opportunities to be harvested by future administrations and congresses for decades to come.

President Obama has already invested in this legacy—with his signing into law 2.1 million acres of new wilderness in the Omnibus Public Lands Act in his third month in office. Currently there are another two to five million acres of new wilderness are ready to be acted on by Congress and signed into law. The Wilderness Act makes clear the executive branch's role in recommending additional Wilderness proposals to Congress. In the 112th Congress, there is another three to five million acres that could be ripe for passage, making it quite possible for President Obama to preside over the creation of 10 million acres of new Wilderness in his first term.

Congressional designations are critical, but alone are not enough to secure an Obama wilderness legacy. Leadership at the Secretarial level to rethink, craft, and implement strong new wilderness policy—to guide wildlands inventory, management, planning, and recommendations to Congress—is absolutely necessary to create a pipeline of future opportunities for securing even more wilderness.

Dozens of landscapes have been identified as worthy of national recognition and additional protection via a range of designations, including: National Conservation Areas, National Monuments, Wilderness Areas, Special Management Areas, Scenic Areas, and others. Some have active, locally supported campaigns or are included in current legislation. Still others have not yet garnered such attention. Below are some examples of areas deserve the administration's attention:

Alaska: Bristol Bay Region, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and Teshekpuk Lake.

Idaho: Boulder-White Clouds in Idaho;

Arizona: Northwest Sonoran Desert.

Colorado: Vermillion Basin, Hidden Gems, Dolores River Basin and Colorado's Canyon Country wilderness proposal.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

California: Bodie Hills, Berryessa Snow Mountain, California Desert/Mojave Trails/Sand to Snow, Beauty Mountain and Agua Tibia Wilderness Expansions, Big Sur, Pinnacles, San Gabriel Mountains; Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Expansion, Modoc Plateau.

Montana: Northern Prairie, Rocky Mountain Front, Crown of the Continent, Bob Marshall wilderness additions.

New Mexico: Otero Mesa, El Rio Grande Del Norte, Organ Mountains, Lesser Prairie Chicken Preserve, Badlands/San Juan Basin.

Nevada: Gold Butte, Heart of the Great Basin, Owyhee Desert.

Utah Wilderness County Proposals, San Rafael Swell, UT

Washington: San Juan Islands, North Cascades

Wyoming: Red Desert

North Dakota: Little Missouri Grasslands

South Dakota: Buffalo Gap National Grassland

Maine: Mahoosucs region of western Maine and eastern New Hampshire, Lakes and Mountains region of western Maine.

Tennessee and North Carolina: Cherokee, Natanhala-Pisgah national forests.

Texas: Big Bend National Park

Fully support the wilderness and other conservation designation bills making their way through the 111th Congress and those in the “pipeline” for the 112th Congress.

Provide consistent and supportive agency testimony on wildland designation legislation, whenever possible.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Articulate Administration support for new wildlands designations through official statements, bill signing ceremonies and other public communications, whenever possible.

Each year, more than 12 million people visit our wilderness areas to hunt, fish, hike, backpack, camp, ride horses, climb mountains, ski, raft, canoe, view wildlife, take photographs, research and study nature, and much more. Because there is vast public interest in wilderness, the Administration should prioritize public involvement in the designation of future wilderness areas. The encouragement of public involvement could include:

Ensure agency participation, support, and leadership (when appropriate) of formal and informal stakeholder groups focused on building broadly supported proposals for the long term protection of wilderness quality lands.

Provide staffing, meeting space and administrative/technical support to stakeholder groups sponsored by local communities.

Offset climate change impacts

Use a science based inventory of wilderness quality lands

Provide long-term water conservation

Further additional wildland protection and stewardship policy goals of the land management agency

Provide incentives for creating partnerships with local organizations and communities for the management and stewardship of both proposed and designated wildlands.

The Department of Interior has forwarded to Congress recommendations that 27 million acres of national parks and many million acres more of national wildlife refuges be designated as Wilderness. The Department should resubmit those recommendations to Congress with a request that they consider an omnibus national parks wilderness bill to act on the recommendations. With the 100th anniversary of the National Park System approaching in 2016, there is no better time for the Department to advocate for special protections for America's beloved parks.

Require identification and consideration of wilderness suitability for all National Park Service lands in all park management plans or plan amendments and prepare wilderness suitability recommendations through a director's order from the Director of the National Park Service and action by the assistant Secretary of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Consideration of citizen proposed wilderness should be a priority.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Forest Service should immediately make the guidance from Region 1 on managing recommended wilderness national. This guidance requires the agency to manage land it recommends as wilderness for its wilderness potential.

Issue an executive order requiring the USFWS to use its research arm with the LCCs to study how climate change may affect existing national wildlife refuges and how the species they were designated to protect will be affected by climate change. Additionally, the USFWS should issue a report on the status of the refuge system in relation to climate change. In cases where climate change will affect species and the refuge is surrounded by other public lands, the appropriate land management agency should be instructed to amend its management plan to manage for recovery of the species. The FWS should then begin working with local communities and other federal agencies, to identify a path toward expanding the refuge boundaries so they can adequately protect species. For example, well over a dozen national wildlife refuges in the West are adjacent to, or in many cases surrounded by, high quality BLM managed wildlands of substantial acreage. The BLM lands can serve as the watersheds feeding the refuges, the habitat corridors that contribute to wildlife migration through refuges, and buffers for adaptation or protection from climate change impacts and from development. Unpublished USGS data indicated that by 2100, climate change will drastically alter the biological environment of many of the 520 national wildlife refuges in the US, with at least 65% shifting to sharply different biomes than today.

A tremendous conservation opportunity exists for the BLM to manage BLM lands adjacent to Fish and Wildlife Service wildlife refuges in support of the species the refuges are designed to protect. Among the refuges worthy of further exploration are the: Modoc and Lower Klamath in California; the Sheldon, Hart, Malheur, Ruby Lake, Stillwater and Ash Meadows in Nevada; the Fish Springs and Ouray in Utah; the Monte Vista in Colorado; the Pathfinder in Wyoming; and the Charles M. Russell and Black Coulee in Montana. Potentially millions of acres of BLM lands could be managed in service of greater conservation, supporting key wildlife species across the West while also contributing to enhanced wildlands protection.

The Secretary of Interior should issue an order reaffirming and implementing BLM's authority to establish Wilderness Study Areas. This effort should include giving BLM the authority to establish new Wilderness Study Areas and to protect the wilderness characteristics of those areas. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land across the West that were identified by citizens and BLM as worthy of wilderness designation have been leased, and they deserve both a commitment and an approach to real protection.

Require consideration of wilderness characteristics in pending and future land-use plans and direct BLM staff to inventory and protect wilderness-quality lands through a new instruction memorandum from the Director of the BLM.

Designate Special Recreation Management Areas around uses such as backcountry hunting, and protect those pursuits as wholly unique endeavors. This can be done by designating a Special Recreation Management Area, as has been proposed by the Jarbridge, Idaho, and Little Snake, Colorado, BLM field offices in their respective Resource Management Plan revisions.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Update the inventory of roadless areas in the National Forest System. When the Roadless Area Conservation Rule was adopted in 2001, the U.S. Forest Service had identified approximately 58.5 million acres of Inventoried Roadless Areas. However, subsequent inventory work by the agency and others demonstrate that there are millions of acres of additional undeveloped land that should be included in the inventory and provided protection under the Roadless Rule.

Implement the Roadless Area Conservation Rule nationwide. During the Bush administration, roadless areas in Alaska's Tongass National Forest were "temporarily" exempted from the Roadless Rule. In addition, the Forest Service adopted a state-specific roadless rule for Idaho that removed protection for many areas, and it began to consider a similar rule for Colorado. The 2001 Roadless Rule should be restored to protect all of the roadless areas in the National Forest System.

The Forest Service in its planning process should designate more areas on forests for quiet trail users and other activities that do not involve motorized use. This effort would move the agency away from focusing mostly on trail use, toward zones of activity. The agency should also look at opportunities for new trails to accommodate new uses. One example is building new trails for mountain bikes, in places where conflicts are emerging. This could be important for backcountry hunting areas, for example.

The Conservation Lands offer the spectacular qualities of national parks and national wildlife refuges. But, instead of focusing on isolated parcels, the system focuses on protecting large landscapes, encompassing entire ecosystems, watersheds and archaeological communities. The Conservation Lands are intended to preserve the remote and wild character of these landscapes and to serve as an outdoor laboratory where current and future generations can study prehistoric life and environments, human history, and the application of scientific knowledge to improving land management.

The Secretary of Interior should issue a Secretarial Order that outlines a vision for the National Landscape Conservation System, emphasizing the protection of the conservation values for which the individual units were established and uniting them under a single system managed by the BLM.

The Department shall manage the National Landscape Conservation System to conserve, protect and restore the cultural, ecological and scientific values for which these lands have been designated. The conservation and protection of the National Landscape Conservation System's resources are of paramount importance and the Department will take affirmative steps to prohibit or limit uses that may harm or are in conflict with the conservation, protection and restoration of those resources.

The Bureau of Land Management shall manage the National Landscape Conservation System to conserve, protect and restore the ecological resources and protect the cultural resources for which these lands have been designated.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Lands within the Conservation System shall remain undeveloped in order to provide visitors with the opportunity to experience natural and historic landscapes and enjoy a self-directed experience.

The Bureau shall ensure that the National Landscape Conservation System is managed to maintain biodiversity by promoting ecological connectivity with surrounding landscapes.

The Bureau shall establish a budget line-item (appropriation) for the National Landscape Conservation System.

A new position, Assistant Director of the Bureau of Land Management for the National Landscape Conservation System, is established and reports directly to the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

The BLM has had at its fingertips for the past 34 years a potentially very powerful and hugely underutilized conservation tool. FLPMA calls on the BLM to identify areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC) and to manage these areas to protect their critical resources. BLM has half-heartedly designated these ACECs and, in many cases, has never developed management prescriptions to protect these resources.

Many of BLM's national monuments and national conservation areas have at their core previously identified areas of critical environmental concern or other administrative designations. Identifying and protecting ACECs protects lands and resources, forming the foundation for future conservation areas and additions to the Conservation Lands.

Past BLM leadership has never realized the untapped potential of ACECs, yet all of the authority currently exists to vastly improve conservation on tens of millions of acres of sensitive BLM lands. Unfortunately, BLM has not distinguished between ACECs that have been designated due to fragile or sensitive soils from those designated to protect rare archeological resources or unique wildlife habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated 25 million acres of BLM lands as critical habitat for listed and sensitive species, yet BLM has not used the ACEC designation to further the protection and management of these critical environmental resources.

Manual 1613 (ACECs) has been out of date and out of print for many years, but it is still the only comprehensive guidance available for staff. The BLM should issue an updated manual to provide direction to categorize various kinds of ACECs, lay out standard management prescriptions, encourage research and science, and otherwise provide guidance to the agency on how to designate and manage ACECs.

New ACECs should be encouraged and celebrated as a part of the BLM's on-going inventory and planning responsibilities and as new resources are discovered. FLPMA's direction to prioritize designation of ACECs means that, once the agency finds the existence of relevant and important values and determines that those values require special management attention, the agency should designate an ACEC.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Consider overlaying ACECs wherever the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated critical habitat.

FLPMA's direction to prioritize protection of ACECs means that existing ACECs should not be undesignated unless there is a strong showing that there are other changes in the management of the area that will still protect the relevant and important values, which must be documented in the decision document.

Require management prescriptions (including mineral withdrawals) be developed to protect ACEC resources and be included in resource-management plans.

Direct that the size of the ACEC should be as large as necessary to protect the relevant and important values.

BLM has wide discretion through its land use planning process to designate special areas and associated management prescriptions. By working through the land use planning process, local people can help craft solutions to protect nationally significant resources while building local support.

As with ACECs, ensure BLM is fully utilizing designations such as Globally Important Bird Areas, Significant Caves, Research Natural Areas, National Natural Landmarks, community watersheds, and others.

Fully explore how BLM can utilize Special Recreation Management Areas that can both encourage recreation and protect the special resources that are attracting recreationists, such as non-motorized backcountry hunting experiences.

Examine the full suite of administrative designation options for lands that are historically and culturally significant.

Many of the lands that have been developed are the most productive and ecologically diverse lands. A key part of any America's Great Outdoor Initiative should be to restore damaged landscapes so they can fully function as watersheds and wildlife habitat. These restored lands and waterways will enhance the watershed and wildlife values on adjacent lands, including wilderness and private lands.

Restoration activities also mean jobs for people in rural communities. For each million dollars of restoration work spent, we can significantly increase new jobs in rural and urban areas. This also gives us an opportunity to connect people to the land through vigorous support of the current network of Civilian Conservation Corps-type organizations across the country. It also gives us an opportunity to develop monitoring programs that can involve our youth – helping connect them to the land by measuring the impacts of development and restoration activities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Restoration is a place where industry, conservation, county commissioners, recreationists and others can agree and work together toward a goal. Much of this work should be collaborative and built from the ground up. In the case of forest restoration activities, the recently passed Forest Landscape Restoration Act (FLRA) demonstrated that in many places across the country, the timber industry and conservationists are working collaboratively to identify successful forest restoration projects that may include some timber harvest. More than 60 collaborative efforts identified projects, of which 31 were nominated and 10 selected.

The Forest Service was formed with a mission around protecting watersheds. During the post World War II era, some of the public lands were devoted to commodity production. The American public today values these public lands for water, wildlife and recreation purposes over commodities. Where development does occur on public land, it should proceed with a mind toward conservation and should model projects for protecting nature while allowing some traditional uses. In addition, many damaged landscapes exist that require restoration.

All Americans will benefit from this restoration work in terms of improved water quality and wildlife habitat, both of which are important in a world affected by a changing climate. Water, especially in the West, will remain a conservation issue. Today we should take action to protect and improve water quality. Moreover, restoring damaged ecosystems can enhance carbon storage and the resilience of ecosystems affected by climate change.

Consistent with the Obama Administration's commitment to forest restoration and watershed protection and consistent with TWS' commitment to reallocating at least one-third of the Forest Service's \$300M forest products budget to watershed restoration, we recommend amending and expanding FLRA as follows:

Recognizing the enormous demand for FLRA funding (31 nominated collaborative proposals with only ten funded) and the great promise of collaborative forest restoration, we should pass a second generation of FLRA and increase the annual fund allocation from \$40 million to \$120 million.

Amend FLRA by increasing the number of proposals that may be funded to 30 from the current limit of 10.

Change agency guidelines so smaller watershed-scale projects (smaller than qualify for FLRA) can follow the FLRA criteria for collaboration and science-based decisions. Once these criteria are established, projects would receive priority for funding and staff time.

Identify the minimum road system and roads for decommissioning (pursuant to 36 CFR 212 part a)

Implement the minimum road system by decommissioning unneeded or problematic roads, stormproofing necessary roads, and adequately maintaining the appropriate system into the future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Establish agency performance standards and targets linked to watershed conditions including, inter alia, meeting water quality standards and enhancing aquatic biodiversity, and road decommissioning and stormproofing.

Establish performance standards that echo agency standards for staff across departments including engineering; fish and wildlife; recreation; regional foresters, etc.

Fund Legacy Roads and Trails Initiative at a minimum of \$150 million annually.

Enhance water staff at all levels of the agency so that it is equipped to carry out this initiative.

Conduct workforce analysis and adjust staffing accordingly

Reallocate budgets to adequately fund enhanced water program

Create an interdisciplinary team that reports to the Chief to guide watershed protection and conservation, including this initiative.

To formalize the Administration's commitment to watershed restoration and to ensure quantifiable, enforceable standards, the Secretary of Agriculture should issue an order to the Forest Service instructing it to enter into an MOU with EPA (under the EPA's enforcement authority under the Clean Water Act) requiring the following:

Watershed Restoration Study: Using the Forest Service's network of research stations, the agency shall complete a thorough landscape-scale assessment of all point and non-point sources of water pollution on Forest Service and adjacent Federal lands within 12 months.

Watershed Restoration Action Plan: Using the results of the aforementioned study, each Regional Forester shall develop an action plan, budget and clear priorities to mitigate all point and non-point sources of pollution within 10 years, and a 30-year plan to address pollution from abandoned mines. (Note: This prioritization process should then inform allocation of Legacy Roads and FLRA funds within each region)

Reporting: Regional Foresters shall ensure all point and non-point pollution sources are mitigated within ten years and shall report annually on their progress (abandoned mines priority for cleanup over 30 years), including jobs created and other economic benefits, until watershed restoration is complete.

Forest Service Performance Standards for outreach/communication do reference and encourage collaboration, but the language in the relevant standards could be refined to more strongly emphasize the importance of collaboration.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Forest Service Performance Standards should focus on condition of watersheds, wildlife and water as well as condition of the land.

Create a team to transfer knowledge around successful collaboration efforts to other staff of the Forest Service, partners and future collaborators. Too often, some efforts are successful, but the agency fails to spread the information of that success to other parts of the country.

Highlighting collaborative restoration success: The Administration and its partners should work hard to highlight collaborative restoration successes resulting from CFLRP and other efforts. Means to highlight these successes include the following:

Chief's (and other high ranking officials') visits to sites of early successes (similar to event in Ovando to launch AGO). This sort of visit means a lot to agency leaders and line officers.

Media/public awareness strategy to ensure that people begin to see the agency in a positive light when it is engaged in collaborative restoration efforts.

Regional Foresters, Chief and Administration officials should continue and expand efforts to draw attention to positive examples around the country. One way to do this would be to create a new class of awards for forest supervisors, district rangers and other staff who make a significant contribution to collaborative restoration efforts. Make awards and publicize reasons for awards.

In the view of many past and present agency employees, a budget that is tightly prescribed/micromanaged by Congress and that has far too many line items is one of the biggest deterrents to the agency spending more time, energy and money on restoration. While poorly framed and rolled out, the intent of the new Integrated Resource Restoration line item in the President's Budget was to create more flexibility for regional foresters and forest supervisors to plan and fund for interdisciplinary restoration projects at the landscape scale. The following changes could help address this:

Reduce number of FS budget line items.

Move timber money to watershed restoration and fish line items.

Fund Legacy Roads at \$150 annually, and move to National Forest System (away from engineering).

Fund FLRA at \$120M annually (see above).

Link budget and line officer accountability to meeting watershed restoration goals (see language above on FS-EPA MOU) instead of board feet goals.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Revise the metrics currently associated with “Accomplishment Reporting” to address watershed restoration rather than commodity production. This would have a real impact on how the agency performs at all levels.

As an aside, the agency feels a great deal of pressure from lobbyists representing the entrenched interests, which want to see a certain number of widgets (e.g. board feet) produced each year; they do NOT feel nearly as much pressure from those who want to see more diverse ecosystem services produced. Ensuring the agency feels as much pressure to decommission roads as they do to produce saw logs will give all of these initiatives more traction.

Shift forest-level budgeting to emphasize pre-NEPA collaboration rather than post-decision appeals and litigation. Historically, forests have spent money on NEPA appeals and litigation. When they instead spend money on Pre-NEPA collaboration and then NEPA, the quality of the projects is better and conflict greatly reduced. Over the long haul this will also save the agency money and rebuild public trust.

The preceding bullet’s goals could be achieved by providing agency leaders with specific guidance in the “Budget Advice” that directs them in how they will spend all appropriated funds.

Describe the start of projects in the SOPA (Schedule of Proposed Actions) as “Start of Pre-NEPA Collaboration” rather than “Start of Scoping”.

Work with appropriators to ensure that Stewardship Contracting does not score on the budget. It hasn’t up to this point, but some on the Hill are advocating to ensure it does score. If this happens, its use could decrease greatly.

Reauthorize and refine stewardship contracting authority. Refinements should ensure that stewardship contracting is based on a large landscape scale and that each contract gets the whole job done and not just part of it (see preceding bullet).

Some national forests in the United States store more carbon per acre than the average tropical rainforest. The role of these large protected landscapes in absorbing and storing harmful carbon emissions from the atmosphere should be recognized as a “carbon trust” and become part of managing for forest health in an era of climate change. The Secretary should direct the FS to conduct long-term regional studies of national forest carbon balance and to ensure forest management activities result in the preservation of stored carbon on our national forest system lands and other adjacent federal lands. Incentives for private land-owners who put their forest/grasslands into some form of carbon easement should also be rewarded with tax incentives or other LWCF-type incentives.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Wild Trails Forever— Restore America’s Wilderness Trail System by committing to maintain every mile of trail in Wilderness by 2015. One of the major challenges in promoting Wilderness designation is the perception that Wilderness locks people out, and isn’t meant for recreation. Part of this perception stems from the fact that land management agencies have done an insufficient job maintaining trails in Wilderness – trails that were once great became impassible. Agencies don’t have the money, and more importantly, they don’t have the manpower to do the time-consuming and physically difficult manual labor wilderness trail maintenance requires. Some groups have stepped up to help, like the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, but many more resources are required to restore our valuable wilderness trails. Wild Trails Forever will be the Administration’s commitment to America to maintain every mile of wilderness trails. It’s a laudable goal that, once achieved, will provide Americans with a remarkable and unparalleled trail system through our wildest and spectacular landscapes. The agencies should also examine opportunities to increase volunteer work on trails and reduce agency barriers to utilizing volunteer help.

Create Jobs, Connect Youth - Support youth jobs and job training while improving our national trails systems. Create a major youth corps initiative that commits to restoring America’s trails. Leverage and focus the efforts of existing trail maintenance groups – SCA, AmeriCorps Vista, Youth Conservation Corps, etc. - to not only restore our neglected trail system, but at the same time, create jobs, and connect youth to our public lands system, a system few know about or understand. Youth service corps programs – which may soon get an additional boost from The Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010 (H.R. 1612 / S. 1442) - provide tremendous job opportunities and training for youth. If the bill passes as expected, the various job corps will have a jumpstart on creating the centralized support and coordination needed to execute a Forever Wild Trails Initiative.

Create a comprehensive “Quiet Recreation Strategy” for federal lands. This strategy should variously provide the same opportunity for people who engage in non-motorized activities such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing, family camping and wildlife photography, as the agency provides for motorized trail users. Right now the agency has a motorized strategy that often includes formal agreements with BLM about use. The BLM should afford other users the same standing and have quiet trail agreements.

Stable Funding for Trails – Create Private/Public partnership to fund public trails – modeled after WWRP or GOCO NFF initiative. Arguably the single biggest threat to the long-term legacy of public lands recreation is the continual decrease of federally-provided funding. This long-term neglect by Congress has increased the backlog of maintenance and trail building needs on our public lands, to the point where decades of work and billions of dollars are needed just to bring existing recreation facilities up to standard. One example is the completion of the 1,200 Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail, which was designated in the Public Lands Omnibus Act of 2009 and spans three states. The trail is currently unfinished and unsigned in many places. Completion of the trail and improvements to access could be achieved if recreation funding was restored to sustainable levels at the federal level.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Under the auspices of America's Great Outdoors, a public-private partnership could be created to leverage private funds for sustaining the legacy of public lands recreation by providing much needed funds for trail maintenance, recreation facilities and trail system revitalization and improved access. This model has been successfully used in several different programs, including Great Outdoors Colorado (GoCo) and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).

Develop regional plans in areas of major concern (e.g. Seattle, Denver) focused on youth access. This would involve conducting a region wide assessment of needs, providers, available lands (e.g., county, state, federal) and accompanying capacity assessment, and a strategy for ensuring that youth groups can readily provide services in a fair way. The strategy could involve identifying particular places on public lands suitable for a youth access emphasis and commensurate management.

Evaluate barriers to equal access to recreation permits on a nationwide level, and revise the agencies' policy guidance to address these barriers.

Address the worst barriers immediately through rapid administrative action, including seeking a letter from the head of each land management agency interpreting their policy guidance in a way that prevents groups serving disadvantaged youth from being captured in the "commercial guides" class, but still requires these groups to register with the agency before taking trips out.

Develop MOU's w/ outdoor educational organizations to provide learning experiences. The public lands management agencies should develop MOU's with educational groups to leverage their ability to provide exciting and interactive learning experiences in an era of limited federal budgets, especially for seasonal rangers and other staff typically dedicated to interpretive services. See, e.g., North Cascades Institute in North Cascades National Park that provides both adult and youth programming. Add a performance standard for forest-level and regional-level recreation or partnership staff related to educational MOUs. And, develop a national template for a MOU and make cost-share dollars available for these efforts.

5th graders Play Free! Create programs that provide incentives for families to recreate on our public lands – incentives that many senior citizens enjoy today. One example is a proposal where families that include fifth graders can enter all federal fee areas for free. Advertise the program in youth-oriented magazines like Ranger Rick and Highlights, and through schools.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal programs that support conservation of lands and wildlife – both efforts on public lands and voluntary efforts on private lands – are an essential tool in preserving this incomparable natural heritage, yet most have been marginalized to a critical point and historically have not been funded commensurate with the need. The Obama Administration has made great strides in addressing these needs during its first two years in office, but continued investment in our natural resources is crucial. Moreover, the growing impacts of climate change will require commitment of significant additional amounts of funding. Conservation programs are also pivotal to the success of the outdoor recreation industry, which contributes \$730 billion annually to the economy while supporting nearly 6.5 million jobs across the country. We urge bold, immediate action in making additional investments as part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, including these specific recommendations:

In order to make climate adaptation operational on the ground, funding is essential for climate risk assessments and restoration work that increases natural resilience against future climate-induced stressors. Full funding for DOI's Climate Adaptation Program, including the USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center, FWS' Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, and USFS adaptation programs - including the National Forest Service's Integrated Resource Restoration program - is critical to ensuring the best climate science and management plans are implemented.

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million per year and dedicate the funds to the program. The U.S. House of Representatives has already passed legislation – the Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic Resources (CLEAR) Act of 2009 – which includes full and dedicated funding for LWCF.

The Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program (FLP), authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill, has provided over \$444 million in matching funds to 42 states and territories for the conservation of over 1.9 million acres of forests valued at over \$1 billion. Currently, 50 states and territories are active in the program, with four more in the planning stages. In recent years, the identified demand from participating states has exceeded \$200 million annually, and the program has grown rapidly as new states have joined the program. This trend shows no sign of dissipating; in fact, for FY 11, states have requested over \$204 million in FLP funding for projects totaling over 360,000 acres, with an estimated value of almost \$440 million. At current funding levels, less than a third can be funded. This leaves thousands of acres of valuable forest lands at risk of development and fragmentation. Research by the USFS has projected that, due to increased populations and expanding urban center demands on our forests, over 44 million acres of private forests are likely to see increased conversion pressure over the next three decades. With ownership of large forested properties changing hands frequently, a concerted effort to keep forests intact is needed; the Forest Legacy Program is the nation's premier program dedicated to that end. The Forest Legacy Program should be funded at \$250 million per year through at least 2014 to prevent forest conversion, development and fragmentation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Develop full budget clarity for the Conservation System and appropriately fund the System at \$100 million for Fiscal Year 2012, with an increase to 10% of the BLM budget by FY '14. Restore the Challenge Cost Share Program at full funding, a cross-cutting program within DOI, which provides a 1:1 match for volunteer activities.

I am a bit starved for some real statistics. Why doesn't someone from the govt. step in somewhere and inform all of us as to what percentage of our public lands is currently available for motorized recreation.

Please complete the National Trails System. Though many will never use them, those that do know how valuable they are. There should be some among us who are aware of what has been lost and of what must be saved. The educational, recreational and inspirational attributes of the National Trails cannot be matched.

Former National Park Service Director Russell Dickenson once said that he did not know "of a single major National Park or Monument today in the Western part of the United States that doesn't have some sort of Indian sacred area." A national partnership would raise public consciousness on issues such as cultural resource protection and ancestral use of parks and other public lands. It would help tribal communities participate in the economic benefits to arise from increased tourism to the national parks and historical sites during commemorations like the Civil War 150th and the NPS 100th. It can provide a framework for improved federal agency/tribal relationships and collaborations to protect and conserve the parks and other public lands. And it can enthuse Americans of all ages to get outdoors and reconnect with our shared land, water, wildlife, culture and history. A partnership between tribes, the National Park Service and other federal land management agencies can offer outdoor recreation visitors fresh activities, authenticity, new discoveries and adventures, insight, solitude.

A formal partnership between American Indians, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service and other federal land management agencies could also include partnering with state, regional and national organizations, non-profit public lands partnership organizations, the American Recreation Coalition and others who support byways, trails, heritage corridors, rivers, beaches, greenways, historic preservation, interpretation, travel oriented organizations such as the National Tour Association, educational institutions, museums and other interested parties.

Looking ahead to the implementation of the AGO, we recommend that the Administration provide strong leadership and vision through this initiative while collaborating locally with communities across America to create a new and popular legacy of conservation, recreation and restoration activities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect natural system integrity and connectivity. Healthy lands safeguard our watersheds, providing clean drinking water for millions of people and habitat for the diversity of America's plant and animal species. Our land and water areas, however, are not always well-connected or large enough to maintain viable wildlife populations or sustain natural ecological processes. Across the country, government officials, conservationists, forest land owners and ranchers, rural and suburban community leaders are increasingly working together to create large-scale landscape restoration plans. If supported by an America's Great Outdoors initiative, these cooperative efforts can create networks of critical ecosystems, natural resources and recreation lands from the inner city to wildlands. Important tools in accomplishing this scale of conservation include:

Integrating science into land management plans and individual projects. Scientific analysis like the statewide habitat connectivity analysis being produced in Washington mentioned above, must be incorporated into federal land management plans and projects.

Creating, expanding and better protecting shared outdoors spaces including federal, state and local parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. The protection of these treasures is a fundamental value of the American people. These places can include large areas of mostly undeveloped public and private land protected from unplanned growth with a variety of tools, important watersheds and rivers, and cultural landscapes that can sustain and interpret the natural, recreational and cultural heritage of the American people. Such connected and continuous areas can also help natural systems and fish and wildlife to be more resilient to impacts of climate change.

Provide balanced access to high quality outdoor recreation for all Americans. The ability of the public to experience our federal lands is important to increasing a connection with the landscape, while also providing an economic value to communities near federal lands. This access must be thoughtful and balanced with the need to conserve our natural resources. Your Administration has the opportunity to forge deep, broad, and varied constituencies – traditional and new – working together to promote sustainable enjoyment of natural places, fish and wildlife.

Enhance the economic and environmental viability and the quality of life of urban areas. Federal, state, and local parks, greenways, and natural areas in and around urban metropolitan areas are essential to economic development, reducing the impacts of global warming and fostering the health and well being of the American people. In the northwest where we are experiencing continued growth, we must grow in a way that leaves future generations with the same natural resources and landscapes that we treasure today. State and local parks, preserves and trails must not be seen as separate and apart from large protected landscapes and wilderness. Rather, they provide physical and conceptual links to America's great national parks, wildlife refuges and natural places and are portals to a national network of recreational and natural resources. Visitation to these areas is often the first step towards a lifetime of good health and appreciation of the outdoors, and as shown by a connectivity analysis done in Portland, OR these urban and suburban open spaces can provide critical links and refuges for some species of wildlife and fish.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Commit to new, more reliable and flexible funding for the acquisition of public lands, conservation easements and for the restoration and management of lands and waters to achieve the goals of this initiative. The Administration's desire to promote and support innovative community-level efforts can only be fulfilled if there is adequate, long term and reliable funding to support the additional work that will be required to achieve the goals of AGO including funds to build collaborative partnerships, engage youth, serve park visitors, train and fund a workforce dedicated to restoring watersheds, implementing measures to improve connectivity, monitoring to inform our adaptive management approaches, and for the acquisition of conservation and recreation lands in fee or easement. These funds may come from a variety of sources, but their expenditure must be targeted and coordinated to achieve lasting results at the scale of whole natural or park systems.

Coordinate with the states and other initiatives. There are many initiatives to address climate change and find a new way of doing business that compliment the AGO. To avoid redundancy and confusion, we encourage the AGO to recognize and coordinate closely with these other efforts. For example, the Western Governors Association has several initiatives and committees dedicated to addressing issues identified in the AGO such as wildlife corridors. And, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has recently launched Landscape Conservation Cooperatives across the US that are bringing people together to look at the impacts of climate change on fish and wildlife. As the initiative moves forward, it will be important to ensure close coordination with these other efforts.

Encourage dialogues and planning beyond political borders. The anticipated impacts of climate change make a clear case for the need to coordinate on our natural resource management and plans to mitigation and adapt to climate change beyond our borders. For example, the lynx that call Washington's Cascades home today are highly dependent on connections into British Columbia for their future. The actions we take to reduce fuels on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest in Washington directly impact the forested lands of the Colville National Forest. We encourage your Administration to foster dialogues between federal agencies, across state and country lines, and within agencies to further the goals of this initiative.

While conservation is important and useful at every scale, to be successful in preserving and restoring the overall health of our land, water, and coastal areas, the America's Great Outdoors Initiative should focus its resources and apply the most cost-effective strategies and tools to three distinct kinds of conservation projects:

Working initially within existing authorities and budgets, the President's Council on Environmental Quality should facilitate the creation of an operational America's Great Outdoors Initiative with advice and support from the Office of Management and Budget and with the operational leadership of the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency that:

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For Landscape Partnership Projects, designs a from-the-bottom-up competition through which coalitions of Federal, state, local and tribal governments and non-governmental organizations apply for designation as America's Great Outdoors landscapes. Selected sites would then be eligible for Federal catalyst and coordination funding, receive priority support from several Federal programs, and benefit from the ongoing cooperation and assistance of Federal agencies to accomplish landscape objectives.

For Large Watershed Projects, CEQ would establish a framework for consistent, long term Federal support and for the coordination of governmental action to achieve watershed goals.

For Metropolitan Greenspace Projects, the Department of Interior would lead a competitive process to select metro areas for Federal agency assistance.

Fully fund and improve the operation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million per year and make it a permanent, dedicated source of conservation funding.

Change the operation of cost share and reserve programs under the Farm Bill to encourage targeting of at least a portion of these funds to America's Great Outdoors projects to achieve measurable impacts on the watershed and/or landscape scale and to better support private land conservation by ranchers, farmers and forest land owners.

Adopt administrative and operational changes to allow a far greater level of interagency cooperation and cost effective program delivery at the landscape level.

Use the America's Great Outdoors report from the agencies to develop and release a plan for an operational program. This plan should include specific goals for the first five years and beyond.

Issue an Executive Order that designates lead agencies, sets out the framework for the Landscape Partnership and Metropolitan Greenspace pilot projects, requires parallel processes for Large Watershed Projects, and establishes a working group to create a framework for evaluating project success against the five year goals.

Within the boundaries of existing law, task CEQ and OMB to develop procedures for a new level of interagency cooperation and budgeting for America's Great Outdoors projects.

Protect ecosystem integrity and connectivity. Ecosystem fragmentation impairs the survival of plants, fish and wildlife and the natural systems on which they depend, as well as the many benefits healthy ecosystems provide to human communities.

Restore and protect water resources. Water quantity and quality to sustain habitat and for human use are dependent upon whole watershed conservation strategies.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Large Watershed Projects: Expansive aquatic systems that are already a national focus and in some phase of restoration Including: the Great Lakes, Mississippi River, Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, Gulf of

Mexico/Louisiana Wetlands, the Greater Everglades, California Bay Delta, and the Colorado River Basin. Projects could launch within the first year, with substantial and measurable progress made in achieving

sustainable conservation goals in all of the named projects within 5-10 years.

Build on the successes of the past and the use of existing government authorities wherever possible

For Landscape Partnership Projects, the President's Council on Environmental Quality, with advice and support from the Office of Management and Budget, should facilitate the establishment of an America's Great Outdoors Initiative Office led jointly by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture that also includes the participation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of Defense including the Army Corps of Engineers. This office would administer the Landscape Partnership Program.

For Large Watershed Projects, CEQ with advice and support from OMB should oversee the management, budgeting, tracking and evaluation of projects by departmental lead agencies.

For Metropolitan Greenspace Projects, CEQ with advice and support from OMB should facilitate the creation of an Urban Greenspace program led by the Department of the Interior with participation from EPA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Transportation.

Launch an operational America's Great Outdoors Initiative (FY12) by inviting a small number of initial pilot projects that exemplify the goals and outcomes of the program (see below) to participate in a pilot competition. Rapid action should be an important criterion for selection as a pilot project.

Develop multi-year project agreements.

Monitor progress and make recommendations for a full scale program.

Matching multi-year catalyst grants to facilitate implementation of landscape scale conservation. Where Landscape Partnerships already have a landscape plan of action and coordinated implementation, AGO

should not require new levels of planning to become eligible for project selection and focus but a simple standard plan format should be developed to encourage parallel action at many locations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Priority and streamlined processes for federal funding programs in the landscape including, but not limited, to:

1. Land and Water Conservation Fund Federal and state funding
2. Forest Legacy Program
3. Cooperative Endangered Species Fund Grant Program if the area is already part of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), other species recovery funds, and funding that may result from climate change adaptation planning and implementation programs (It would also be desirable for states to concentrate the use of Federal fish and wildlife funds allocated to states under various programs (State Wildlife Action Plan Grants, Dingell-Johnson, Pittman-Robertson) in these areas)
4. Farm bill cost share and reserve programs including expanded use of the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI)
5. Water Resources Development Act continuing authority programs
6. The application of various conservation tax incentives (as noted below some such incentives should be expressly designed for use in these program areas)
7. The accelerated use of ecosystem scale mitigation of infrastructure and development projects including watershed scale wetlands mitigation and other ecosystem scale approaches to mitigation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act
8. NOAA restoration and land conservation programs (including Community Coastal Restoration Grants, CELCP, Open Rivers, National Estuarine Research Reserve capital funding)
9. EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 Funds, State Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund Program, and EPA Watershed Protection Funds
10. Superfund and similar toxics remediation programs

The ability to pool Federal funding and the flexible use of such funds to meet the objectives set out in landscape plans

Full funding for Payments in lieu of taxes and Refuge Revenue Sharing on Federal lands within the partnership landscape

Accelerated designation of lands for special status (Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Areas, National Estuarine Research Reserves, etc.) where the landscape partnership plan recommends such designation

A commitment of ongoing interagency cooperation within the project area

These projects should be grouped in their own category, should not be subject to re-designation and should not be slowed down by another cycle of planning if planning has already been completed, but they do require stronger parallel processes, better accountability and realistic and consistent funding to achieve a greater level of success.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For all Large Watershed Projects, CEQ working with the relevant agencies should:

- Formally designate or re-designate a lead agency and a lead person within that agency to direct the restoration effort.
- Create or continue an interagency state/Federal council or task force to make policy decisions and ensure operational coordination. The council should be staffed by the lead agency with support from other participating agencies.
- Create a single citizens advisory panel and a single scientific advisory panel for each project
- Re-affirm project objectives.
- Adopt a five-year multi-agency financing plan including specific provisions for shared and pooled funding to accomplish project objectives.
- Identify a single agency to compile criteria for and monitor progress on all of the named projects so that progress can be measured to consistent standards.
- Identify an agency to compile and disseminate best practices and lessons learned from all projects and develop a plan for cross-agency sharing of resources and tools to produce cost-effective results.

The ability to pool Federal funding and to use those funds more flexibly to meet the objectives set out in landscape plans

The council should select criteria for pilot projects.

As is proposed for the Large Landscape category of projects, program and financial incentives should be available to the metropolitan greenspace projects selected in a competitive process including the availability of flexible planning and coordination funding.

Increase Access to and Promote Urban Green Spaces, particularly in low-income communities with significant health disparities, by eliminating park, playground and natural space deficit, providing adequate funding mechanisms for outdoor infrastructure, increasing safety in parks, creating safe routes to the parks, playgrounds and natural spaces, including better connecting green spaces with public transportation routes, sidewalks and bike paths. Promote a communications strategy in local urban areas to bolster awareness and engagement with urban green space.

Strengthen Outreach to Communities of Color at all relevant agencies by integrating 21st Century communications tools such as mapping devices, iPhone applications, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and other tools that will increase the visibility of our parks, playgrounds and natural spaces. Federal agencies should design targeted media and marketing campaigns to reach communities of color and invest resources in developing partnerships and identifying appropriate role models within these communities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million per year and make it a permanent, dedicated source of conservation funding. Communities all across America have successfully used this fund and continue to find it pivotal to meeting their conservation goals. A fully funded and dedicated LWCF is the key to a successful AGO initiative.

Develop a new competitive grants program within the state-side assistance program.

Further leverage state, local and private funding by enhancing the importance of such funds in project selection criteria.

Allocate a significant portion of the fund (\$100M-200M per year) for a small number of largescale, transformative landscape projects.

Develop a new program of competitive grants to fund conservation easements held by qualified land trusts that advance specified conservation goals (such as federal trust resources, wildlife corridors, connectivity of federal and state conservation lands) and promote the economic sustainability of working agricultural landscapes. Allow 3rd party holders of conservation easements similar to Farm Bill programs (FRPP and GRP) in those cases where federal agencies determine the project will advance landscape goals.

Change the operation of cost share and reserve programs under the Farm Bill to encourage targeting of at least a portion of these funds to AGO projects to achieve measurable impacts at the watershed scale.

Making the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative Program (CCPI) operational will facilitate this. Some of this can be accomplished administratively, but explicit provisions should be included in the 2012 Farm Bill. Maintaining or increasing funding levels for Farm Bill cost-share, reserve and easement programs (including the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program) is essential. Ensure that forest land owners can participate. Grassland programs need more attention.

Expand the size of the Forest Legacy Program and make grassland projects eligible for Legacy funding.

Adopt legislation that includes coordinated changes to the tax code to encourage private land conservation

Reduce or eliminate capital gains tax for transactions involving the sale of land or an easement for conservation purposes.

Provide an income tax credit for donation of funds used for the acquisition and stewardship of conservation easements by qualified land trusts in AGO project areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide an incentive to investors to fund tax-exempt bonds to be used for the specific purpose of land conservation.

Adopt new Principles and Guidelines for water resources projects and whole river approach to conservation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Identify and adopt funding sources to help natural systems, including fish and wildlife habitat, adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Adopt administrative and operational changes to allow a far greater level of inter-agency cooperation and

cost-effective program delivery at the large landscape level including:

1. The ability to share and pool funding to accomplish overall objectives
2. Multi-year and landscape scale budgeting
3. Changes in land acquisition process including third party easements
4. New techniques for inter-agency cooperation including authorities for cooperative inter-agency agreements
5. Coordinated and streamlined appraisal review for federal land acquisition

Issue an Executive Order that designates lead agencies, sets out the framework for the pilot Landscape Partnership projects and Metropolitan Greenspace pilot projects. requires parallel process for Large Watershed Projects, and establishes a working group to create a framework for evaluating project success against the five-year goals.

Within the boundaries of existing law, task OMB and CEQ to develop procedures for a new level of interagency cooperation and budgeting for AGO projects.

And so, it is difficult to imagine our children, the extended family of this great nation that President Roosevelt described all those years ago, ever being anything but eternally grateful for our acting now to create a durable America's Great Outdoors Program to provide the means for the American people to work together to save the land, the rivers and streams, the ocean coasts, and great marshes that they will need for their health and happiness in the years long after we are all gone.

One of the most important policy levers to accomplish the American Great Outdoors conservation agenda is Federal tax policy that creates significant incentives for conservation. Operationally, these financial incentives encourage private landowners to implement conservation solutions for their lands and/or encourage others to provide the private capital needed to fund conservation transactions.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Reduce or eliminate capital gains tax for transactions involving the sale of land or easements for conservation purposes. By eliminating Federal capital gains on conservation transactions, Congress would both encourage those landowners who cannot afford to make a gift of land or an easement to sell for conservation by improving their net after tax return from a sale for conservation. In addition, the reduction in the tax would enable other Federal, state and local acquisition programs that buy land for conservation to stretch their limited dollars to accomplish more conservation results. A version of this provision has been introduced as HR 1447.

Provide an income tax credit for donation of funds used for the acquisition and stewardship of conservation easements by qualified land trusts. By providing an income tax credit for cash donated from private parties for the specific purpose of acquiring conservation easements or for stewardship expenses incurred with managing an easement program, Congress would stimulate private investment in land conservation. The tax credit could be targeted and applied to landscapes and watersheds designated by AGO processes. Tax credits have proven to be very effective tools to generate capital to be used for specific purposes.

Provide an incentive to investors to fund tax-exempt bonds to be used for the specific purpose of land conservation. One approach would provide for the issuance of a "Forest Conservation Bond" to provide tax-exempt financing for conservation land with timber resources. Revenues generated from the management of the land would be used to repay investors. This proposal has been introduced as HR 3302/S.1501. Another approach would extend the use of the currently authorized Qualified Forest Conservation Bonds. This program provides a tax credit for investors to stimulate investment in bonds that are used to acquire land for forest conservation purposes. This approach was used in the Montana Legacy Project. By authorizing these Bonds for use elsewhere in the country, Congress could unleash the power of private investment to fund land conservation.

Expand and enhance conservation grant and other funding programs administered by DOI, USDA (including NRCS and USFS), NOAA, and other federal agencies to:

(1) give additional priority to easement or fee acquisitions and non-federal land stewardship projects in priority landscape conservation areas.

(2) improve criteria to support and incentivize better coordination and unity of effort across agency lines and across program lines within agencies for action in high-priority landscape conservation areas.

(3) authorize and fund competitive federal matching grants to non-federal entities for acquisition and management of land and easements to maintain ecological processes and connectivity in priority landscapes.

(b) Allocate a small percentage of grant funds administered by federal agencies through a competitive process to support multi-year (e.g., 3 to 5 year) funding associated with cross-jurisdictional, large landscape-scale conservation initiatives.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Much of this could be done administratively through modification of regulations and guidance implementing grant and other funding programs. CEQ/OMB could work with agencies to review and modify their regulations and guidance to better support landscape scale conservation and support and reinforce the enhanced conservation outcomes resulting from a "unity of effort" across the full suite of federal conservation grant and other funding programs. Some modifications may require legislation, and the Administration should identify where legislation is required and request such legislation in its FY 2012 legislative program.

Modify guidance relating to agency and OMB Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) implementation and oversight and guidance relating to agency budget submission and OMB budget submission review.

Modify how OMB and agencies have implemented the Government Performance and Results Act and other management and personnel performance evaluation systems to emphasize and reward interagency cooperation and coordination in landscape scale conservation, rather than simply evaluating performance and outcomes of each individual conservation program in isolation. In other words, take appropriate administrative action to make such integration a specified purpose of each and every conservation program and therefore a valid and important purpose of each such program.

Have OMB/CEQ direct agencies to articulate with specificity in their annual budget submissions how their budgets for conservation programs, including land acquisition and grant programs, integrate with and support similar programs in other federal agencies and in the states. Modify OMB budget review processes and standards to encourage agency budget submissions that facilitate such mutually supporting activities across landscapes rather than evaluating budget submissions in isolation and on a program-by-program basis

Take appropriate steps to modify budget guidance to OMB and the agencies to encourage and simplify "cross cutting budget" initiatives that help integrate multiple agency conservation programs within a defined landscape scale conservation area.

Under the OMB-managed performance and budget review process, all agencies are required to identify a limited number of "high priority goals" for their agencies. OMB should modify that guidance to require agencies administering conservation programs to include as one of the agency's "high priority goals" better integration at landscape scales of their conservation grant and other related programs with those of other federal agencies and with similar programs of state and tribal agencies.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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A number of federal conservation programs are funded with "one year" money that must be obligated within the fiscal year for which appropriated, and related budget guidance requires agencies to submit annual funding requests and justifications for such programs. This leads to uneven, "stop and go" funding from year to year, especially where there are delays in annual appropriations legislation (a not unknown phenomenon). This creates difficulties in effective long-range interagency coordination and in the planning for and implementation of large, multi-faceted and multi-participant actions of the kind vital to an effective AGO landscape scale program. It also creates serious planning and funding problems for local, federal, tribal, and NGO partners in such programs. Evaluate programs currently funded with "one year" monies to determine those programs where the effectiveness of the program as an element of landscape-scale AGO programs would be enhanced with multi-year funding and take the appropriate administrative and legislative steps necessary to convert those programs to multi-year or "no year" funding.

Solution: Provide new mechanisms and fiscal and programmatic authorities for federal agencies to enter into cooperative agreements with non-federal public and private actors and into interagency agreements with other federal agencies to pool resources in order to achieve agreed-upon conservation objectives within a specific landscape and/or watershed.

For fiscal year 2012, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may enter into cooperative agreements with a State or political subdivision (including any agency thereof), tribe, or any not-for-profit organization and into interagency agreements with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies if the agreement will: (1) serve a mutual interest of the parties to the agreement in carrying out conservation or restoration activities on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary concerned or on lands adjacent to or ecologically related to such lands for activities that benefit resources on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary concerned; and (2) all parties to the agreement will contribute resources to the accomplishment of these objectives. At the discretion of the Secretary concerned, cooperative agreements shall not be subject to a competitive process; Provided that, cooperative agreements and interagency agreements entered into under this section shall be subject to the availability of funds and shall not be considered, nor be treated as, cooperative agreements to which chapter 63 of title 31 applies."

Authority of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture:
The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may enter into cooperative agreements with States, local governments, tribes, non-governmental organizations, and individuals and into interagency agreements with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies to provide for the following:

The maintenance, restoration, or improvement of natural resources on lands under the jurisdiction of their respective departments

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The maintenance, restoration or improvement of natural resources located on lands not under the jurisdiction of their respective departments if the purpose of the cooperative agreement or interagency agreement is to facilitate action on such lands that will provide an ecological benefit to lands under their jurisdiction or otherwise advance the mission of their department.

Funds appropriated to the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture for a fiscal year may be obligated to cover the cost of goods and services provided under a cooperative agreement or interagency agreement entered into under subsection (a) of this section or through an agency agreement under section 1535 of title 31 during any 18-month period beginning in that fiscal year, without regard to whether the agreement crosses fiscal years.

Cooperative agreements and interagency agreements entered into under this section shall be subject to the availability of funds and shall not be considered, nor be treated as, cooperative agreements to which chapter 63 of title 31 applies.

Solution: Allow direct "pooling" of funds from multiple agencies for land acquisition and other conservation or restoration actions of interest to and benefit to the agencies concerned.

Create a specific transfer authority, perhaps modeled on statutory provisions related to wildland fire response, allowing agencies to transfer a specified amount of funding to another agency to implement a conservation action of interest to and benefit to the agencies concerned. Such an authority would result in more effective and efficient implementation of projects of interest to multiple agencies. Such an authority might read as follows: "The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize the transfer of funds appropriated for acquisition of interests in real estate or for other conservation programs between the Departments, in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$50,000,000 in any fiscal year, when such transfers would facilitate and expedite jointly funded landscape scale conservation programs and projects."

Another possible approach would be to amend the current CEQ "pass the hat" authority under 42 USC 4375 to expand that authority to include accepting advance payment from agencies for interagency landscape scale projects in which CEQ performs a coordinating role, and allow CEQ to use a specified portion of the funds received to provide administrative support to stakeholders involved in a landscape scale project and to related planning efforts.

A final approach would be to amend section 1535 of title 31 (the "Economy Act") to include acquisition of interests in real estate to the scope of the statute, which allows one agency to provide funds to another agency to implement an action where so doing would be more effective and efficient.

Solution: Allow a single overarching NEPA analysis for projects involving multiple agencies across an integrated landscape.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Develop, with CEQ leadership, NEPA guidance for multi-unit (including cross-agency) planning and EIS/EA evaluations and issue an Executive Order directing agencies to establish priority areas in which to initiate use of multi-unit planning (CEQ NEPA guidance or regulations).

Solution: Provide sufficient funding for implementation of USDA conservation programs.

Technical assistance funding to implement farm bill conservation programs are capped by OMB in its apportionment to the agencies at levels insufficient to provide necessary technical assistance to private landowners. Increasing the amount of funding available for technical assistance and allowing such funding to be provided to third-party NGO technical advisors where the agency concerned deems such action more effective and efficient would increase the quality of the technical assistance provided, reduce the demand on the Conservation Technical Assistance account as a farm bill program preparatory program, and allow for increased cooperative agreements with entities to assist in implementation of program delivery.

Solution: Allow use of "stateside" Land and Water Conservation Funds to be used by states to satisfy all or a specified portion of matching funds or cost-share requirements of any federal conservation program within a designated AGO project area

Specific authority to use funds received by states under the "stateside" provision of LWCF to satisfy in whole or part matching funds and cost-share requirements for federal conservation programs within a designated AGO landscape scale project would encourage (but not require) states to use such funding in ways that advance landscape scale conservation programs and would encourage and facilitate integration of state conservation plans and programs with related federal programs in AGO project areas.

It is my belief that your November report must be specific in identifying the next steps the Administration will take to adjust policy and target future fiscal year budgets to achieve Great Outdoors goals. I urge you to provide this specificity so that your agenda of actions is clear and the initiative does not fall into the inertia that befell 'Cooperative Conservation' and other recent initiatives of prior Administrations.

I also hope to see your suggestions on how Congress can help you achieve your goals in setting a conservation agenda for this century.

Climate change is already affecting our ecosystems and it would be futile to launch this initiative without discussing how you will incorporate the latest science and climate change models into your efforts to maintain and restore America's most important landscapes.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You must focus efforts on actions which will best help wildlife adapt to their changing ecosystems. CEQ, BLM, FWS and other agencies are already in the midst of strategic plans and new scientific assessments of how resources will be affected by climate change. The launch of America's Great Outdoors needs to build on these efforts to address adaptation and incorporate adaptation planning and implementation as a centerpiece of the initiative.

In addition, it is crucial that the initiative include mechanisms to ensure that the federal land management agencies work together across their jurisdiction at the landscape level when appropriate and coordinate their management efforts with conservation of state and private lands.

Given that we are likely to face tight budgets for the next few years, it is difficult for me to imagine how you can achieve your goals unless this effort identifies priority landscapes and relentlessly focuses staff and other resources to advance the conservation of those landscapes. I believe such a place-based approach is critical to your efforts.

Private lands conservation efforts are crucial in any initiative to conserve America's greatest ecosystems. I hope that you are able to pay particular attention to ways that USDA and other conservation programs can be targeted to achieve the highest environmental returns. If necessary, I support your use of additional payments or more advantageous match ratios if doing so will be effective in spurring greater landowner participation where we need it.

Scenic Hudson alone is investing approximately \$5 million annually and leveraging additional resources. But at the current pace, Saving the Land That Matters Most will take 60 years. With federal support, success can be accomplished in a decade. By making the protection of the Hudson Valley's breathtaking landscapes a pilot project of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, the Obama administration can achieve early outcomes in connecting more people to the country's irreplaceable natural treasures.

Fully fund the Highlands Conservation Act. Although authorized for a \$100-million appropriation, the fund has received only \$5.2 million since 2004. Fully funding the program would empower the four states in the Highlands region to conserve this critical urban water resource, recreational outlet and habitat.

Direct money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to the Hudson Valley. To date New York State has received just \$228 million of the \$3.7 billion allocated to states, with the Hudson Valley getting less than 2 percent of the state's share.

Protect viewsheds surrounding the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites. Recently the National Park Service has relied on Scenic Hudson and other partners to preserve former Roosevelt lands and vistas integral to the significance and popularity of these sites. Federal funding should be allocated through legislation or budgetary authorization.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide \$1.3 million to support the creation of West Point Foundry Preserve. This world-class historic site preserves the ruins of the West Point Foundry--which produced Parrott guns considered the key to the North's victory in the Civil War--and an ecologically important cove. Scenic Hudson has preserved the land and secured \$2.2 million in government and private funding to restore the site and create a family-friendly eco-tourism destination; \$1.3 million still is needed.

Commit \$100 million from the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program to protect the Hudson Valley's farms. At the moment, FRPP funding for New York averages \$2 million to \$4 million per year—just 3.2 percent of funding over the program's history. The FRPP should direct more funds to small- and mid-sized farms typical in the Hudson Valley and reduce the 50-percent matching fund requirement.

Support the protection of the Kerley Corners Corridor. A dozen farmers in the Town of Red Hook, Dutchess County, have expressed great interest in protecting their productive lands--nearly 1,000 acres in total--via conservation easements. Their farms not only are critical to ensuring a vibrant future for the town's agriculture-based economy, but safeguard rural views that attract tourists and sit atop the town's prime water supply. Protecting this corridor via a \$5-million federal investment represents an excellent America's Great Outdoors pilot opportunity.

Increase support for the New York State Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda to \$52 million--commensurate with funding for Chesapeake Bay and Puget Sound.

Extend funding beyond the NY/NJ Harbor Program to the entire estuary up to the Troy Dam. At a minimum, invest 20 percent of funding in strategic land conservation along the Hudson River corridor.

Prioritize funding through NOAA's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) to conserve the Hudson Valley's most important freshwater tidal habitats or expand the 4,800-acre Hudson River Estuarine Research Reserve.

Provide \$1 million in CELCP funds to support protection of the Plotkin (Little Nutten Hook) property. One of Scenic Hudson's top Saving the Land That Matters Most priorities, this 304-acre property in Columbia County includes significant Hudson River shoreline and freshwater tidal wetlands. It is the highest ranked of three land-conservation projects submitted by the state Department of State for funding under CELCP. It also is a high priority for the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) because of its relevance to the Hudson River Estuary Program and the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve. Scenic Hudson has secured an option to purchase the property and a \$1-million commitment from the DEC provided matching CELCP funds are allocated.

Expedite completion of the DOI's Hudson River Valley Special Resources Study and ensure it includes plans for conserving important natural areas that contain habitat for key species.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Jumpstart the newly created National Tourism Office and fund regional events in the Hudson Valley. Federal funds will be leveraged by state investments via the Hudson River Valley Greenway and I Love New York campaign.

Retool transportation programs to support pedestrian and bicycle links to mass transit and recreational, cultural and historic destinations.

Ready to partner

The state Hudson River Estuary Program as well as organizations such as Clearwater and Scenic Hudson have long been dedicated to introducing children to the Hudson Valley's natural wonders and educating them about the need to protect these treasures. In addition to creating future stewards for the river and its shores, these programs often ignite an interest in outdoor recreation that lasts a lifetime. Federal resources and legislation will provide a mandate to connect children with the outdoors, enabling the valley's environmental educators to broaden the reach of their place-based work into underserved communities and provide new places to engage schoolchildren with nature.

Provide funding (through the National Estuary Program) for the state Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda, a key player in the valley's environmental-education community.

Support funding for the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, which offers critical support for Teaching the Hudson Valley, a prime resource for educators committed to sharing the region's natural, historic and cultural treasures with children and youth.

Pass No Child Left Inside legislation and dedicate funding for states to incorporate environmental learning from pre-K to grade 12.

Support inclusion of environmental literacy language in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Include environmental education as a goal in the draft strategic plan for the EPA; align work on this goal, with the National Environmental Policy Act.

As a treaty signatory with concomitant treaty obligations and as the primary trustee for tribes, the federal government has an important role to play in helping to ensure the availability of healthy and abundant natural resources for tribes and tribal members. This role has a number of facets: first, the federal government must support base tribal natural resource programs so that tribes can effectively participate in initiatives like this one and undertake conservation actions on their own behalf. Second, the federal government must live up to its commitment to undertake effective government-to-government consultation with tribes when its actions have the potential to affect their rights. Finally, neither this nor any other federal government initiative should be used as a vehicle for diverting funds from tribes for any purpose other than to meet distinct treaty obligations and the federal government's trust responsibilities.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The federal government could do more to encourage tribal youth outdoors by including the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Department of Interior's (DOI's) "Youth in Natural Resources" initiative. This DOI initiative noted that only 17 youth were employed by the BIA in 2009 as compared to 8,193 in other Interior agencies. \$36.1 million was provided for this initiative in 2010 and \$45.4 million is proposed in 2011; no funding was provided to, or is proposed for the BIA or tribal governments.

Increased funding within the BIA's Rights Protection Implementation and Natural Resources Tribal Management and Development budgets for the types of initiatives described above. Also, funding for the BIA to participate in the "Youth in Natural Resources" at a level at least equal to the \$4.3 million annually that DOI is providing to USGS, the least funded DOI Agency.

The MO River from Kansas City to St Louis is highly channelized. That results in a narrow and swift flowing river which limits safe opportunities for visitor enjoyment. Programs such as the Big Muddy Wildlife refuge will provide more varied habitat along the river which will be good for fish and wildlife as well as recreation. More funds and emphasis should be placed on that and similar projects.

Our growing population and suburban sprawl constantly put pressure on family farms and forests. We should encourage tax and other policies that enable families to keep their land undeveloped without incurring unnecessary hardship and expense.

Safe access via bicycling and walking is also important. One example: the Sierra Club would like the USDOT to insist that MoDOT take financial responsibility for restoring the historic Route 66 Bridge over the Meramec River. After building a new interstate bridge right next door -- which excludes non-motorized traffic --, MoDOT allowed the smaller bridge to fall into such disrepair that MoDOT has finally closed it even to non-motorized traffic. This Route 66 Bridge is the only way that cyclists and pedestrians can now cross the Meramec River for many miles, and it had been expected to serve a regional bike-ped trail that would help our citizens connect to the Great Outdoors within the St. Louis urbanized area.

Because of Missouri legislative inaction regarding adequate funding for Missouri's land disturbance and water pollution permit programs, and because our state has created arbitrary categories of streams where it does not intend to enforce national water quality standards, Missouri's opportunities for safe water recreation are greatly diminished. The Sierra Club would welcome more effective oversight by the federal government of Missouri's water quality management policies.

Understanding the role of forests and grasslands in sequestering carbon is an important and controversial one. The Federal government could play a role here in sponsoring research and helping to sort out competing claims.

The Federal government should keep its commitments to the Roadless Rule which helps the Forest Service protect unroaded lands. Also, the Tongass National Forest should be protected by this rule. Thus, the federal government should discard its exclusion of the TNF from this rule.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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The Federal government can help by coordinating issues within its own agencies. Events in the Gulf of Mexico have focused on the need to rebuild the delta and wetlands in that area. Yet federal management of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers directly and adversely contradict that goal by allowing sediment to be trapped behind upstream dams. The Federal government needs to help manage beyond artificial state boundaries.

The federal government can address this challenge by conducting a thorough review of exactly how and where the recreational fishing public is interfacing with resource management decision-making. The next step would be to determine a consistent standard across the federal agencies for both freshwater and saltwater resources. The best tools to be used in a new more consistent approach can be found with the non-governmental organizations that already are tapped in to the sportfishing communities around the country.

Federal resource managers have a decidedly mixed record when it comes to gathering adequate data on fish populations, habitat quality, etc. necessary for effective fishery management and conservation. The federal government should establish a standard that is applied across agencies, which will ensure that there is consistency when gathering fisheries data and a high national standard in terms of the quality of that data.

In terms of what works when it comes fisheries data gathering and use, new technology and techniques have been identified and are currently under discussion between our community and NOAA. The recommendations we are considering should be reviewed with an eye toward broad adoption.

The federal government's role in meeting this need is fairly simple: a commitment must be made to achieve a much higher and consistent standard when it comes to gathering fisheries related data across the country. That requires making it a priority across the federal government and, as a result, dedicating adequate resources to this incredibly important and fundamental need.

We know that it is possible to conserve and sustain our natural resources, but only when we manage them with the best scientific information in hand. Again, a review should be carried out across the federal agencies with fisheries management responsibilities to determine current standards for the use of science in fisheries management decisions. The results of this review should lead to the establishment of a clear fisheries science standard with obvious thresholds for what managers must have in hand, in terms of scientific information, before making a significant management decision.

Legislation to formalize and fully fund NFHAP – the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (NFHCA) – has been introduced in the 111th Congress. ASA urges the administration and federal agencies to fully support passage of this legislation. By restoring fish habitat and boosting fish populations, the NFHCA will improve fishing opportunities across the country, helping to ensure that individuals and their families and friends can get outside and enjoy our nation's aquatic resources.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To achieve this goal, which we are pleased to know this administration shares, we believe the federal government should have the additional goal of managing fishery resources to maximize recreational fishing opportunities. The more fish there are to catch, the more fishermen there are and the more funding there is for fishery management. Thanks to bag limits, seasons, catch-and-release, equipment restrictions and other regulatory restrictions, recreational anglers have relatively limited and manageable impacts on a given fishery. Given this, there should be a new commitment to keeping as many recreational anglers fishing as possible while sustaining health fisheries.

ASA has heard very clearly, from recreational anglers around the country, that loss of access is leading directly to declines in fishing participation. As busy as people are in today's society, if the slightest impediment is thrown up to a given activity, a person will turn to something else. It is our belief that access must be explicitly identified as a criterion in federal natural resource management decision-making and that a reduction in access can only be contemplated under extraordinary circumstances backed by unimpeachable scientific information.

Indeed, not only should maintenance of access become a much higher priority of the federal government, there should be an active and concerted effort across the federal agencies to INCREASE access. Outdoor activities such as recreational fishing not only have significant economic, social and health benefits, but also increase public awareness and appreciation of the need to conserve and restore this nation's aquatic natural resources. It is therefore imperative that federal lands are managed to facilitate and encourage public recreation. A recent study found that 64 percent of recreational anglers access their primary fishing areas from public lands. This and other reports highlight the importance of public lands to connecting people with nature and the importance of sustaining our natural resources.

We believe the Administration should prioritize the protection of water in our national forests, restore forest watersheds and fisheries, protect drinking water quality, enhance declining fisheries and provide connectivity for wildlife migration. We believe that by emphasizing watershed and fisheries restoration we will make our forests more resilient and more adaptable to the effects of climate change and simultaneously sustain American families whose lives and work are tightly connected to our national forests. These comments focused on four recommended actions.

Increase funding for the Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative

Rightsize the National Forest Road System

Create a Forest Service Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program to develop the agency's capacity for restoration

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Enhance jobs in rural communities

A New Future for the Forest Service – Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack’s Restoration Vision: In August 2009, the Secretary’ articulated a bold, new vision to conserve and restore our national forests. He outlined a complete commitment to restoration which he defined as "managing forest lands first and foremost to protect our water resources while making our forests far more resilient to climate change".To achieve the Secretary’s 21st century vision, the Forest Service needs a 21st century structure. We suggest the agency would benefit from a major reorientation that prioritizes watershed and fisheries restoration and protection. Water is likely the most important ecological and economic resource that the Forest Service manages. Water derived from our national forests is estimated by the Forest Service to be valued at \$7.2 billion⁴, while timber is valued at a mere fraction of that amount. Despite this, the agency is still operating under a structure focused primarily on silviculture and resource extraction. To make restoration as a priority for the agency, we believe a watershed and fisheries restoration program is necessary and restoration experts need to be moved into leadership positions to effectively achieve that goal.

Removing unneeded, ecologically damaging roads is a critical first step toward watershed restoration. Repairing culverts to restore fish passage and performing essential maintenance are crucial for those roads that we need to keep on the system to ensure they have the least impact possible on aquatic resources. We have an obligation to restore watersheds to provide the resiliency and adaptability necessary to respond to the impacts of climate change.

LRT dramatically enhanced watershed restoration efforts within the Forest Service and with sufficient funding and programmatic support could well be the most important work being done within the Forest Service to conserve biodiversity in the face of climate change. The Administration should fully embrace this funding and support increasing the LRT funding in the President’s budget to match the levels provided by Congress in FY2010 and proposed by the House for FY2011. Over the long-term, we recommend increasing funding of LRT to \$250 million annually at least until the Forest Service road maintenance backlog is eliminated. The increase is needed partially to undertake planning to identify a rightsized road system

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The identification of a minimum road system should be the first step in a comprehensive restoration program. In 2009, Congress provided direction that all national forests identify a minimum road system as part of the travel planning process. Leadership is needed to move this process forward in the Forest Service and to provide a model for comprehensive watershed restoration. Guidance is needed for the regions to enhance the overall success and uniformity of the process. Planning funds are needed to begin the evaluation of the road system. Identification of a minimum road system is needed to provide the data necessary to evaluate the progress being made by the national forests to comply with the Clean Water Act. A long-term plan for rightsizing the road system, and a viable and well-prioritized process for implementing this plan, is essential as the agency moves from resource extraction to watershed and fisheries restoration. Restored national forests will, by definition, have smaller and more sustainable (both ecologically and economically) transportation systems.

If restoration represents the future of the Forest Service and the protection of water is a primary goal of the agency, then these activities need to be structurally embedded within the agency. To guarantee that our national forest watersheds and fisheries are restored and protected and that all agency activities comport with that goal, we propose the creation of a Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program or its equivalent. This would allow for increased coordination of watershed restoration activities, (e.g. identification of the minimum road system, implementation of Legacy Roads and Trails or Priority Watershed projects), with greater guidance, accountability, and oversight.

Key components of this program would include the appointment of an Associate Chief or Director of Watershed and Fisheries Restoration and staffing that position with a hydrologist or fisheries/aquatic ecologist. Similarly, trained Regional Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Directors should also be appointed to prevent this program from being isolated at headquarters. The National and Regional Directors should then determine additional on-the-ground needs such as appropriately trained staff to develop and oversee watershed restoration contracts, associated NEPA, etc. The new Climate Change roadmap might also provide some examples for how to incorporate watershed and fisheries restoration and protection more effectively into daily activities of the agency, including things like the annual scorecard. It is also possible that a watershed and fisheries restoration program could be an integral part of new climate change activities, staff and structures within the agency.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Tasks for the new Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program could include the development of national and regional Aquatic Conservation Strategies (ACS), identification and implementation of a minimum road system and concomitant Legacy Roads and Trails work within the framework of the ACS. The staff in this program could be responsible for assessing and implementing efforts to ensure that national forest watersheds and fisheries are resilient and adaptable to climate change. Currently, the agency is completing a watershed condition class survey and will be working to upgrade watersheds from lower to higher conditions. Such efforts, and the multitude of terrestrial and aquatic benefits that would flow from them, should also fall under the purview of this new program. It would be beneficial if the Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program staff could identify ways to incorporate nonwatershed- based restoration activities – such as wildlife connectivity – into this program.

A well-staffed and robust program would be tasked with developing and implementing clear, science-based, ecoregion-specific restoration agendas for the agency that put resource restoration needs over economic returns (though such efforts will provide economic benefits) and ensure that projects labeled as benefitting watershed and fisheries restoration meet minimum thresholds related to watershed health and climate change resilience and adaptation. Comprehensive monitoring programs should also be developed to assess program effectiveness and adaptive management as needed. Successes and challenges should be reported online in a centralized and standardized manner.

National Forest watershed and fisheries restoration will provide real jobs to people in rural communities. Forest Service estimates from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding that twelve direct jobs and twelve indirect and induced jobs are created from every \$1 million spent in restoration¹⁴. Moreover, healthy watersheds increases land values, associated amenities, and outdoor recreation related jobs. Many workers have not only been displaced by the timber industry, but they are also feeling the pinch from the decline in housing starts. Investing in watershed and fisheries restoration can create a variety of direct jobs for local workers, while also increasing the opportunities for related jobs as described above. Investing in watershed and fisheries restoration will help create stable resource-related jobs and career opportunities for the 21st Century in rural communities. Retraining in both the science and art of road reclamation and other watershed restoration activities will be necessary and can provide the opportunity to ensure that watershed restoration practitioners are trained and certified in the best engineering and restoration practices in the field. Restoration work must be done effectively and efficiently on the ground to guarantee that the results are beneficial for watersheds. Companion funding could also be provided to develop a systematic, comparative area monitoring program through the agency's research branch or through universities to ensure that new technologies are being tested and monitored for effectiveness. A timely infusion of funding could help kick start new careers in watershed restoration while simultaneously bolstering the growing restoration economy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We recommend that the Forest Service calculates the number and types of jobs created in the first three years of Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation funding. This will require tracking individual FS contracts that used LRT funds, researching the vendors who were awarded the contracts and then determining the number of workers who completed the projects.

The Forest Service should use these data to evaluate how to enhance the flow of restoration jobs to rural communities, including as example 1) determining the workforce capacity in communities adjacent to national forest lands, 2) determining obstacles to local hiring, and 3) development of restoration work cooperatives to pool funds for heavy equipment.

A high priority should be place on hiring watershed and fisheries restoration employees who have received appropriate training and/or restoration certifications. Forest Service should also identify contracting mechanisms, and trends in vendor hiring to determine ways to ensure skilled/specialized restorationists get hired.

Conclusion: Secretary Vilsack's 21st century vision for the Forest Service can best be met by redesigning the structure, leadership and direction of the agency to ensure it emphasizes watershed and fisheries restoration. One first step toward meeting the new vision is to increase the funding for the Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative and associated rightsizing process to ensure that the agency's transportation system is ecologically and fiscally sustainable. Creating a Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program will increase rural job security, insure clean water supplies, promote aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem health, and support a broad diversity of ecosystem services, especially in the context of climate change.

Identify and Support Effective Partnerships at a Local Level. On August 25, a homegrown listening session took place in Lander, WY, and was attended by over 100 people. Hosted by the National Outdoor Leadership School, Central Wyoming College, Teton Science Schools, Wyoming State Parks and Historic Sites & Trails, and TU, the productive conversation produced four main themes, and several presidential messages. A unique presidential message that surface during the discussion encouraged the identification of effective partnerships at a local level between community organizations, private sector and state and county agencies. Then sustain them with funding and support and enable local control.

My answer or idea is the wrong answer.. Our national parks, refuges, national forests, and public lands represent the best of America. They are home to our most treasured and historic places, and are vivid representations of American democracy and values. Protecting our public lands - from poorly planned development, inappropriate oil and gas and mining activity, pollution, and the impacts of climate change should be the number one conservation priority of the Obama Administration. With limited federal spending available, the Administration should be examining how decades old federal programs can be retooled to focus on protecting the key landscapes on our federal lands and to reestablish policies that prioritize the long term future of our wildlife, clean water and other natural resources.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree. The economics of wilderness are important, and too little known. I would suggest the federal government go beyond providing a forum. Those in charge of our wilderness areas should forthrightly speak out on the economics of wilderness.

Fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Land and Water Conservation Funding (LWCF) helps states and communities make parks, trails and environmental education programs available. Friends of Baxter State Park in Maine has demonstrated the importance of such outreach programs and materials, for example our popular "Know Before You Go" brochure for first time visitors to Baxter State Park - Katahdin available at Maine Visitor Ctrs, L.L. Bean, etc. Demand is high. In two years we have gone through two printings of 5,000 each, and are working on an updated 2nd edition for 2011.

Promoting a Conservation Ethic. Promoting a conservation ethic fosters action to preserve, support and enhance the wilderness character of special areas such as Baxter State Park, Maine's premier wilderness. The Friends of Baxter State Park, an organization that works to preserve, support, and enhance the wilderness character of the Park, has demonstrated the importance of promotion of the conservation ethic with its successful Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program. This program provides ten highly motivated high school students from ten different high schools selected in a competitive process to spend eight days immersed in a wilderness experience. Participants gain a deep appreciation of the outdoors, and wilderness in particular, through hiking, camping, photography, art, storytelling, writing, and history.

Here we go with the welfare forest user again. Roads cost big bucks to maintain. If they are not being used to extract some resource that is worth way more than road construction and maintenance costs, then those roads are costing taxpayers all across the country, money that could be spent on schools, health care, police. Branden wants this welfare cost to be permanently locked in by making the government do an expensive, taxpayer funded EIS just to close a road. It's a ridiculous idea.

I noticed in the article you linked to that the county is taking responsibility for maintaining the rs2477 road. I assume that costs quite a bit. I hope the road goes somewhere worthy of the expenditure. In my area a load of gravel costs over \$200. The grader in the background must be a hundred bucks an hour. Sounds like Kane County is spending big taxpayers dollars, including the court battle. I bet not everyone in Kane County is happy with that!

These sites are, indeed, everywhere. Tremendously interesting learning possibilities. I've seen many, from over grown trails to pit houses to rock carvings. Many have been in the path of development and have been destroyed.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Government should buy only renewable energy and make energy conservation mandatory. Here is a link to a NASA site discussing black carbon soot melting the arctic ice cap. The effect of the ice cap melting could affect the whole planet ecosystem, so it is an appropriate discussion for a public lands forum. { Link } Black carbon soot is created by burning everything but most of it is created by energy production. The economic cost of melting the ice cap is going to be astounding, so, we could save a bunch of money in the future by switching to solar and wind energy now.

My view of things is that everything is connected to everything else in some way. The connection between the melting ice cap and management of public lands is enormous. Why? The ice regulates the weather. Public lands, as we know them, need that moderating influence of a big ice cube on the north pole. If you are an outdoor recreation advocate, then you know that you need a river in order to promote rafting. Without the ice cube, maybe the river won't be there anymore. I went to Yosemite recently and there were so many fires the views were hard to see. On top of that, Yosemite Falls was dry as a bone. How could that be good for public land recreation? The government agencies involved with public lands, including the department of transportation which also owns a lot of public land, could do an enormous amount of good in stabilizing the ice melt off by encouraging the use of renewable energy and discouraging the use of fossil fuel. These are huge agencies and if they changed their ways it could make a difference. People have to decide if they want to pay now or pay a lot more later. As I said, if the ice cap melts, the sky's the limit of what it's going to cost of all our tax dollars.

_____ said "charge jets permit fees for leaving contrails in the viewsheds of National Parks" That's a great idea and I hope you will list it as an "idea" here. _____, what do you think of this?

To the people voting this down, why wouldn't you want the government land managers to have information that would help them make informed decisions regarding the effects contrails on the land they manage? You make assumptions about contrails. You say they're harmless, but you have absolutely nothing to back that assumption up. NASA says the contrail clouds can change the weather, and the chemicals dispersed along with jet fuel, the anti-static electricity metal additives, the fuel enhancers that have been shown to be dangerous to jet refuelers; what about that? You don't know and if you say bah, you absolutely don't know what you're talking about. We need area specific EISs, and they should have been done years ago.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The border of Glacier Park is the center of the river, so mining on the North Fork, which is crystal clear, will affect the water quality inside the national park. It's time for the US to add the whole North Fork Flathead River to Glacier NP. It's certainly scenic enough! And ____: you saying that, because the glaciers are going to be gone soon, it's OK for us to continue down fossil fuel road, just demonstrates how cynical humans really are. Here's how the human mind works: someone sees a beautiful place and they dump their garbage there. A bunch more people of the lowest common denominator see the garbage and they think it's a dump so they dump their garbage there. Pretty soon the county make's it into a bonafied dump site. Someone says clean it up, it should have always been a national park. But the majority say, it's a dump, it's always been a dump. We have to make the world better. It's easy to degrade everything, but it's hard to clean it up. Around Glacier Park, one of our oldest national parks, we can clean it up.

I see you have made one comment and have, to this date, cast one vote. You are villifying government employees and making it seem like they are somehow less worthy of jobs than the private sector. The private sector doesn't do a lot of things that are important to your life, like educate your kids, surface your roads and give you access to hunting and fishing. You disagree with some of the ways the government spends your tax money but you agree with some of the expenses. Same with me, but I think they should spend a lot more on research and monitoring and a lot less on roads. The government is the only entity that has enough money to regulate big corporations to protect little people like yourself from becoming slaves. As for government overspending, the whole world is in an economic crisis that is far from solved. If we don't spend money to get out of it we'll all be eating rat. Maybe spending the money won't get us out of it anyway, but we have nothing to loose.

Arctic Ocean should be off limits to development!. Russia is expanding their boundaries into the arctic for oil and gas development. The USA should also extend it's boundaries to the north into arctic waters and then declare those waters as off limits to development of any kind. The reason the Arctic Ocean is on the front burner right now, and you can look at news stories about this on the BBC website, is that global warming is making the ice cap melt and that ocean is becoming accessible. Drilling for oil and gas there will make global warming worse, which is the opposite of what we need. It is absolutely counterproductive and counter intuitive to take advantage of the catastrophe of global warming and make it even worse.

Invisible Benzene and the Great Outdoors. Benzene flows invisible, like rivers, down the canyons from freeways and factories. People have heart palpitations and doctors say that is normal. It ain't normal. People swarm the shelves for herbal remedies looking for something to make themselves feel better. How are we supposed to get out and enjoy the wild if benzene has made the whole atmosphere poisonous? In my area, the government doesn't even monitor gasses you can't see. It's not good for the chamber of commerce, I guess. They don't want to know. The fed needs to toughen measuring standards for benzene and invisible atmospheric pollutants. Sick people don't get out and recreate.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Sick people can NOT recreate!. People who can't breathe can't get out and enjoy nature. Asthma and heart disease caused directly by air pollution is running rampant. Everyone in the USA knows a few people who survive on inhalers, including young kids. Wake up! These people don't think about anything but breathing. Recreation is a luxury to be experienced by people who are somehow unaffected by the atmospheric sewer of air that people have made. Here's the worst of it. We "recycle" our garbage including plastic by sending it to China where it is burned and sent back to us as toxic air pollution. On the barge to China, the worst, most polluting kind of fuel is burned to propel the ships. This is greed running our world, on the most retarded level. Should there be a government push to end disgusting behavior? YES, there should. The DOI and USDA can participate by reducing use of plastic and packaging, converting to electric vehicles, turning off lights, building smaller buildings and using solar hot water.

Conservation is conspicuously, absolutely missing from the national debate, which makes me wonder, did Obama lie about his commitment to environment just to get elected, or did the big boys from big coal, oil and toxic waste, behind the scenes take him in the back room, put a friendly arm around his shoulder and say something like, 'if you want your pretty daughters and wife to stay alive, don't say another word about parks, climate change, ending the war and crap like that'.

Conservation organizations have been great about helping people understand environmental problems. The government has to use the billy pulpit to help consumers understand the consequences of consumption that is beyond the carrying capacity of the planet. The consumer is the key. If an airline is only allowed to carry so many passengers on a certain size of plane, why should we ask the Earth to provide lifestyles of the rich and famous to everyone in the world? There are a lot of really stupid things consumers are doing that actually diminish the quality of life for all of us and our future. One example is shipping things like steel and drywall all the way from China, things that we could make right here, heavy things. We send China our garbage and they use it to power their electric plants and cargo ships and send us a polluted atmosphere and a bunch of crap made by slave labor. Consumers need to say no! Pay a little more, but have a little class. Don't enable the slimiest possible behavior.

Close roads of no proven economic use that are degrading environment. Close all federal public land roads unless it can be proven through EIS process that those roads are necessary for long term economic benefit and are not causing environmental degradation.

I am proposing to continue with the management strategy that is being done right now that allows rangers to close roads of little importance without going through an EIS process as suggested in a previous "idea" by _____.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Does someone who lives on the beach in San Diego know better how to manage the Modoc Plateau, or does someone in downtown NY? What difference is giving fed control to the states going to have? I'm not a spotted owl expert, but you are correct about one owl species killing another. But what you didn't say, the most important part, is that the attacker lives in cut over forest, and as more forest is cut, that brings the two species of owl together. As for your comment on tree spiking: many people in spotted owl forests consider timber industry to be terrorists. When you are cutting the last remnant of ancient trees in the USA, you are a radical. Only a radical could kill the last of the 400 year old trees. I consider you to be a radical.

If motor homes and excessive lifestyles were eliminated from national parks, there would be a lot less maintenance. If there were only tent camps and out houses and one way narrow roads, there would be plenty of money for maintenance. If people had to walk from the camps to get anywhere, there would be plenty of money for maintenance. We need more national parks. There is plenty of money to pay for them.

Keep wild places for the wildlife. Whether it is Bristol Bay, the Arctic National Refuge, the wild mustangs or the wolf populations, we are letting various industries and corporate interests encroach upon our wildlife and their habitat until we will be lucky to have any left. Mining in the beautiful wild area of Bristol Bay which sustains both wildlife and people. Do we really need to dig for gold and have to produce huge dams to store the polluted water which results/ Do we need to drill for oil in the arctic off-shore or on land? Drilling everywhere we can in this nation will not produce more than 10% of the oil this country uses so it would seem we are drilling to make money for the oil companies, not for necessity. Rounding up wild mustangs and warehousing them so that there is more room for cattle to graze? This costs the taxpayer much more money than it makes on the ridiculously low 'range rent' that the cattle industry pays. With the small amount of mustangs left to graze we will be lucky if we have any mustangs left. What about making and keeping a better policy to keep the wolves alive? The wolf hunts aren't about the wolves eating cattle, they don't that much and the government and private organizations have long been willing to recompense the farmers. The wolf hunts are about wanting to kill a predator that competes with man as a hunter or in some cases just to kill for the sake of killing something. These are just a few examples. How about assuming of policy of protecting wildlife wherever and whenever possible and stop making excuses for eradicating it. Our ecosystems are all interlocking and ruining one part will eventually ruin all.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Watersheds Work...Fund the CWMP. Landscape scale conservation work being conducted through a watershed approach is critical to the health and welfare of every American across the nation. Water connects us all. As a Headwater's State, Montana recognizes the importance of Building and Uniting Watershed Communities. Watershed groups emerge locally in response to local concerns and issues. Their success is often dependent on cooperative partnerships built on understanding, trust and respect. Because they reflect the needs of the community, on the ground projects encompass a wide variety of natural resource issues, but often include a strong education and outreach component. The Montana Watershed Coordination Council asks that the administration prioritize watersheds as part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative and assist the efforts of local watershed groups, conservation districts and tribes across the nation by fully supporting the Cooperative Watershed Management Program (P.L.111-11). We believe that implementing the CWMP is an important first step in developing a comprehensive program that will provide the much needed financial, operational and technical support for the more than 1000 identified watershed groups across the nation. Montana is home to many success stories and is actively demonstrating the power and promise of local communities working collaboratively and collectively to address natural resource issues from the ground up. Conservation and education work that is accomplished through a watershed approach is enduring. It is enduring because it swells from the hearts and hands of regular folks in the local community, folks that care about the land and the legacy they are leaving for their children. As noted by Julie Cajune of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe at the 2010 Watershed Symposium: Connecting Communities in Helena, Montana September 7th: "...we have a generational responsibility to introduce our children to the delights of the natural world and raise them with responsibility as stewards of the land...we live in a finite place with finite resources and we are losing the battle...now is the time to be radical and creative in our thinking and actions to connect to the spirit of the land and each other..."

How the Federal Government can play an effective role in conservation. The Federal Government can play an effective role in conservation by making sure that federal spending on conservation for our national parks stay at a sufficient level.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

"Tread Lightly" doesn't work when the very purpose of an OHV is speed and thrills. The book "The consumer's guide to effective environmental choices: practical advice from the Union of Concerned Scientists" says that one of the most effective things you can do for the environment is, don't buy and ride an OHV. "Wilderness Quality" means an area of over 5000 acres without significant human impacts, so if people are riding ORVs on Wilderness Quality lands it means they are riding in places that have not yet been torn up by tires (or at least they weren't yet torn up 20 years ago when these pristine wild places were documented). In Utah elected officials (Mike Noel for one) have led groups to break the law and ride on closed trails in sensitive areas. OHV riders justify the destruction they cause either by saying "we have ridden here historically so it's OK to destroy this place" or by denying that there is any destruction. I have heard OHV riders say again and again that they believe riding in washes and rivers is benign because they believe (contrary to all scientific evidence) that the next rain washes away all traces. Areas that are heavily infested with OHVs become impossible for other users to use. The noise, speed and exhaust from the equipment makes the area dangerous for people on foot, especially those who don't want their children run over. Around Easter OHVs converge on Moab Utah and the resulting chaos is so vastly unpleasant that it is virtually impossible to visit the desert at that time of year without hiding out in a National Park or Wilderness Area where they are not allowed. In my strong opinion, public lands OHV use needs to be far more restricted, controlled, monitored and enforced than it is now, especially as the number of OHVs continues to grow with the population and the level of destruction rises. OHVs should not only be excluded from all identified wilderness quality lands, they be limited to designated trails. The most enforceable policy is that all public lands are closed to OHV use unless they are specifically marked as "open".

Eminent domain is often an effective method to preserve lands and to gain access to landlocked public lands. Often private landowners who control access to public lands charge a fee for the public to use the public lands, or only allow their friends to use them. Eminent domain to gain access to a public tract of land is a perfectly fair use of the power.

Those who are against public land either suffer from cognitive dissonance (they enjoy public lands but rail against the Federal Government), or own lots of land and don't care if the rest of the public is not as fortunate. More public land for conservation and recreation, is needed.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is disappointing to read the comments from ill informed and sometimes just ignorant people. Living in the Sierra Nevada for 20 years of my adult life and participating in all forms of outdoor activities including OHV's, hiking, fishing, photography has brought me a understanding that there is something for everyone. Those that see it one way or another have never taken the time to visit the areas they are so desperately trying to protect. Many lives depend on these areas and being open for all reasons. Hiking, Hunting, Fishing Photography and yes OHV's. This entire time I have yet to see any one of these segments of people try to willingly destroy the land they use. Just because you call yourself an environmentalist does not mean you live that life. I have seen hikers walk away from campsites (hike in/hike out) and burn thousands of acres of land. That was my livelihood as a young man. Putting out forest fires. So much for those trying to protect the land. The earth heals itself. I have seen meadows that have been trampled by OHV's Sheep and cows come back fuller the next season. Dont be so sure in your belief that that one side is worse then another. Keep all the land open and MANAGE IT. Thus the USDA has a job to do.

Good idea. I would also like to see the CWSRF broadened to fund green infrastructure projects that protect natural systems as tools to buffer urban areas and natural resources against rising waters, storm surges and floods associated with climate change.

Ensure outdoor recreation and economic opportunities by preparing for climate change . The impacts of a changing climate on sea levels, weather patterns and temperatures will impact the landscapes that people use to reconnect with America's outdoors. For example, in New York's Hudson Valley, conservative estimates are that levels of the Hudson Estuary will rise six feet, and additional flooding impacts will be felt during storm surges. This will threaten \$350 billion of built infrastructure in our coastal zone, including many parks and public spaces, and the integrity of globally unique freshwater tidal wetland habitat that mitigates flooding and supports the region's job-creating river-based recreational economy, valued in the hundreds of millions. To address these challenges and protect public investments in the natural and built shoreline infrastructure, technical capacity available through NOAA, USGS and FEMA should be enhanced to help coastal communities respond thoughtfully to emerging management needs. Support in the form of modeling local impacts of climate change, outreach to decision makers, stakeholders and user groups, and understanding the behavior patterns of coastal communities for recreation and emergency response is essential to create 21st century strategies that reconnect American's with the outdoors.

While you and I might be on opposite sides when it comes to wilderness and OHV issues, I have to agree with your comment above as there's not been much in terms of ideas on conservation. We should be doing what we can to conserve our resources in order to hopefully maintain our world. Why aren't we seeing a larger increase in fuel efficient cars? Or the reduction of the use of plastics, or electronic waste going overseas for processing? Why are we building more and more homes when people are loosing them at a record number? To me, something just doesn't add up.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

What is Wilderness?. One of the greatest obstacles currently facing the conservation of wilderness is the lack of understanding of the term "wilderness." The Federal Government defines wilderness as "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." When most people think of wilderness, they think of national parks and reservations that have nice walking trails that conveniently end at clearings overlooking beautiful landscapes and scenery. These two concepts contradict each other in so many ways. Although it meets the requirement that humans do not permanently remain, it disregards the fact that walking trails, shelters, and the beautiful overlooks are creations of man that alter the wilderness, disrupting the "community of life" that is supposedly "untrammelled by man." There is no contrast to other "areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape," it is just masked by what we think wilderness should look like. Although, I believe people should have access to wilderness, there should be limits on the impact humans have on it. People who understand the importance of this distinction are willing to sacrifice the convenience of man-made structures to fully appreciate the beauty and grandeur of true wilderness. What is the point of entering the wilderness if you have to rely solely on human creations to enjoy it? When "googling" the term wilderness, the first suggestion that pops up when typing it is a link to a wilderness resort. This should not be the first thing we associate with wilderness. Rather than helping to conserve it, these associations ultimately hurt the whole concept of wilderness, catering to people who do not fully understand its importance. A compromise should be worked towards. Instead of the leveled, pristine walking trails that lead to convenient clearings overlooking beautiful landscape, a person should have to work for that reward. If that occurs naturally, then so be it, but if not, then man should not alter it to make it so. People who truly appreciate wilderness will either enter it knowing that they have to work for the reward of seeing it in its full beauty, or if they choose not or cannot enter, they will know it's because wilderness is being preserved the way it should be.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Well this is the same self serving IMBA nonsense that Hasenauer has been pushing for years. His point 2 is an out and out lie. 1964 Wilderness Act did ban bicycles since they are mechanical transport. In the early years Hasenauer and IMBA were able to trick some land managers into believing that they were "human transport" not mechanical transport. This allowed mountain bikes into some wilderness areas. Finally the feds had to put the 1984 regulations in place to make it clear the original intent of the Wilderness Act - Mountain bikes are mechanical transport. They are not allowed and should not be allowed in wilderness areas. They should not be allowed on the PCT which is primarily a hiking trail. They already have access to miles and miles of trails, they just want to consume everything. Some jurisdictions have tried to allow Mountain biking on trails with hikers and equestrians but there is a long history of failure of this approach: History of Failure "Share the trails" is the cornerstone of the national mountain biking interest's public relations campaign to successfully promote opening public trails to mountain bike use. In the 1980's and early 1990's, this philosophy was used to convince many decision-makers that a "Sunday ride in the park" was precisely what mountain biking is all about and that no social nor environmental impacts would occur once trails were opened to use by bicycles. By the late 1990s however, mounting evidence of environmental damage, user conflicts and use displacement convinced many jurisdictions to return to earlier regulations and ban the use from public trails. The public agencies' actions amplify growing discontent among officials with the problematic sport. Of eight agencies interviewed on mountain bike use compliance with rules and regulations, all stated that the single biggest problem was the disproportionate amount of time that officers and staff spent on enforcement (See "Liabilities" this report). It is a costly sport in terms of enforcement, but also in terms of medical costs. 1. Bryant Creek Trail in Banff National Park, Canada, was closed in 1998 by officials due to disturbance to wildlife habitats. According to the Parks Superintendent, the distance a mountain bike can travel effectively shrinks the wild habitat from a human disturbance point of view. Predictably, mountain bike interests charged "discrimination" and said the trail should be closed at all. However, no credible evidence was presented that habitat disturbances ever occurred in the past, prior to mountain bike use introduction. The fact that the bike can travel so fast and far may in fact disturb grizzly habitat, a concern raised by nature personnel in Parks Canada when the trail was closed. 2. Boulder, Colorado—home of the International Mountain Biking Association—opened 6500 acres of parks in 1983 after discussion among agency staff and mountain bike interests, who committed to maintain and monitor trail use. Prior to that date, city parks prohibited mountain biking use. In 1987, after years of multiple efforts to educate, post signs, distribute brochures and offer a college course in proper mountain bike trail etiquette, Boulder officials barred the high impact sport from the parks systems because of off-trail damage, community complaints and staff-observed conflicts between mountain bike uses and other trail uses. 3. Alley Pond Park, Queens, in 1999, stepped up enforcement to include fines and seizures of mountain bikes after cribbing, logs and other maintenance devices, installed to impede erosion and bike traffic, were torn out and destroyed by mountain bikers unhappy with the trail closure and bike repair. The Parks Commissioner stated "They kill the vegetation, they cause erosion and they turn the thing into a motorcross track. It's a public park, not a racing ground." The Parks Forester stated that the footpath had been expanded from 12 inches to 5 feet due to aggressive bike riding; that further evidence was present of bikers straying off trails, creating new trails and damaging tree roots. 4.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills and Palos Verdes Estates, California, in 1990, banned mountain biking from their hiking and equestrian trails, citing unmanageable conflicts. Some bikers are "courteous, others are not," but the overall assessment concluded that the uses are in conflict. 5. Point Mugu, California, was the site of radar guns purchased by the State rangers in 1995 to clock and ticket speeding mountain bikers on "multi purpose" trails. As one ranger observed, "a lot of hikers are no longer coming" to the area because they no longer can enjoy the hiking experience. Radar guns are a clear indication of a chronic, not an occasional problem. When the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) planners limited mountain biking use in 1995, there were sued by biking interests, including IMBA. On appeal, the Ninth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals opined that testimony about mountain bike use speeding, causing erosion and scaring horses are valid indicators of use conflicts and the Court upheld the extensive ban on mountain biking imposed on Marin County Trails in the GGNRA. The mountain bike interests tirelessly demand "statistics or scientific studies" to prove conflicts exist, but the published Court opinion has clearly set aside that false argument and has provided that letters and verbal testimony about social conflicts are admissible and clear indicators of past, present and the likelihood of future conflict. 6. In 1990, the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), California adopted extensive guidelines, policies and standards in order to permit mountain biking on multi-use trails. The mitigation measures included: • a published etiquette brochure • caution and speed limit signs • increased ranger patrols in hotspots with persistent problems In 2000, the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), California voted to ban mountain biking in seven preserves, approximately 40 percent of the parks area, because of repeated problems with user conflicts and long-term damage to the parks ecosystems promoting erosion: The Agency launched a review of its trail policies after receiving a steady stream of letters from people who complained that their outdoor experience was marred by a run-in with bicyclists...Often the letters were from senior citizens and families with young children who said that they were afraid to hike the most popular trails. 7. A Commissioner admitted during the reconsideration that opportunities for tranquil nature study and observation had been lost and that the Agency had strayed from its directive to provide a peaceful outdoor experience. Reported as a threat to close trails, the district Commissioners subsequently voted to ban biking in seven preserves. This significant development occurred in an area that spent countless hours detailing policies, guidelines and standards to permit mountain biking on multi-use trails only to reverse its own policy when too many uncontrollable problems arose because of the use. 8. The Tantalus Trail, Hawaii, near the Hawaiian Nature Center, was closed by State officials in February to mountain bike use. The officials said that the halt was needed to allow recovery from rutted and eroded trails. Conditions on the 18-mile trail system were monitored for five years and mountain bike use damage was witnessed and documented; a lot of "near accidents" were also reported where hikers had to jump out of the way, said the program manager for the State Na Ala Hele trail program. 9. In North New Jersey, the Morris County Parks Commission, in 1999, banned mountain biking use from all but two parks. The Commission reconsidered after predictable pressure from bike interests who promised to "educate" bikers on trail etiquette. Mountain bike use is already prohibited on unpaved trails in Essex and Union counties due to repeated reports of conflicts, trail damage and loss of solitude among other trail users. 10. Orange County, California, a parks system touted by IMBA interests as a model, is experiencing significant

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

damage from environmentally and socially irresponsible mountain bike use. In Aliso and Woods Canyons Wilderness Parks, there is now a visible decrease in quality of habitat because bikers ride off of designated trails creating their own and poach hiker/equestrian trails when rangers are not present. The effects have been cumulative: "Rogue mountain bikers ride right over the vegetation – even prickly pear cactus – commonly replanted to block illegal trails. Signs identifying closed trails are taken down faster than I can put them up," (Ranger) Maloney said. And so on and so on.....

Please help stop Mitsubishi's plans for an enormous, disasterous, toxic, open-pit gold and copper mine in the heart of Alaskan wilderness. Nothing less than an American natural treasure is at stake! Bristol Bay is home to orcas and beluga whales, wild moose and caribou, and one of only two populations of freshwater harbor seals in the world -- all intimately connected to the health of the bay and its world-class salmon runs. Those salmon runs also support thousands of sustainable jobs in fishing and tourism as well as Alaska Natives who depend on the salmon for food. The massive Pebble Mine would be dug right at the headwaters of the pristine watershed that feeds Bristol Bay. Anglo American (a British company) and Mitsubishi couldn't pick a much worse place on the planet to dig a 2,000-foot-deep open-pit mine. Sited in a known earthquake zone, the Pebble Mine's colossal earthen dams -- which are supposed to hold back some 10 billion tons of mining waste including toxic byproducts like arsenic and cyanide -- are a disaster waiting to happen. But it wouldn't even take an earthquake to irreparably contaminate this unspoiled corner of Alaska. Just constructing the Pebble Mine -- before it goes into full-scale operation -- will permanently destroy over 60 miles of salmon habitat. As all large mines do, it would leak, spilling copper -- which is toxic to salmon -- right into Alaska's biggest sockeye salmon fishery, on which wildlife, Native communities and commercial fishermen all depend for their survival. Will Mitsubishi back down when faced with worldwide opposition? It did 10 years ago. When Mitsubishi and the Mexican government planned a massive industrial salt plant in the planet's last untouched gray whale nursery at San Ignacio Lagoon in Baja, Mexico, millions of concerned people joined with leading Mexican environmental groups to oppose it. Working with an international coalition, public opinion was brought to bear on Mitsubishi -- deluging the company with more than one million petitions. In the end, the Mexican government called a halt to the project, and Mitsubishi abandoned its salt plant project! Today, Mitsubishi needs to know that proceeding with the disastrous Pebble Mine will give the company a black eye in the view of millions of American consumers.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Help stop Mitsubishi's plans for an enormous, disasterous, toxic, open-pit gold and copper mine in the heart of Alaskan wilderness. Please help stop Mitsubishi's plans for an enormous, disasterous, toxic, open-pit gold and copper mine in the heart of Alaskan wilderness. Nothing less than an American natural treasure is at stake! Bristol Bay is home to orcas and beluga whales, wild moose and caribou, and one of only two populations of freshwater harbor seals in the world -- all intimately connected to the health of the bay and its world-class salmon runs. Those salmon runs also support thousands of sustainable jobs in fishing and tourism as well as Alaska Natives who depend on the salmon for food. The massive Pebble Mine would be dug right at the headwaters of the pristine watershed that feeds Bristol Bay. Anglo American (a British company) and Mitsubishi couldn't pick a much worse place on the planet to dig a 2,000-foot-deep open-pit mine. Sited in a known earthquake zone, the Pebble Mine's colossal earthen dams -- which are supposed to hold back some 10 billion tons of mining waste including toxic byproducts like arsenic and cyanide -- are a disaster waiting to happen. But it wouldn't even take an earthquake to irreparably contaminate this unspoiled corner of Alaska. Just constructing the Pebble Mine -- before it goes into full-scale operation -- will permanently destroy over 60 miles of salmon habitat. As all large mines do, it would leak, spilling copper -- which is toxic to salmon -- right into Alaska's biggest sockeye salmon fishery, on which wildlife, Native communities and commercial fishermen all depend for their survival. Will Mitsubishi back down when faced with worldwide opposition? It did 10 years ago. When Mitsubishi and the Mexican government planned a massive industrial salt plant in the planet's last untouched gray whale nursery at San Ignacio Lagoon in Baja, Mexico, millions of concerned people joined with leading Mexican environmental groups to oppose it. Working with an international coalition, public opinion was brought to bear on Mitsubishi -- deluging the company with more than one million petitions. In the end, the Mexican government called a halt to the project, and Mitsubishi abandoned its salt plant project! Today, Mitsubishi needs to know that proceeding with the disastrous Pebble Mine will give the company a black eye in the view of millions of American consumers.

More conservation lands in states with failed economies. States such as Ohio, Indiana and Michigan could use more tourist-based land conservation in the form of National Recreation Areas, National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks. These areas suffer from high unemployment and would benefit from the addition of tourist generating lands. Few people view Ohio, Indiana or southern Michigan as vacation destinations, but conservation lands could change this.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I know that the Upper Peninsula has large amount of public lands. There are some great destinations in all of these states, but few are in "rust belt" areas. Northern Indiana has Indiana Dunes National Seashore, but you look down the beach either way and there are smokestacks. Southwest Ohio has the Wayne National Forest, but it is highly fragmented. Detroit doesn't even have any National Historic Parks or Sites. The lakeshore dunes are a critically endangered habitat with high biodiversity, but at the moment, they are a stepchild of the more glamorous destinations. Cuyahoga National Park is a good example of carving a natural destination out of an old industrial area. These lands don't need to generate taxes if they can generate other revenue. Most parks generate a minimum of \$2 for the local economy for every \$1 spent by the government. With more popular destinations, that ratio is ten times higher. Also, most of the lands within the National Forest system or the National Wildlife Refuge system would generate much tax revenue because they are too mountainous or too swampy to be farmed or developed and therefore would not be valued highly. Either way, I'm mostly concerned about restoring ecosystems that have been destroyed by industrialization. Places succeed when the people there take pride in their surroundings and restore the health of their lands. You can't have a successful community in a place that neglects (or forgets they ever had) a beautiful landbase.

As a youth cycling coach for the past 8 years, I can attest that many a youngster that I have worked with has grown to appreciate the outdoors as a result of their ability to legally ride their bikes in nearby parks. As such, I believe more multi-use trails should be built in order to provide more opportunities to get kids outside! By reconnecting with the outdoors, we have a chance of creating future environmental leaders.

This is exactly right! I grew up riding and working on dirt bikes and this definitely inspired my curiosity and love of complex mechanical systems. I went on to get BS and Masters degrees in Mechanical Engineering and I now manage an engineering research group at a Fortune 500 company. I owe all of this to my exposure to dirt bikes in my youth. I still ride dirt bikes, and I hope that future generations of kids have the opportunity to own and ride dirt bikes and that it inspires them to pursue a career in engineering, as it did me. We must keep some riding areas open and pursue sensible legislation that allows kids to experience this family oriented sport. As _____ said, we certainly need more talented engineers in the US!

Respect volunteers. Other threads have talked about things like providing volunteers with a free pass if they work enough hours. Last year I officially volunteered almost 400 hours - 10-40 hour weeks - but was still well shy of the time required to get an \$80 interagency pass. Volunteering for an interagency pass is a full time job for nearly 3 months, far beyond the reach of most Americans. Sometimes volunteers are offered a free night at the campground where they volunteer. But that doesn't cut it either. I don't volunteer at a soup kitchen in order to get a bowl of soup for myself. Likewise, I volunteer on public lands to give to others who enjoy the land but don't have the free time to volunteer. For that reason, I find it entirely inappropriate for Government agencies like the Forest Service to take the fruits of my labor and charge a fee for what volunteers like myself have worked to create.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Eliminating top heavy government. The Forest Service's appropriated funding has nearly doubled in the past decade, and visitation is down, leaving the Forest Service with more money to serve fewer visitors. Yet the Forest Service continues to complain that "we are underfunded," particularly at the local district level. Meanwhile, in the private sector, few individuals are unaffected by the current economic downturn. Most people who are still employed have seen their incomes drop by 10%, 15%, even 50%, through the loss of income, benefits like healthcare, or both. Young Americans just out of school are finding it impossible to find work. I propose that Forest Service employees join the general population in their sacrifice, by accepting a modest pay decrease based on their GS rating. For example, a GS-5 or lower employee would see their pay remain the same, but every employee above a GS-6 would see a 1/2% pay decrease. For example, a GS-6 would see a 1/2% pay decrease, a GS-7 a 1% pay decrease, a GS-9 would see 2% less, a GS-15 would see a 5% drop in their income, and a GS-19 would see a 7% drop. The decrease would cap at 10% for anyone over a GS-25 or equivalent. Many people tithe at 10% - the loss of income is doable. The money saved can then be sent down to the district level, where it can be used to hire seasonal employees and fund long deferred maintenance projects. By realigning the government payscale as described above, we can get more money onto the ground without increasing funding, without increasing appropriations, and at the same time increase opportunities for the next generation of Forest Managers to begin their careers. While some employees might leave, given the current job market, most would stay and readjust to the decreased income, just as the rest of the country has with theirs. Meanwhile, there would be increased funding available on the ground, helping to eliminate the top heavy nature of our public land management system. The benefits are not just immediate, but will continue to reward us for decades to come. It continues giving back every year. And again, it gives our future land managers the opportunities to use their skills and education immediately, under the tutelage of a mentor, rather than waiting for more seasoned employee to retire. It also makes our job easier by providing the funding to do the work that needs done. This is truly a case of the current economic downturn having a silver lining. We shouldn't pass up this opportunity. Thoughts anyone?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To address your concerns, first note that I stated GS 25 or equivalent. The point is the idea, not the specifics. Think broadly, and don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. And thank you for the link. Please note that this idea does not add funds to the Forest Service budget, (note also that the agency budget is speculative, while the agency appropriation is the funding they actually receive), but redistributes the existing funds for better effectiveness. The idea is to address exactly what you are complaining about - the "deductions for overall administration", and to get more than \$1 in \$3 to hit the ground, without creating other problems in the process. The problem with fee retention is that it creates an incentive to use taxpayer dollars to create extravagant and unnecessary amenities in order to justify the fees. Think \$1.6 million dollar toilets, etc. With agency fee retention, basic campgrounds where people pitch their tents are given a paved parking area with hookups, in order to charge them double or more. Fancy visitor centers replace simple information sites. Think Mono Lake California, or Cedar Mesa in Utah. And I'm curious, who is the "we" to whom you refer? The rewards will not diminish as they gain experience and ability. A GS-7 will always earn more than a GS-5. The pay scale will simply be more in line with the rest of the economy, and administrative expenses will be reduced. As pointed out earlier, most Americans who still have jobs have seen their "rewards" diminished far more than my suggestion. I want to encourage young people to follow their dreams, and this idea helps give them the opportunity to do so. As many Forest Service employees will tell you, its not about the money, and never has been.

Thanks. I certainly wouldn't limit the idea to the FS, or even public land management agencies, although I don't know how applicable it would be for the Dept of Health and Human Services. I'm looking at the big picture, to readjust the funding down from the top so we have more funds available on the ground to complete the maintenance backlog and take better care of our public lands, without having to implement new taxes. Its something we can do currently that wouldn't have been possible while the economy was steaming along full tilt. And it keeps on giving for years, or decades if we're smart about it.

I like the idea of a voluntary donation, but considering I haven't been able to afford a visit to a National Park in decades, I not sure what I have to gain. How about making the Park entrance fee a voluntary donation?

I don't know about the privatization argument, although it seems logical that without being able to charge fees, corporations would have little interest in public lands; and conversely, charging for public access would encourage privatization. But as far as funding public lands goes, the best option is through our taxes. At the Great Outdoors initiative meeting in Denver, there was an immediate consensus that the programs that were working - Jefferson County Open Space and Great Outdoors Colorado - were both funded by taxes, while on the flip side, the state of Colorado's attempt to require a fee for access to state owned lands withered in just two years. It's logical for the same reason it makes no sense to put a toll booth on every corner, just to make people pay for the roads that they actually use. Although such a proposal could really help the unemployment situation, just like the fee proposals above, it costs too much and is grossly inefficient.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Interesting idea, but I can't afford to visit the parks anyway. How about just getting the insurance companies to fund public lands and eliminating the current user fees?

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the only system of its kind to put wildlife first and foremost. No other system has the welfare of our nations wildlife as its mission. It is time that the NWRS gets fully funded and recognized as such. Wildlife has always been an important part of this countries significance. Perhaps the other people who took of their time to comment are right. It is time for the NWRS to become its own agency separate from the USFws. Both the NWRS and the USFWS would benefit from such a move. The NWRS contains more acres than the NPS but receives less per acre to manage - this makes no sense other than the NPS serves people and the NWRS serves the benefit of wildlife.

This comment is poorly defined. I live in Utah and without the cooperation of ranchers and residents, waterholes become degraded and useless for any animal, including cattle as well as wildlife and non sustaining of botanical diversity. With the help of ranchers and local citizens the general range is preserved for wildlife and people. We have vast areas that few people in the eastern states can understand. What we do need is full access to our public lands and help with reclamation after fires. I would be heart broken if I could no longer visit many of these areas because I'm not as able as I used to be, or that my grandson would be limited from seeing these areas. Further, if these areas are designated wilderness, NO medical help would be available in an area already underserved by medical facilities. I don't mean to say that we throw these areas open for oil shale mining, which is a filthy, daangerous process.

Acquire Land. Take advantage of the decline in real estate values to acquire in-holders, adjacent properties, and in general expanding the public land base. Much of the original set asides are no longer used for their original purpose whether grazing, mining, rail roads, etc and some prime land is destined to become into accessible private property. Where ranchers, miners and railroads used to allow access the new developers of resort caliber property are prone to shut up miles of prime river and many square miles of land. In no case sell public land to satisfy the national debt. That is the equivalent of selling one's birthright. There may not be a better time for the next 15 years.

yellowstones wild buffalo. I think these buffalo should be able to go onto our public lands freely. They need this land when there food souces are running low and they shouldn't have to compete with cattle when they get here. Who's idea was it to close this to the buffalo and allow cattle on them anyways it makes no sense. And no more hazing or costly shots for for the disease some carry that wouldn't help anyways.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We the people includes everyone...not just the environmental activist that has become well known for having the attitude that EVERYTHING is being destroyed by OHVs and the sky is falling. Guys we need to find common ground here. Not everything can be YOUR way or the highway. Most of us who enjoy recreating with an OHV agree that we must protect the environment that we have. Guaranteed, NONE of you love the environment more than we do. We don't advocate new trails and roads. What we advocate is the right to use what already exists. A bunch of our roads and trails have already been closed...most without seeking our input. We're tired of being railroaded and we are now letting our voice be heard. We are part of the "We are the People" club of the United States too. We love the mountains, sand dunes and all the areas we recreate in. With a consideration to taking care of our environment, we demand the right to continue to access these areas and we demand that our voices are heard before any more lands are deemed National Parks or a Wilderness designation.

Only close roads/trails after environmental study shows damage. As travel management plans are being created and implemented across the Western US, thousands of miles of roads and trails are being closed for no solid reason, with no environmental review being conducted to determine the negative impact any particular road or trail has on the surrounding environment. Honestly, it seems to me that some of these land managers have never actually visited a single mile of the roads and trails they close. This is a problem... I propose that for every mile of road or trail that is proposed to be closed, a solid environmental impact study must be initiated to determine the extent of the damage that road or trail is responsible for, estimated times and benchmarks for recoveries of the trails and surrounding areas following closures, and alternatives to closure discussed if damage does not warrant closure. Areas that do not show significant improvement following closure will be evaluated for re-opening. Alternatives should also include temporary closure, or re-routing where possible to avoid sensitive areas. Roads and trails that are to be closed must show significant damage to surrounding areas, with no alternative to rehabilitation other than closure likely resulting in environmental stabilization. In other words, you want to close a road or trail, you need to show just cause for doing so.

How so? I believe it would be good national policy to actually prove that closing a particular road or trail is necessary and vital to environmental well-being. Look, I live at 9,000 feet in Colorado. I am surrounded by NF. I see trails and roads closed every year that I, or my buddies have ridden for years sometimes decades, for absolutely no reason. I LOVE the area in which I live and don't want it to be trashed; it is NOT being trashed, it is not being destroyed, yet these roads and trails are still closed. As a policy, that makes no sense. Roads are important in many ways for rural communities such as mine: tourism, timber, mineral development, wildfires, etc

You are joking, right? Seriously, you are joking? What state do you live in? Not CO, not UT... I'll give you one easy example - BLM closures in the Moab, UT area. Lower Porcupine Rim Trail was closed to dirt bikes Oct 31, 2008 because it was not designated as a dirt bike trail in the TMP, regardless of the fact it was created by dirt bikes. That is one small section of Moab that has been closed, or limited to dirt bikes. When I pushed the BLM as to why it was closed, no other reason was given. That one piece of trail is maybe 10 miles of more than 500 miles (at least, probably more like 2 times that) that are now closed.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I thought the exact same thing. Funny... Seriously, there is no way to prevent planes from flying above National Parks. None. To try to tax planes is insane. There are enough out here you in the West would practically have to "bob and weave" a plane thru them, especially if you consider how far you can see from some of 'em. *facepalm* Who the heck came up with "viewshed", please tell me you made that up. I really, really wonder about people who sit around thinking that planes are ruining the "natural experience" of National Park (which is anything but natural and wild). You OK?

Allow snow machines to access Wilderness in winter. As the Federal Government becomes more involved in our lives, from a great distance in most cases, my idea is intended to bring some sanity to the Wilderness designations. Snowmobiles do not adversely impact the lands they travel over. Snowmobiles tread more lightly than even snowshoe users or back country skiers. Snowmobiles also provide useful snow compaction for wintering large game easing stress on the population. In order to reduce overuse of the limited over snow motorized designations, I propose we open any new Wilderness designations to snowmobile use. In most cases I believe these areas of proposed Wilderness expansion already entertain snowmobile use which is being ignored during deliberations on the merit of the lands uses.

You can think what you want, once again it is not all about you. You are correct though, when I take the truck on the 4wd trails I do not work up a sweat, or generally get any exercise. When I ride the snowmobile it is a much different story. Not everybody rides like we do in the west, so I do not expect people to fully understand. Wrestling a 500lb machine in deep snow is more physical exertion that you clearly can conceptualize. That is why I posted MY story, which you clearly ignored. Wade, Well stated. I think some of the forest managers are starting to see increased participation by snowmobile groups, and they are figuring out that they need to start considering more than just the non-motorized users input. To those that think we will continue to lose as they push their "fully closed" agenda, consider this...When negotiations were being help regarding skier/snowmobile areas near Wolf Creek Pass in SW Colorado, the snowmobile club proposed just what we are discussing here, if snowmobiles lose one area, we want another back open. Forest Managers agreed, skiers backed down and decided to be reasonable and share rather than be locked out of some land themselves. The results are interesting when the shoe is on the other foot.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Clarification using specific examples, sheesh! Currently the situation is precarious. There is pending Wilderness legislation on land I ride, and has seen documented snowmobile use for over a decade. Another area is currently open to motorized use, also documented back 10 years to the USFS planners. The south half of the pass is one forest district, the north half is another. Currently we have 1/4 of the land designated non-motorized. They can keep that 1/4, but I want the same 1/4 already open to me, closed to them and I would politely share the other half. The third documented use area under siege is tightly bordered by Wilderness on one side, non motorized closures on another, and a refuge area for x-country skiers on a third. Cat skiing outfits have a permitted closure on the snowmobile trail system. I was riding up the adjacent, open to motorized use zone only to find Cat skiers at the top complaining about me riding the good powder. It is NEVER enough for them, they want it all and openly admit it on their own public websites. We are legit forest users. There is no evidence to suggest that snow machines in the area over the last decade, in increasing numbers even, have caused a problem for the ecosystem. I just want a fair shot at what is out there. Wilderness...NO NEW WILDERNESS, this is really for another post, of which there are plenty but suffice it to say that process is corrupt. We have enough already, the remaining public lands should be managed on a local level by qualified USFS and BLM land managers. Any questions about my intent?

Where I live there is a snowcover limit for snowmobiles. If someone is tearing up land, call the authorities and deal with the offender. This glaring generalization that snowmobile riders are all nitro crazed stump jumpers is pretty funny. Those parts are expensive. We never ride off a main trail with less than 5-6 feet of snowcover. That doesn't take long where I live, and we are 10 miles in, in minutes enjoying the splendor of the lands. Nobody else comes here, they never did, oh, except when the snowmobile club used to groom the road. Nobody is asking to be "excused from all accountability" Enforce the laws, that was something the state snowmobile club in Colorado supported. It was a bill giving all law enforcement jurisdiction on USFS and BLM lands. It became a law. CSA also supported measurable sound laws that work. It feels like we are trying to work towards a middle ground. Every time we try, we have lost ground consistently. You just can not operate under an "I want it all" and sound resonable to anyone.

Creating a national park in the Maine woods is a great idea. For people who are not from here, or do not have experience with the Maine woods, its very hard to know how to access these wonderful places that we hear about. In other states, there are national parks/national forests/national recreation areas that provide easy access and knowledge. I know that if I go to a national park I will have a place to camp, a place to hike, a place to fish, etc. When I look at a map of northern Maine, I don't know where those opportunities exist. A national park will make access easier and bring people and money to our state. It's a great idea.

Your ignorance is showing. Your thread title is about Wilderness designation, they you rail about OHV use...which is banned in designated wilderness. Then you whine about wolf management plans, which were in turn blocked by an activist judge. "when we are going extinct we'll regret our stupidity"...I can only assume that you are speaking for yourself.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have the same issues here in Idaho and Montana. I've been working with the local forest service ranger district in regards to a planned closure in the Wallace area. It is one of the most popular trails because it allows a loop between 2 different riding areas, provides access to a rural town where we often stop for lunch, and offers some great views. The forest service's "justification" for the planned closure is due to the threat the trail poses to endangered Bull Trout. The trail does cross the creek over an area where the bottom is large rocks. I took pictures after 5 machines crossed the creek, there was NO turbidity in the water after this. I followed this up with a call to the US Fish and Wildlife service biologist in charge of Bull Trout recovery in this area. According to him: 1) There is no known Bull Trout population on this creek 2) There is no proposal that designates this stream as critical bull trout habitat 3) The stream in question isn't in an AREA even proposed for bull trout recovery. 4) Even on streams with endangered bull trout populations, motorized crossings pose no threat unless they are running across a reed (spawning bed), or across a really soft, muddy area that will contribute to sedimentation. These conditions are very uncommon on trout streams, which typically have rock bottoms. So, the entire excuse to shut down the trail is bull poo. Like most in the OHV community, I place the survival of an endangered trout above recreation on a particular trail. However, I don't appreciate being LIED TO with regards to the justification for a closure. These actions are costing the forest service, as well as a large portion of the environmental community, in terms of creditability. They are also driving the OHV community to be alot more resistive to closures in areas where there may be some actual justification for closures. On a brighter note, I have started a dialog with the biologist with regard to what we in the local ATV club can do to help him with a project on a local creek that does have an established bull trout population. We'll see what comes out of it.

Also, in areas where the Forest Service has completed the travel management planning process, they are issuing Motor Vehicle Use Maps. These maps are the controlling document and trump signage. Many roads and trails in my area are not signed, or have outdated ones that are inaccurate with regard to what is open and even what the route number is.

I'm voting to promote. State endowment lands are required by law to be managed for financial gain to support schools. It may make more sense to group state endowment land holdings, rather than have them scattered within federal lands. I disagree however that these lands are incompatible with conservation purposes. In my state, many of the forests on federal lands are in poor health due to overcrowding associated with a lack of harvest and fire suppression. Nearby state forests are generally healthier and provide more useful habitat for wildlife. The state has more of an incentive to ensure forest health than the federal government does.

I would add, given the success of the various state endowment programs, it may make sense to transfer ownership of some federal lands to the states. There is little reason for the federal government to own some 70% of the land in some western states (Idaho). The state has proven a responsible manager of public lands, in many cases more so than the forest service.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Close and Convert Zoos. Elephants do not belong in St. Louis. Tigers do not belong in San Diego. Giraffes do not belong in London. Convert zoos to urban open and park space, commercial venues and human housing. Use resources garnered from selling off zoos to create large nature preserves based on bio-regional science and populate those preserves with indigenous animals only.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These conversations are always tough because strong emotions overtake logic and reason - which is a shame because at the end of the day we all want the same thing, access to our beautiful lands in whatever way we prefer to enjoy them. I know for many mountain bikers - access to the trails is simply a way to see more and experience more of the beauty than is possible in a day solely on foot or hoof. But lets start with some facts as a good basis for the discussion: 1. Trail Work - it's an absolute fallacy for anyone to believe that MtnBikers don't work and car for the trails they ride - there are numerous organizations across the nation that spend almost every weekend of the calendar working trails... the issue is that you probably don't see them on trails where their bikes are not allowed - please open your minds to this fact - we are more alike than we are different. 2. MtnBikers - some are very nice and respectful of other trail users; some are not - this by the way is no different than hikers or equestrians or campers. There are nice people in the world and some not so nice people in the world. It is impossible and improper to stereotype any of these class of trail users as wholly being one or the other. Again - protect your mind from making these simplistic conclusions. 3. Biking and Horses do not mix - this is a challenge because it can be true for inexperienced users (of the bikes and the horses). I've also seen many cases where hikers have spooked some horses and caused some pretty sketchy situations. But there are all kinds of very simple solutions - that are practiced in many parts of US and Canada to alleviate the risks (particularly in the Rockies Regions). Two very simple and easily applied examples: One: Separate access times for horses and bikes - can be even/odd days; or alternating weekends; or whatever - i'm sure the bikers would take mid-week if that worked best - as the timing plans becomes known trail users of all kinds learn how to plan around it and each group enjoys the trails without the danger/annoyance of the others. (this is actually less enforcement burden as rangers only need to be concerned half as much as closing a trail full time, etc.) Two: Separate Trails in similar areas: one for hike/horse - one for bikes... more trails can be concerning for ecological issues but it does solve the safety issues and if trails are built correctly won't harm the ecosystem really at all... Where there are existing network of trails - simply divide and designate. These simple tactics provide equal access to all US citizens and keep safety at the forefront. There are many land spaces in the US that have done exactly this with raging success for all users. Again - open your mind to innovative ways to get what you want - but also share the trails with others.. it can and has been done. 4. Trail Damage - this is flat out misguidance. There have been numerous studies that show that horse hoofs cause significantly more long term trail and erosion damage vs. bikes - particularly in softer/wet steeper terrain as horses stomp hard for traction. Proper trail construction/maintenance and closure for both horses/bikes in extreme weather generally preserves the trails the best. Again free your mind of the mis-perceptions related to bikes vs. horses in this regard. 5. Plenty of trails exist for bikes - unfortunately this is not valid except in a few select regions of the country like maybe the Rockies and the Appalachians where the communities have embraced the bike culture much stronger. And in particularly when we refer to 'trails' as the sweet singletrack, narrow trails that all trail users prefer and crave. I live here in the supposed Mecca of Mountain Biking, Northern California - but in reality in the greater Bay Area - there really aren't that many great single track places to ride --- maybe 5-7 tops. if we ride 1-2x per week, we've exhausted these trails within a month or so... multiply by years and things get pretty stale pretty fast. I know this to be true in many other major metropolitan areas - and in some cases even more true in remote wilderness

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

areas... so again - while it may seem like there are plenty of places to go ride our bikes - we crave the same serene deep scenery and remoteness that you do - and for the same reasons of beauty, wonder, and adventure. In the end there really is no valid reason other than safety not to make the same trails and/or spaces available to bikers - other than safety. All other reasons are really false and simply propaganda based on wrong facts and pure emotions. If the safety concerns can truly be solved via simple division tactics through time or routes - then all of us can enjoy these beautiful places together, in harmony - and we can join forces to protect and nurture these trails together. It can be done - put down your emotions, open your minds, and think creatively about how to divide but share the trails amongst us all. If you can't see this and see the other sides POV - then I wouldn't want you on the trails in any form - check yourself and your motives.

Crow Canyon does an amazing job teaching a wide age range. Being able to physically dig with professional archaeologists is an experience for which to long. I would personally recommend this program. My experience has been one of fulfillment, knowledge, and growth.

A Federal Surplus Land UnUsed (Make a Public Park). This message is in reference to the Federal Lands to Parks Program. The BONUS Plant (lm.doe.gov/bonus/Sites.aspx) administered in part by the Department of Energy (DOE) and The Office of Legacy Management is a good candidate to be considered for a public park. This property and land was expropriated for an energy research purpose. At this moment is not been using for energy research. Currently, there are many organizations interested in preserved this land in its natural state for its great value in helping many environmental causes. Currently, there is a movement in the community to preserve this land.

Saving Our Natural Resources. I really have just 2 comments. The first being that Bristol Bay Alaska should not be ruined by the pebble mining. The second is that all our National Parks beauty needs to be preserved and that includes the peace and quiet. Off road vehicles should not be allowed. They are distracting and disturb the wild life that we need to protect.

I find it completely baffling to think that anyone could be against preserving the precious few resources that we have left, and doing it in a way that brings jobs and money to our state. Here is our chance to truly effect the future in a positive way. Maine Woods National Park has a beautiful ring to it!

More Mountain Bike Access to Promote Youth & Diversity. Natural surface trails in neighborhood parks will give inner city youth a way to get outdoors; bicycles on trails will be a neat hook for these kids. Once they experience it, they'll learn the finer points about the great outdoors.

All ORV vehicles should have to right to use the open trails be it Federal or State owned.. There are many people that own side by side rec vehicles that appreciate the out of doors and gladly accept the responsibility of keeping it clean and natural. Their tax dollars are paying for the trails also, and therefore they should have the right to ride on these trails also. Here in the state of Michigan they are closing trails both state and federal owned land which should be open to all tax payers.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think you need to get outdoors. The US has more trees today than it did when the pilgrims landed. It is true that most of our forests were cut down in the 1800's to build homes, railroad tracks, support beams for mine shafts and to fuel steam locomotives. There is an excellent book that shows then and now pictures and in each case the areas that were in many cases totally denuded are now heavily forested. Most would say so heavily forested they cannot tolerate a natural wildfire. When John Muir roamed the forest he was able to stroll through the open forest landscape. When a fire came he climbed up a tree and waited it out. If one did that today you would be incinerated due to the overgrown forests. So there is plenty of forest, but it needs to be managed and thinned to be healthy. Our overgrown forests are also poor habitat for wildlife who cannot survive massive stand replacing wildfires. Wildlife also need wider spacing between trees to be able to travel in the forest.

Equal Use Rights for OHV. Please consider equal rights to all parties in the OHV use matter as this is the American way. Systematically off-road use is being taken away from OHV enthusiasts little bits at a time over decades. This is being accomplished by a non compromise policy by one party and a compromise policy by the other party. The other side has no intention of relenting until all trails are closed to motorcycles and ATVs. This is not a fair compromise this is a total block. I am a hiker and mountain biker as well and empathize and respect these concerns and desires within reason. Please be respectful of all rights of all taxpayers and I ask you to be considerate of the off road community. Most of us love our country and love to enjoy it's wilderness in our way so please always be sympathetic or empathetic of OHV rights.

I find the link to family recreation to be interesting but a non-sequitor. It would be just as logical to promote family spray painting of graffiti in the National Gallery of Art. I'm sure a family that enjoyed vandalism could bond together and have a good time. But that doesn't mean that cans of spray paint should be allowed in art museums. ORV recreation is a consumptive use of the public lands. The vehicles damage (at a minimum) and frequently destroy the ecosystem where they are used. That said, motorized recreation is a popular pass time and there ought to be 'sacrifice areas' where it is allowed. But given the consumptive and destructive nature of that 'multiple use'; those areas should be limited and carefully selected to minimize the impact.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Government's Duty To Protect Wilderness from Resource Exploitation. Today, wilderness conservation is one of the most highly contested arguments facing our nation. I believe this is due largely in part of the energy crisis experienced by countless nations across the globe. To borrow a quote from the first argument of Michael P. Nelson's *An Amalgamation of Wilderness Arguments*, "Wilderness is the untapped pool of natural resources." It is for this reason that wilderness conservation and preservation is such a highly contested issue. Wilderness areas are specifically designated to prohibit the exploitation of natural resources. Without much thought, it is clear that the highly contested wilderness areas in our country are contested solely on the market value of the natural resources they contain - areas such as the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge. It is the Federal Government's duty to conserve wilderness areas like the ANWR as wilderness. The most effective methodology the Federal Government can use to conserve wilderness is to increase its investment in alternative forms of energy. Destroying wilderness for the extrusion of natural resources is just a crutch or band-aid for a much larger problem. Our nation's, along with many others, addiction to fossil fuels is one that cannot be sustained. There are many alternatives to coal and oil such as wind and solar, and dare I say, if used properly to its full potential, nuclear energy. A 1998 report by the U. S. Geographical Survey estimated there is between 5.7 billion and 16.0 billion barrels of technically recoverable oil in the ANWR. Opening this area for oil exploration seems logical - it is a resource in our possession and we should use it to its full potential. Furthermore, as many Republicans in Congress point out, the area proposed for oil exploration encompasses an only 2,000 acre section of the nearly 19 million acre refuge. However, a 2005 National Resource Defense Council study points out at that "a spider web" of industrial sprawl across the whole of the refuge's 1,500,000-acre coastal plain, including drill sites, airports and roads, and gravel mines, would have a footprint of 12,000 acres, but actually spread across an area of more than 640,000 acres, or 1,000 square miles. This would mean the destruction of countless acres of habitat for many threatened species that inhabit this area. It is the Federal Government's duty to protect areas such as ANWR. Exploiting an area such as this would inflict an irremovable scar upon a pristine wilderness unique to our nation. The ANWR is just one example of many wilderness areas threatened by exploitation and development. Wilderness has become the next commodity and some writers such as _____ even suggest that wilderness conservationists are the "abolitionists" of this era. Conservation viewed as abolition is quite unsettling. Abolition is act of doing away with something - therefore conservation as abolition is the doing away of the idea that the natural world is expendable and that we can do with it what we please. This idea Robinson introduces suggests that conservation is the minority opinion. This is exemplary of the fact that we, as a people, have lost our connection with the natural world that sustains us. I feel that the government has a duty to educate its citizens on the benefits of the natural world in some form of nationwide program to reorient its citizens with the natural world. The idea that Robinson suggests clearly indicates that the doing away with idea that wilderness is expendable is a task of monumental proportion. Despite this, I feel it is the government's duty to advocate for the protection and conservation of the little wilderness we have left and adjust its focus to alternative forms of energy. Wilderness areas are finite, as are the resources they contain - once they're gone, they are gone.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Nuclear power indeed shows great potential for an alternative form of energy opposed to our current coal-fired power plants. Nuclear power generation emits relatively low amounts of carbon dioxide - a key greenhouse gas credited to global climate change. It also generates high amounts of electrical energy output in one plant and the technology is readily available. However anyone with basic knowledge of the benefits of nuclear energy recognizes the negative after affects of nuclear waste. Waste from nuclear reactors remains radioactive for thousands of years and we do not have an effective way of safely disposing of this waste. In the past, our nation disposed of all nuclear wastes in a single location called Yucca Mountain. However, as reported by the U.S Department of Energy, the Department of Energy filed a motion with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to withdraw the license application for a high-level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain with prejudice. With the support of the Obama administration, our country currently has neither an effective method nor location to store nuclear waste material, especially at quantities which the commercial level would produce if nuclear energy were the main source of electricity. In your post you indicated that nuclear power could "provide all our energy needs for the next 700 years". I cannot fathom how you have arrived at this figure. Nuclear power requires a basic element - uranium. Just as coal for our coal fired power plants is a finite resource, uranium is no different. In July of 2010, the U.S Energy Information Administration published an updated estimate of uranium reserves for the year-end of 2008. The EIA calculated, based on average consumption levels between 1998 and 2008, that if uranium is available at up to 100 dollars per pound we have approximately 23 years worth of demand. If this price per pound is reduced to 50 dollars, there is an estimated 10 years worth of usable uranium. Currently, domestic U.S uranium production supplies only about 10 percent of U.S requirements for nuclear fuel as published by the EIA. This means that there is, and will, be a large dependency on foreign resources in order to fulfill our energy demands. As reported by the EIA, the U.S exported 13,334,822 million short tons of coal in 2009 whereas it imported 8,462,152 short tons of coal in the same year. Clearly this indicates a positive economic gain for the U.S. By switching from coal-fired power plants to nuclear power, our heavy dependency in foreign sources of uranium could easily shake our economy. Foreign uranium producers could effectively control the American consumer's energy bill by setting the prices at essentially whatever they wish. This theory is clearly exemplified at the gas pump due to our heavy reliance on foreign oil. Although nuclear power emits significantly less harmful greenhouse gas then our current coal supplied power does, I feel that the state of our economic wellbeing in the course of finding an alternative energy source is much more important. Although I agree that wind and solar energy are supplements and not solutions, they do little to harm the environment, and if used even as a crutch or supplement, are much better than jumping entirely to nuclear power as a solution. I feel it is necessary to take into consideration that we have no effective method of nuclear waste disposal, we have a finite supply of uranium which could open the door to foreign producers controlling our energy prices, and uranium is a very unstable element which can potentially do more harm than good.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Service-learning on public lands. There is a pressing need to provide service-learning opportunities on public lands to help restore the Nation's natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, and scenic resources, train a new generation of public land managers and enthusiasts, and promote the value of public service. Therefore, we urge the Department to include service and service-learning as innovative solutions to issues of how to build knowledge of, and appreciation for, our public lands and how to encourage a new generation of Americans to make working on public lands a career. Through the study of our parks, forests, and other lands we can connect young people with their natural environment and cultural heritage, creating a new generation of environmental stewards. Along the way, students can contribute to energy conservation, reduce the carbon footprint, and learn about the use of alternative sources of energy. For those who are so inclined, this experience can lead to a pathway to careers in federal land management agencies, which are in serious need of new, younger, and more diverse employees. Therefore, we urge the Department to use AGO as an opportunity to infuse service-learning into Department initiatives on public lands.

Expand Summer of Service. We strongly encourage the Department to build on efforts undertaken last summer in which Summer of Service programs exposed middle school students to public lands with promising results. Summer of Service (SOS) initiatives, included in the 2009 Kennedy Serve America Act, are examples of innovative service-learning opportunities for middle school youth over the summer months. SOS programs are designed to be intensive, structured, supervised, and designed to produce identifiable community improvements. In the summer of 2010, students engaged in community-based service-learning projects that addressed a variety of community needs and included exposure to national parks and other public lands. Expanding SOS opportunities to the Department of Interior, USDA, and other federal agencies will enable more young teens to participate in service as a "rite of passage" from middle to high school and provide opportunities for them to enter their teenage years with a positive experience that reinforces community connections, enlivens their education, and strengthens personal and civic values. At the same time, communities across the US might find an important new resource in their own backyards-young people who are ready to serve, if only they are asked and given the opportunity to do so.

I was privileged enough to fly through and camp in Alaska several years ago. WOW! Please do NOT allow the construction of Pebble Mine to go forward. Bristol Bay is a state/national/world treasure which deserves to be protected.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This situation isn't just about hunting. I know where public trailheads are also blocked. Weyerhaeuser (hardly what I would call a small private rancher) has complete control of access to a chunk of nearly 50,000 acres of public land near me. Nearby, private landowners have four USFS trailheads landlocked. Big timber pays lower property taxes because of the public benefits to forestland. One of those benefits is recreational access. If these companies insist on blocking access through their land to public land, their tax breaks should be reduced. Also, Federal agencies and local jurisdictions should be able to use all means necessary to acquire public use easements to significant blocks of landlocked public lands via roads or trails. The public should have rights to public land, just like if a private landowner was landlocked by public, they should have the right to access their land.

I love a fast machine as much as anybody, and it's just my opinion, but it seems that there are enough areas for ORVs already - they don't need access to all wilderness quality lands or to all areas. ORV users are concerned about their rights, but giving them unfettered access to these lands takes away the rights of other user groups by ruining their quiet enjoyment of the land. I can see the joy of flying across the desert on an ORV. Can the ORV users see the enjoyment of walking through the natural quiet of wilderness areas and wilderness study areas? Seems to me there is enough land to go around for all of us if we are willing to give some consideration to the rights of others.

I was about to write something up, then I read this post. It is tough to do any better. There is this misguided idea that the outdoors are only for one type of user. When I started mountain biking 2 years ago, the equestrians opposed us because we were different. There were claims that we destroyed the land, but in New England, soil compaction by horses is arguably more damaging than biking. The point is, America's beauty is experienced by people of many background and by many methods. Closing off any access should NEVER be done in response to one group's desires. It must be PROVEN that the closure is a necessity.

There should be more trails made specifically for bicycles, not on the PCT or through designated wilderness. There are many old, unmaintained dirt roads that could be made into bicycle trails. Bicycles need wider trails because of trail damage and erosion issues that their use causes. Old forest service roads that are no longer being used would be perfect bike trails.

Clean Water State Revolving Funds. Preservation of land that filters water (or prevents further degradation of American waterways) is a cost-effective supplement or alternative to gray infrastructure of wastewater and stormwater treatment plants. Over the last 20 years, only 5% of the \$70 billion in EPA grant-funded Clean Water State Revolving Funds has been used for non-point source projects, much less land conservation projects specifically. State CWSRF administrators need prioritize projects each year on cost-effectiveness (pounds of pollution reduced or avoided per dollar), and encourage municipal utilities to pass the savings from funding land conservation on to their ratepayers in the form of lower sewer and water bills.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Another good example is the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, which is part of the National Park Service. Goes right through the major metropolitan areas of Minneapolis and St Paul. The river was always there, and many people have a hand in it, and control over it there, but adding an overlay of the National Park Service has really made an impact, and it's exciting to have "National" status so close to home! Helps focus restoration efforts along the river, and raises awareness of this incredible natural resource right under our noses.

increase gov't solvency. The Federal Gov't has an enormous wealth in land. If the Fed's was more solvent it could be more credible when it made suggestions for land management. If the Fed began selling the land to private citizens it could use the money to pay off it's huge debt. This would be a form of voluntary tax collection that would help everyone.

Every state already receives roughly \$1 million each year in RTP funds to do this. RTP = Recreational Trail Program

Wilderness should be Wild. I think the Wilderness areas should be Wild. There should be no maintained trails. No trail heads. No trail head parking lots. No GPS, Cellphone, rescue beacons. If somebody tries to use an electronic device to summon help, it should be ignored. There should be no wilderness rescues provided by the government. Marked and maintained trails, and their associated trail heads and parking lots encourage concentrated use. This detracts from the wilderness experience. Of course there will still be a demand for more developed areas, with marked trails, and parking areas, and the possibility of rescue. These areas would have to be removed from Wilderness designation. Perhaps call them "backcountry" areas as a means of distinguishing them from areas that have paved roads. In the interest of fairness I think some of these areas should be designated multiple use. Not all the trails should be restricted to pedestrian use. Horses should be allowed on some. Bicycles, motorcycles, OHV, Jeeps, SUVs should all get areas their owners can use. The division of the available land could be based on the number of users in each group. This could perhaps be determined by trail registers at trail heads. Or perhaps each user would pay a fee based on which type of areas they intend to use.

My understanding is a US wilderness is defined as "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." If we are going to have wilderness areas (and I think we should) we need to be honest about it. In my mind, a maintained trail, with trail register and parking lot, is a permanent sign of the trammeling by man. They should be eradicated, just like other signs of previous human activity (roads, cabins, etc) are sometimes eradicated.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Public Involvement in Archaeology. The area of what is now the United States has been home to Native Americans for more than 12,000 years, and to more recent arrivals from Europe and other parts of the world for the past 500 years. The archaeological sites that document this long history occur virtually everywhere. By visiting and studying the archaeological materials left by those who preceded us, we can gain direct, tangible insights into how people at different times and places have been connected to the landscapes that sustained them, and how those connections have changed over the ages. America's public lands contain hundreds of thousands of archaeological sites--some of them large and spectacularly preserved, as in the cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde National Park, but the majority small and unobtrusive, yet still enlightening to those who know what to look for. Visiting or studying these sites, large and small, requires us to think about how people lived in these places in the past. In most cases, they were dependent on locally grown crops and/or on animals hunted and plants gathered in a relatively small radius around their homes. Landforms and places would have had names and stories attached, so the landscape became a living testimony of each people's history in that locale. Thus archaeological sites can provide us with understandings of ways of living on the land that are very different from our own, yet linked to our lives through specific places and by our common humanity. Studying and reflecting upon archaeological sites can give us new perspectives on our own lives and our own connections to the environments that sustain us. The federal agencies that manage the public lands for all Americans offer several programs that provide a way for citizens to visit archaeological sites and do work that both provides new information about the past and helps preserve the sites themselves. Through its Passports in Time Program, the U.S. Forest Service offers opportunities for people to help archaeologists do research and stabilize sites that are vulnerable to erosion. The Volunteers in Parks (VIP) program of the National Park Service includes some opportunities for participants to work on projects that improve public interpretation, contribute to research, or preserve threatened sites. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management runs a very successful Site Stewards program that provides opportunities for people to "adopt" particular archaeological sites. They visit "their" sites periodically to check on their condition, report problems, and give educational and preservation information to other citizens they encounter while they are out on the landscape. Most states have archaeological societies that maintain local chapters where people can get together to learn about archaeology, go on field trips, and become qualified to assist on archaeological research projects. The nonprofit sector also offers opportunities for active involvement with archaeology in the classroom, laboratory, or great outdoors. One of the best-known examples is the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center of Cortez, Colorado www.crowcanyon.org. The Center has hands-on educational programs for upper elementary through high school students that help them learn about archaeology and Native American cultures of both the past and the present day. Middle school and high school students spend part of their time on campus helping professional archaeologists do excavations and archaeological survey in the field and analysis in the laboratory. Such "research participation" programs are also offered for adults, and there are educational travel seminars for adults that are led by prominent scholars and that focus on visits to important archaeological sites in the U.S. and internationally. Crow Canyon's education and research projects are developed in consultation with Native American community members, and the Center involves Native scholars and teachers in both its on-campus and travel programs.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Throughout, Crow Canyon emphasizes how both past and present cultures have been shaped by, and in turn have shaped, the natural environments that sustain them.

I am a Utah native, and have seen the the damage done by OHV's on Forest Service land, BLM land, and private land. The use of OHV's has exploded exponentially over the last several years, which means the "small minority" of irresponsible riders has exploded exponentially as well. Places I have gone with my family, from the time I was a child with my parents, to now taking my own children have been damaged beyond recognition. Dirt roads that took us into the back country along the Wasatch Front mountains, my back yard, are now impassable. Streams and hillsides ruined and meadows turned into dirt racetracks (I have photographs). We MUST protect the last wild places and OHV use controlled and strict laws enforced or there will be nothing left for anyone.

This planning is already in place through the mandated state trail advisory boards under the Recreational Trails Program,, administered by FHWA, and through the MPO requirements of federal surface transportation funding.

Strong support. Imagine if there were no charts and maps available to general aviation pilots! Both technology and communications conduits are available for your idea -- and it might help us create effective communications channels to recreatiinists on the ground.

I think it is time to tell the federal agencies that earning an America the Beautiful Pass should be doable during a week's vacation and two weekends -- say 50 hours. That would value our time at about \$160 an hour! Make sure that the volunteer effort is subject to documentation, but for goodness sake, make the volunteer recognition acheivable by folks other than the unemployed and the retired!!!! Heck -- I get two free baseball tickets for donating blood -- a \$30 value for literally 30 minutes of my time.

First -- Please get over this phobia about reading more than a paragraph! This is really, really important stuff and deserves the detail in the posting. And it is indeed the kind of initiative that should be embraced by the Administration. right-sizing the road system does not need to inhibit access -- in fact, it can be a tool to improve access. the reality is we have a road system built around a timber program that is an anachronism.

Health Car Reform Revisited: Opportunities for US. The next Congress will almost certainly revisit the health care legislation passed in the 11th Congress. When the discussion begins, let's unite and champion some new ideas that could really help us control health care costs by getting, and keeping people healthier. Let's incentivize employers to provide assistance to employees to be physically active. Let them count as medical expenses free park passes, loaner recreation equipment like bikes and skis (or arrangements with companies like REI that can provide that equipment. Give them some kind of tax inducement if they can meet metrics demonstrating health improvements year-to-year, like reductions in the proportion of the workforce which is overweight or obese. 70% of our national health care costs is for lifestyle-induced chronic illnesses. Let's focus on reducing those costs! And the seerendipity is that more people will be getting outdoors and connected with out parks, forests and other special places.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Forest Service Planning Rule Needs to Facilitate, Manage Recreation. The Forest Service is going through an elaborate process to development a planning rule to guide planning efforts by national forests covering 190 million acres and hosting hundreds of millions of recreation visits each year. The process has included Federal register notices, a science forum, public roundtables and more. Recreation community leaders recently met with the Chief to praise the process but underscore that major change is needed to keep national forests relevant to Americans in the 21st Century. While we agree that the planning rule can't go into great detail about treating recreation in the forests, we do believe that the rule needs to signal a change in managing recreation, including strong direction to utilize state programs, volunteers, concessioners and permittees to head off the all-too-frequent clashes that occur between a dn among recreationists in the forests, and to be more forward-looking in planning efforts.

The data is clear -- recreation and wildlife economic benefits of national forests and most other public lands exceed the economic benefits of commodity uses. Has been true for years. And the recreaiton/wildlife benefits are sustainable. Yet getting recreation its deserved place in forest and public land planning is very tough and not appropriately supported by the agencies. Trying to change that in the new FS Planning Rule.

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program -- Real and Priority Conservation. The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) was established in 2002 and reauthorized in 2009 and provides matching grants to state and local governments to protect lands with significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical and/or aesthetic values which are threatened by conversion. Priority is given to projects which can be effectively managed and protected and which use leveraged funds. Since 2002, NOAA, which administers the program, has awarded more than \$230 million for projects in 27 of the 34 eligible states, protecting more than 50,000 acres. More information on the project is at { Link } This program is noteworthy for several reasons. First, states need to nominate projects and relate them to state CZM and related plans. Second, each project needs to demonstrate need, secured matching funds and landowner willingness to sell. Third, the projects are reviewed and ranked by teams of public and private sector experts independent of NOAA's analysis. and finally, the prioritized list is presented to the Congress, which then appropriates money annually for the projects -- and the Congress determines how far down the prioritized list they will reach with its funding level. No pork-barrel or earmarking the projects are funded according to the reviewers' priorities. Good example of a strategic use of federal dollars to boost conservation!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Would an infrastructure bank be a useful tool for federal recreation providers?. President Obama announced a plan for moving ahead on a 6-year surface transportation program which would embrace a concept he referenced in his Presidential campaign: an infrastructure bank which would raise private capital for transportation projects and guarantee the repayment of those funds with a relatively small federal deposit. This would be his way to "front load" the surface transportation program and create more employment without adding to the federal deficit. And the federal guarantee makes the private capital available at low rates. If the White House likes the idea of an infrastructure bank for roads and railroads, would they also like the idea of an infrastructure bank for parks and other federal recreation sites where entrance fees, user fees and other payments could be earmarked for repayment of the funding? Possible examples of projects: utilities; campgrounds; marinas; lodges and restaurant facilities.

Concessioners and guests team up to raise more than \$1 million for parks. Concessioners in about ten national parks offer guests a chance to make a \$1 per night contribution to help fund projects in those parks. The money is deposited with the National Park Foundation and then returned to be spent on park projects selected by the local park or the local park and a local friends group. Guests can choose to drop the contribution at check-out. Over the past five years, some \$1.1 million has been raised -- more than \$310,000 last year alone.

Park Partnerships are Drowning in Red Tape and Process. There are wonderful partnerships at work protecting America's national parks and helping to create life-long memories. Many of the partners are non-profits like NatureBridge and the Golden Gate Parks Conservancy. Other partners are businesses operating in or near the parks. But across the board, these partners are finding the red tape and process to be growing dramatically and challenging even long-standing relationships. Fear of GAO and IG investigations is prompting NPS to shorten the terms of the agreements -- even as they are asking more of these partners -- and putting each agreement through hoop after hoop of local, regional and national clearance. The House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands held a hearing on Parks and Partnerships on 9/23 and got an earful. The Congress needs to take action soon to overcome the surge in barriers to partnerships and to send a clear signal that creativity in "doing the right thing" by park superintendents will not only be tolerated but applauded. For copies fo the testimony detailing the problems facing park partners, go to: { Link }

While I generally support this comment, I do not believe that management of our lands should be looked upon as a "majority vote" issue. Our federal land managers need to be trained and rewarded for developing consensus on land use decisions, as well as helping the public understand the science issues involved. And there needs to be consideration of the variations in public values within the one-third of the US managed by federal agencies. In short, national park system lands and wildlife refuges deserve more "national" consideration in use decisions than much of the multiple use lands systems.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Permits are required for commercial uses of Wilderness -- or any FS or BLM area. The problem is that the permit process is hugely burdensome, very slow and works only with well-intentioned outfitters and guides. There is virtually no monitoring or enforcement, meaning that there are renegade operators ignoring the permit process -- and others who operate under the pretense of being educational/charitable operations when they are not. This is definitely an area needing major change.

While you could focus your comments a bit more, I applaud your expressed conclusions that recreation is largely irrelevant to the DOI and USDA upper echelons and some type of a new recreation advocacy is appropriate if we hope to keep future generations connected to the outdoors. Your key message to me is: "I learned from ten years of being asked by the DOI and trying to present things to DOA that these agencies have their plates full trying to administer what is before them and that recreation should find its own seat at the table."

Actually, I think this is a natural resource issue since our US population is growing more through immigration than native births. But much more important than simply having the ceremony in national park units (and this is already done frequently, especially at urban park sites in NY, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington and San Francisco), we need to make the story of our parks and conservation part of the curriculum provided to all applicants of citizenship and the citizenship test. And then we should do what was done in 2008 -- give each new citizen a free one-time park pass and a personal invitation to our parks (accompanied by a friend or family).

Agree it is time for action on the Maine Woods -- and to do so in a way which protects intrinsic features and allows experiences which will help future generations to value this features. One hundred years ago, Stephen Mather led the NPS with a vision for both protecting and sharing. His vision enriches us all today. Same type of vision is needed for the Maine Woods!

Why not suggest an alternative for the grazing/mining practices you outline? Higher fees, placed into a trust fund for conservation purposes, could help us circumvent PAYGO problems facing many of our legislative initiatives and allow us to give serious consideration to the multi-year public lands and conservation program budgeting we need!

As a retired Forest Service employee I KNOW (emphasis added) that prohibiting OHV use on land owned by 306,000,000 Americans will decrease at least 15% of the environmental degradation on public land and reduce the tax money needed to fix the plunder.

Stop all OHV use on federal land.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I disagree. Though I will agree that all Americans deserve a say in how federal land is managed in this state; the locals should more say. The easiest way to accomplish this is by county specific land bills, which are spearheaded by county commissioners, with help from state congressmen (they can still take input from people across the country, just as they do now). The bills are then brought to DC where they are voted on by congressmen from across the country. All Americans get a say in how the land is managed via the vote of their elected congressmen/women (just as they do now). The only thing that would change with county specific land bills is that land bills wouldn't be spearheaded by environmentalist groups any longer. And the less special interest group control in this country the better! I don't expect to have a huge say in how Montana, or California, or Wyoming manages their federal land (above the vote of my elected congressional representatives), and I would appreciate if people in other states would afford my state the same respect. Further, there should NEVER, under any circumstances, be wilderness designated in ANY state without at least a simple majority of the congressmen/women from that state supporting the bill. If the advocates for any wilderness can't convince a majority of the congressmen from that state the bill is necessary IT SHOULD NOT HAPPEN!!! (Historically, with few exceptions, that has been the practice...but it needs to be "in writing" so it doesn't happen in the future) .

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

12): Many people don't trust federal politicians...so what's your point? I'll take a crooked local politician over a crooked federal politician ANY DAY! Which is why I feel land bills should start at the county level. As for the wilderness bills not passing without local congressional support, that is essentially how it is now anyway (so though people disagree with it, it's the way it is...with few exceptions), I just want to make it official. And the fact that historically congress hasn't passed wilderness bills without congressional support from the state the land is in, is for good reason! Right now, in Utah, there is a MASSIVE (and even "massive" is an understatement---the thing is larger than the entire state of Maryland) wilderness area trying to be FORCED down Utah's throat, by a radical environmental group. This group tried 20 years ago to get a Utah congressman to support the bill-and he was promptly voted out of office...so they realized they had to get politicians out of reach of Utah voters to progress their agenda. So here we in Utah sit, looking down the barrel of a HUGE wilderness bill that we don't want, that will hurt our economy, that includes non-wilderness act compliant land, is really unnecessary (the reasons stated for the bill are exaggerated or outright lies), and that we HATE, and there is NOTHING we can do about it. The politicians progressing it are out of reach of our votes (many of them won't even accept emails from people outside their district-Maurice Hinchey 22nd district in NY for example). We are helpless! That is why this is wrong! Utahns know what is best the federal land we live on, make our livings from, of which our livelihoods depend. And we're helpless to stop this BAD wilderness bill. In Washington County here, there was a very successful land bill that passed, it included nearly 300,000 acres of wilderness. Similar bills are in the works in Emery County, San Juan County, and Piute County...All will include wilderness...but this radical environmental group has promised to "kill the bills" if the amount of wilderness in each county is less than in their proposed wilderness bill. So for people to say that our local politicians don't care about the land, or won't designate wilderness, or will sell it to the highest bidder is just plain misinformed and WRONG. _____ 13) What does BP have to do with this? And in my experience, the REASON environmentalists are so against "local" (county and state) politicians is because they have MORE control over the feds (just like corporations do). Environmentalist groups are "big business" these days...they have MILLIONS AND MILLIONS of dollars (The one we deal with here in Utah has MAYBE 20 full time staff, and they have well over \$5Million in assets with nearly \$2Million a year in "donations"...and that's a small one!). They are just as eager, just as capable, and just as willing to "buy" congressmen, and their agenda is just as damaging and just as crooked as a corporation is. Environmentalists constantly try and dumb the discussion down into absolutes and exaggerations. They try and make it an "either/or" proposition. It's "either" wilderness, or its "wrecked once and for all". Which isn't even remotely true! There are many different, and sometimes more effective ways to manage public land than wilderness....but the environmentalists-the radicals that they are-only see to want wilderness. Why is that?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

...those county commissioners are wrong in that desire. If San Juan and Emery and Kane and Piute could spearhead the land use proposals without fear of a radical environmentalist groups threatening to "kill the bill" if it doesn't reflect what they-radically-believe it should, those county commissioners would feel they needed those drastic measures. The problem is that the environmentalist groups won't allow a "middle ground" (unless it's a forced last resort--Tavaputs Plateau), their radicalism and extremism breeds extremism and radicalism from the opposition. The opposition to these bills can't give an inch, because the environmentalists will take a mile. So they have to maintain these extreme-be it, unrealistic-positions to counter the extreme-and equally unrealistic-positions of the environmentalists. All I'm saying is that the county residents should have the MOST say (they should do the inventory, they should set the wilderness and other potential designation boundaries, etc...this gives them the most say), they should welcome input from everyone in the country, and at the end of the day ALL Americans would get a say via the vote of their congressional representatives when the bill is brought to the floor in congress (just like they do now on every land bill and every other bill on every other topic). That's all I'm saying.

No wilderness should be designated in any state without local congressional support. No wilderness bills should be passed unless there is congressional support for those bills, from congressmen/women in the state in which the wilderness would be created. The congressmen/women know the needs of their state, and they know the needs of the public land in their states better than anyone! And if they won't support a land bill, it shouldn't be passed.

All public land bills should start at the county level!. When it comes to public land bills, they need to start at the county level-with input from local citizens and businesses-spearheaded by the resident county commissioners, and supervised by the state congressmen. Once a land bill is finalized at the county level, the state congressmen then take that bill to D.C. for a vote. This is public land, and as such all Americans deserve a say. And this way the AMERICANS that will be most significantly affected by the how the land-those that live on/near the land-is managed get the most say. The Americans that live close to the land in question-residents of the state-get slightly less say than the specific residents of the county, and all other AMERICANS get a say by how their elected congressional representatives vote of the proposed bill. This way those that will be affected the most, get the most say. Yet all Americans still get a say-as they should. The current way of special interest groups (environmental groups)-who represent a small minority of the population-spearheading the movement and going over and around local politicians, and getting support for whatever bill they come up with from congressmen from the otherside of the country and then forcing the bill down the local residents throats, is broken and wrong!

I worked for refuge for 30 years on 6 different refuges/wetland mangement districts, a regional office, and Washington D.C. As former Secretary of the Interior once said: "Refuges are infinitely more important than our national parks" because they are close to more Americans and are catalysts for conservation across the broader American landscape. A system of lands encompassing all ecosystems in the U.S. and protecting a stunning array of species while providing hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation deserves the attention that separate agency status would present. A system of wildlife lands started by Theodore Roosevelt deserves no less.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES NEED FULL AGENCY STATUS EQUIVALENT TO THE OTHER FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES. NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES NEED FULL AGENCY STATUS EQUIVALENT TO THE OTHER FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES As a legislatively mandated Federal agency, a new NATIONAL WILDLIFRE REFUGE SERVICE would have the same standing as the other Federal land management agencies. That status would give it greater public and congressional recognition, thus paving the way for new heights of productivity. As an independent agency, the National Wildlife Refuge Service would operate as a direct line management organization, directed by professional land resource managers at every level. The current National Wildlife Refuge System will never attain full potential so long as it is buried in the bureaucracy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). This lack of status prohibits the Refuge system from functioning at the same level of the other Federal land management agencies. The Director of the FWS administers many diverse programs, thus severely limiting the amount of attention given to refuge administration. This disadvantaged status has been recognized for decades. Numerous studies have called for elevating the stature of the System dating back to J. Starker Leopold's Advisory Board on Wildlife Management in 1968. The Refuge System, containing 150 million acres of lands and waters, with units in every state and territory, is sorely deficient in funds and personnel. It is unable to staff nearly half the units and is faced with more than a three billion-dollar backlog of funds needed for maintenance and operations. Comments are sought concerning the merit of this proposal to improve the stature, integrity, support for and independence of our National Wildlife Refuges.

We have gotten ourselves into this unsustainable and disastrous predicament by pursuing exactly the policies _____ recommends! We need to learn from our mistakes and start doing things differently, in a way that is not only sustainable (which has become a buss word, these days), but regenerative. By observing and understanding nature, we can learn to live in a way that renews the earth instead of always degrading and destroying it. This is not a pipe dream, we can do this now. We know how to do it. Organic agriculture and permaculture good examples of how to live this way in terms of food production. Solar and geothermal energy, among others, are good examples of how to do this in terms of energy production. There are many other examples and we are just beginning to see the countless possibilities as we explore other options besides the traditional Western notions of exploit, degrade, rape and move on to the next resource area. Eventually, you run out of new areas and resources to exploit and use up and you destroy the life-sustaining systems we rely on for survival. We are now approaching the limits of oil extraction and exploitation, referred to as "Peak Oil", where the only substantial, new reserves left are those that are increasingly difficult and dangerous to get at, and are much more costly to extract. A new regenerative model is clearly needed, one that allows us to live within the capacity of the Earth to sustain us by incorporating the principle of renewability as fundamental to the system. We will either adapt to this reality, or we will perish. The Earth does not care, it will still be here after we are gone. We still have a "frontier" mentality in America, but we no longer have a frontier to exploit. This is now the case on a global level and we must adapt to this reality.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree with _____ and _____. Wilderness areas must be wild! They are not theme parks or Disneyland. We have those already for people who want that experience. Gentry's comment, "wilderness is not our personal property. It was not created for profit, and thus should not be dominated by investors with buildings" is so true. What part of our landscape is not dominated by "buildings" these days? Beautiful and historically significant buildings, our cultural heritage, are torn down and replaced by unsightly big box buildings, one story, flat-roofed, uninspired structures that no one could possibly care about. Our farms are bulldozed and forests cleared to make way for even more unsightly and poorly designed suburban sprawl. Even our parks and "wilderness" areas fall victim to the developer's wrecking ball. The F.I.R.E. sector (finance, insurance and real estate) wins nearly every time and trumps all other human values and needs. Hmm, I wonder why? The beast must continually be fed new victims...until we run out of victims, I suppose. Is it just me, or does anyone else think this is all wrong? The tail wagging the dog. Yellowstone and Yosemite National Park's are a good model. "Yosemite's gift shops blend in with the nature around them. They are not huge and are not located every three feet. If we could make our wilderness follow this model, the entire experience of a wilderness trip would be much more enjoyable". So true. And we could do so, in fact, we used to do so all the time. I think Yosemite and Yellowstone were done so well because they were mostly built early on, before the 1940's when the tyranny of the post-WWII Zoning Code began to dominate our lives, our communities and destroy the fabric of our towns and the integrity of our landscape and wilderness. Until this regime is overthrown and we go back to designing and building towns and cities properly (i.e., for community, livability, to be walkable and to last, which includes protecting farmland, forests, water supplies and wilderness), I'm afraid we will keep fighting and losing the same battles over and over again.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

public access coalition. I created polarfleece to help folks be comfortable while they are outdoors. The value of that fabric is simply what it means to the person who purchases it and wears it. In other words freedom of choice or expression, a basic right of all Americans is something that we can directly connect to our public lands and the uses of those lands as what is being now called America's Great Outdoors. Since 1997 the term America's Great Outdoors has become a common theme of corporations and those who speak for corporations. Organized into three letter words like ARC, American Recreation Coalition and OIA Outdoor Industry Association, Products are now taking on the voices and opinions of citizens as these corporate controllers begin to navigate the friendly lands and waterways of the heritage of All Americans. Nothing gets to the Great Outdoors unless it is brought there by a human being less it be called part of the Great Nature of the Outdoors. Is it important to draw a line in the sand of the Great Outdoors between corporate OUTDOOR MARKETING and citizen outdoor uses including recreation? I believe the answer is yes based on the Constitution of America and the long standing Bills of Laws that have anchored the rights of every citizen to their public lands. While one might suspect the overly supplied postings in Americas Great Outdoors as a simple path to something like a Secretary of Recreation, posturing health and wealth as its mission and goal, a closer look shows nothing more than corporate lobbying for a free lunch to using the Great Outdoors as the backdrop of marketing products that do not of themselves pay any taxes to use the Great Outdoors let alone own them as the citizens of America do and have done since the founding fathers gave us the tools to create the America Great Outdoors. Policy makers usually make cases for making policies less we not do that and just allow citizens to freely decide what the America Great Outdoors means to them and how they want to use and enjoy them. If that requires a label like recreation and a Secretary to enforce the recreating then why not ask a member of Congress to present a bill and allow the members of Congress to debate it and our President the opportunity to sign it or veto it and send it back to the authors. Meanwhile lets stop exploring the marketing of America Great Outdoors and remember that those who created the Great Outdoors did not do so with corporate lobbying for access to marketing the publics Great Outdoors. Possibly our President might read a few books from those who toiled for decades to create the America Great Outdoors and then the purpose will clarify the positions and challenges to be resolved in this debate that has found the source of access fees creating entitlement that has more political impact that the citizens taxes that simply support and own Americas Great Outdoors. Under the simple three letters PAC, I began the Public Access Coalition over 10 years ago to bring together voices to oppose fees for acces to public lands. Motivated by grass roots non profits the issue was debated but the real voices of fees, corporations seeking marketing rights to public lands have covered the Great Outdoors with themes and promotions usually found in tv and print media called advertising. Giving new meaning to free space in the Great Outdoors. Today over ten years later the debate about the Great Outdoors of America has matured and become as important as health care and other high profile topics. However, unlike health care, every citizen in America has enjoyed free access to the Great Outdoors for over one hundred years. The leading authors of the Great Outdoors say there is no free lunch. That is true when you are using products and props to market them. But dare I say, it is not true there is and always should be a free lunch to access Americas Great Outdoors. Again I reach out to anyone who believes in the freedom of the Great Outdoors and ask you to think of me if and when the

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

opportunity should come about for a Secretary of Recreation in America. I rest my qualifications on creating Polarfleece to better serve you. I cannot improve on what those of our citizens did to create the Great Outdoors one hundred years ago. I simply can only try to continue their purpose and goals from that accomplishment.

Okay, I'll explain it further.. Using the simple heading Plastic or Nature synthetic fibers are all made from plastic outdoor recreation is not synthetic not plastic and not a video it is about nature.. it is real... not created by man as in man made synthetics ie plastic of which all outdoor products are made if not sourced from natural fibers. there seems to be total confusion on this distinction between plastic and nature.. why are coalitions of corporations all of whom use and consume vast amounts of plastic to create profits trying to be the go to for what to do and how to do it and where and why on public lands. records show the arc coalition sunk their playbook into a presidents notebook brief and that woke up the president to ask what do these recreation folks pay to use the public lands. comparing recreation to other uses of industry like logging and grazing and mining.. hence the issue of funding and fees and the no way we willnot pay an excise tax on our products instead charge user fees to the public to bring them there. so recreation is now deployed under a banner of human power like our foot soldiers and motorized like our armor troops. these two coalitions want everyone to believe you need products not a license to visit public lands. back dropping nature to sell their plastic wares faster and more organized than a tupperware lady going amway.. the new american way of recreation requires plastic wares to be able to relate to the difference between the video of atving and the video of climbing vs doing it in the real nature yes, i do believe having enough experience in plastic and nature fibers I can tell the difference between plastic and nature in recreation. and if our gov't is going to embark on a new mission after mission 66 into mission 20/20 then i want to be the john muir that helps it get the best for nature and america. you were fleeced to keep you warm and dry while staying outdoors by me. but i did not ask for a fee nor did i try to tell you what to do in the fleece when you are recreating.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

govern nature as nature governs itself. What works for conservation and allowing nature to live in harmony with plastic. First lets define plastic.. plastic is a cover all word for something that is man made. I have found that anything man made can be traced to chemicals many of whom are by products of fossil fuel extracted as oil. Other posts of mine tell of my creating polarfleece and point out that corporations now deeply rooted to plastic man made products also called synthetics have organized into coalitions to try to improve recreation experiences and participation on public lands. Years ago in 1992 I was quoted in a feature story about polyester plastic underwear in the Wall Street Journal. quote: "layering irony upon irony Mr. Hoschek explained who was responsible for this winter wear revolution: hippies. The outdoor winter wear revolution of moving on from natural fibers to plastic fibers was indeed part of the strong hippie culture in Berkeley Calif. One name Sierra Designs rooted in name only to the more famous Sierra Club began the revolution. Contrast this hippie thing to today and a recent award winning documentary film about one of the founders of Jan Sport also acknowledged to be at one time a hippie. Are we going to connect the dots of Michael Moore and Bill Mahler todays voices that can swear on tv and make it okay as hippies swore at the gov't in the 60's and 70's. What kind of movement can deploy itself against the war on terror in todays world. The term grass roots comes to mind. Grass is a root of the land itself in real terms not just a tag line that might be linked to hippies. Every idea and post for the Great Outdoors I believe carries with it a real claim to preserving and protecting what we have set aside through time honored work and education from those before us like John Muir and Aldo Leopold and others. Every comment should be read by the federal employees who manage the lands of America that are NOT privately owned. That is why I offer up the goal of seeing a separate Department from the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture when the word recreation is associated with conservation and the ethics created from thinkers and scholars like Aldo Leopold and John Muir. I learned from ten years of being asked by the DOI and trying to present things to DOA that these agencies have their plates full trying to administer what is before them and that recreation should find its own seat at the table. Plastic is simply my way of saying its man made and its purpose is to serve a corporate entity to make a profit. Nature is something humans have yet to control and certainly are not paying enough attention to in how it governs itself through all the lives and deaths and births it accepts in the evolution of its union with land air and water. The is a survival of the fittest in Nature but that also directly brings forth another species and the chain is not broken by plastic manmade intrusions less we begin that trail and do not have the right governing ways and means to sustain both our plastic and natures natural. I have always viewed recreation as a means to be upon nature and to employ our powers as human in conservation to its higher power and calling. Words today are not enough. Actions are needed and after ten years of following the conservation alliances of recreation coalitions I truly believe our government should create a new Department for Recreation to allow it the freedom to become what our public lands are asking from us as we continue in our world of plastic and design our way back to nature.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I understand _____'s frustrations. Our local office of the BLM does have an agenda that is not consistent with will of the people in the area. It is also not based on science or evidence that there is any real risk to visitors to the area. The fraudulent closure of CCMA in San Benito county is a travesty. We need some positive attention outside our community to help us.

Tougher Legislation Concerning Cell Tower Siting. National Parks, Civil War Battlefields, National Register Districts, Scenic and Historic view sheds have all been grossly abused by careless placement of cell towers. I would propose the Telecommunications Act of 1997 and the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Section 106) be revisited by Congress to provide stricter controls and guidelines to provide more protection to these valuable areas. Our National Parks and National Register communities alike have had to spend valuable resources to protect these areas against corporate greed and while many have lost these battles, these national assets continue to be threatened by these visual intrusions threatening their integrity.

No predators should be killed, so yes, I agree that wolves should be treated the same as other predators and that means protecting them all from being killed by guns and poisons. These protected predators should include wolves, mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats, foxes and lynx. Predators do not need to be "controlled", as they have population controls built into their internal breeding systems.

California Forestry Association: already has a professionally designed courses that cover grades K thru 12 Teaching ades provided. classes for school teachers are held during summer months. Expenses ,food an lodging are covered, all the teacher needs to do is sign up. cal forests can be contacted at, www.foresthealth.org or call 916 444 6592 for further info.

Elevating the National Wildlife Refuge System to full agency status is long overdue. The Refuge System has outgrown the capability of the FWS to deal with a program as demanding of organizational support and management as the Refuge System. The System, consisting of 552 national wildlife refuges and 37 wetland management districts totaling 150 million acres, is currently a mere program of the US Fish and Wildlife Service -- one of many it administers that range from endangered species, federal aid to states, enforcing NEPA, inventorying coastal habitats and controlling wildlife import and exports, to mention a few. Administrating these varied programs leaves little time for director level management attention for the wildlife refuges. In contrast, the smaller National Park System totaling 83 million acres has full agency status with the principal responsibility of managing parks thus the parks are given more top-management focus than wildlife refuges and in turn are represented better before congressional committees that allocate funds and other resources. The Refuge System needs the visibility and focused attention that a bureau-level organization provides. At that level, the Refuge System would have the authority to present and argue for its staffing and funding needs directly with Interior Department officials, the Office of Management and Budget, and congress. To see a video expressing similar thoughts go to: { Link }

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Save the Chesapeake Bay by saving the tributaries. President Obama issued an executive order for Federal agencies to take all action to support the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Everyone agrees the Chesapeake Bay must be saved to preserve the way of life in Maryland and Virginia. All the scientists agree that the best way to save the Bay is by means of the Tributary Strategy; protect the tributaries and you will save the Bay. However, despite the pious pronouncements of the local politicians in favor of saving the Bay, they continually advocate projects that will destroy the tributaries and thereby destroy the Bay. The only source of the pollution that is destroying the Bay that is growing is urban runoff. Yet local politicians continually support projects that will increase runoff into the tributaries and thereby into the Bay. Case in point is the Cross County Connector in Charles County, MD. This road is not receiving any funding from state as it is considered unnecessary and extraneous. Yet it is proposed to be built through what the county describes as "the most pristine area" of the watershed of the what the state calls "the best most productive tributary of the Chesapeake Bay", Mattawoman Creek. This roadway was revealed in inadvertent statements by the Commissioners who are pushing it to be for the purpose of development. The current commissioner said "the entire deferred development district [the pristine areas referred to above] WILL be developed." This kind of attitude will end up turning the Bay into a sewer. The Federal government must do its duty and enforce the Clean Water act and protect the Bay from the local politicians who would destroy it.

An important distinction that separate agency status can resolve is to send a clear message to the public that Refuges and the staff who work for them perform solely to conserve, protect and sustain wildlife and their habitats. Those are concepts that have huge public support. But the staff, signage and press releases all say "US Fish & Wildlife Service," a name that, in the public's way of thinking, is a regulator, an agency people associate with obstacles and lawsuits. No doubt, the ESA, Migratory Bird Act, and other laws that the FWS is charged with upholding, provide huge benefits to wildlife, the American public and to Refuges but the dirty image "regulator" trumps all else. As the FWS continues to require the FWS identity on all things Refuge, it will continue to bury the full and true image of Refuges and all the popular good that would represent. The Refuge System Centennial motto in 2003 as "America's Best Kept Secret" will always be true as long as Refuges continue to be held under the cover of a regulator.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Bristol Bay: A gem on our planet. I was fortunate to grow up in Bristol Bay, Alaska. This gem in Southwest Alaska is home to a thriving culture, an incredibly rich and alive ecosystem, and the largest sockeye salmon runs on the planet. Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. In the past hundred years we have seen most of the world's salmon rivers destroyed. Ranging from Europe, to the Atlantic runs on the East, to more recently the salmon die off on the West coast, salmon habitat has been destroyed. Yet, still there is hope. Due to the harsh climates and low populations of the North, Alaska has maintained land incredibly rich with life. A large scale mine proposed by foreign mining interests threatens our headwaters. We are at a point where clean water on this planet is about to surpass gold in importance. I can't eat gold. I can't drink copper. But salmon, clean air, clean water, cultural identity, these are things that matter to my humanity. When I pass, as we all will, it's not the material things that'll matter to my life. What matters is the richness I have felt in our natural world. The peace and wonder that accompanies me when I can look out onto thousands of miles of life. Please, join me in telling the US Government that Bristol Bay is a National Treasure worth protecting!

Send a message that wildlife matters. The Federal Government can be a better partner for conservation by sending a message -- from the very top -- that wildlife and wilderness matter. Teddy Roosevelt lead the country and instilled values by insisting that national parks were treasures. We need similar leadership today to set an executive example. Whether it is protection of Alaska or Nevada against rampant energy exploration and development, protection of wild horses, polar bears or wolves, or preservation of habitat for birds and bees -- we need the men and women at the top to lead the way with vocal, visible statements.

This seems like the perfect example of a site that should be seriously considered for Obama's America's Great Outdoors conservation objective. Florida must be looking for ways to protect it's wildlife and it's water resources for the present as well as the future. To preserve this tract of land in it's current natural state will be a positive step toward achieving this goal. Anyone living in this area should see the value of preserving this fragile ecosystem in our midst and do what they can to keep it from development.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We the People. The Constitution of United States reads " We the people". Off highway enthusiast are the People, we are the laborers the contractors the factory workers. We are the American families who love the great outdoors. We use it, we don't abuse it. Four wheel drive clubs do more to protect and care for the National Parks and Forest than any other group. We are there for the back breaking hard, down and dirty work. Maintaining trails taking care of water sheds and run offs. Other groups make a louder noise and can write bigger checks, OHV users do the real work. We need areas to play with our motorized vehicles and share family outing. Family is really what off roading is about. On the trails you will find husbands and wives with their children, Uncles and Nephews, Father and Sons, working together to accomplish the achievement and awards that come from traveling terrain that requires skill and perseverance. These times together builds better people. Responsible people who want their children and grand children to enjoy the same experience. You want a teenager whose active, healthy and respectful? Take him on a jeep trip. They will establish goals to protect, respect and care for Mother Nature as well as their own communities and the people around them. We the People of United States want and need access to our land, please do not make our land available to only a few who wish to control and dictate to the American people Mr. President I can make myself available if you wish to learn more.

Yes,thank You - There is so much room out there. What seems to work well is to provide user groups the opportunity to help care for the trails they love, skin in the game if you will. At least as long as the budgets are thin. The problem as I see it: historically infinite miles of logging roads were available, a fraction were enjoyed by OHV's or other user groups but there were no funds to care for them so when many were responsibly closed to re vegetate during the 50 years it takes to grow a new tree crop. It was perceived as a nefarious loss of access. The way forward involves local ranger districts understanding what folks enjoy and helping make it happen. When a logging road is built, ohvs, bikers, hikers, hunters, horses, and decommissioning should all be considered but we cannot afford, nor does it make sense to maintain them all.

Protect Adobe Town and other crown jewels in Wyoming's Red Desert. Adobe Town is the largest and most spectacular of Wyoming's desert wildernesses, and it is under threat from oil and gas drilling. This land of spectacular spires, arches, pinnacles, and red-banded cliffs is ideal for primitive hiking, backpacking, hunting, and horseback riding. Spanning 26 miles from north to south, it is the last place in the Red Desert (or really anywhere in Wyoming's deserts) that remains wilderness from horizon to horizon. Less than half of Adobe Town's geological wonderland is protected as a Wilderness Study Area, and the rest is open to oil and gas drilling and other industrial use. The federal government should protect ALL of Adobe Town from future leasing, allowing existing oil and gas leases to run their course and then expire with no renewal option. In addition, 'checkerboard' lands at the north end with private inholdings should be bought up, opening access to the public of the visually stunning Haystacks area.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In addition to the numerous studies suggesting/promoting agency status for refuges, many individuals and NGO's have gone on record supporting the idea. Go to the link below to see the viewpoint expressed by a former Regional Supervisor for the FWS in an interview with Chuck Leavell of the Mother Nature Network. { Link }

I agree with the comments of #43 and #45. Refuges would be better served as a separate agency and would be enabled to better serve the public. A National Wildlife Refuge Service separated from the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) would not only gain the benefits mention by both ____ and _____, it would free the FWS to pursue, with more diligence, the other programs within their charter. It's a win/win situation. I support the idea, now let's take it one step further.

During our current depression all of the governmental (borrowed) money we spend on roads should be for road construction and maintenance rather than wildlife related issues. To support this ideas issues another agency should be created by Congress if the general public so desires. Well intentioned but not appropriate at this time in our Nations history.

From what I've experienced in Florida, heritage, culture, traditional trades (fishing)and local economies suffer tremendously from draconian regulations that accompany Federal control of property. A recent prime example of Federal callousness is the refusal of Nat Park Service (NPS) to mention in the draft Addition Plan two local cultures the plan could devastate. (Independent Seminoles and Gladesman) . NPS may think this intentional oversight will provide a legal foundation to run over these cultural communities with their steamroller of a plan but it will not work this time. In an idealistic sense this idea has merit but due to reality I will vote to demote.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Coming back to the OP, his idea is to have a sticker or sign with a characters large enough to allow identification of machines violating rules in that area. I'm not opposed to this, but I don't know that it has to be via a site-specific permit. Many states require snowmobilers to display registration numbers in some minimum size on their machine. This would accomplish what the OP stated he desired without creating another bureaucratic maze of permits. "A snowmobile does not automatically 'tread lightly' - operator discretion is crucial. The snowmobile will not keep itself out of unsuitable conditions, nor can it prevent its driver from pursuing clandestine bushwhack routes through breakable tree tops, etc. A snowmobile does not automatically 'tread lightly' - operator discretion is crucial. The snowmobile will not keep itself out of unsuitable conditions, nor can it prevent its driver from pursuing clandestine bushwhack routes through breakable tree tops, etc. Even though thoughtless pedestrians may adopt unsuitable routes on vulnerable terrain, they quickly tire of post-holing into brush, and soon turn around whereas a snowmobile just keeps going and going - even when it trenches foot-deep through unsupportive snow into underlying material. Like any remotely operated vehicle, a snowmobile must be driven with discretion to minimize its impact on the resource and on other forest visitors. Like any remotely operated vehicle, a snowmobile must be driven with discretion to minimize its impact on the resource and on other forest visitors." I agree with the first sentence. Responsible operation is important rather we're talking an over the snow vehicle, OHV or non-motorized recreation. And yes, there are irresponsible operators of all types. I do have to debate this statement: "Even though thoughtless pedestrians may adopt unsuitable routes on vulnerable terrain, they quickly tire of post-holing into brush, and soon turn around whereas a snowmobile just keeps going and going - even when it trenches foot-deep through unsupportive snow into underlying material." I believe what _____ is describing is a circumstance where a brush field, new growth seedlings or small trees exist, and are covered with a layer of snow. The vegetation creates air pockets where the snow is not fully supported, allowing the snowmobile or skier to break through into the void. In my experience, these are conditions that snowmobilers actively try to avoid. This unsupported snowpack may give way at any time, resulting in the machine getting stuck. "Unsticking" a 500 lb machine is far more unpleasant than it is for a skier to extricate himself from a "post hole" scenario (I believe by this _____ means where a skier sinks up to his knees or deeper when the snow gives way). This is a circumstance most riders try to avoid. In general, there are two types of snowmobile "configurations". The first are designed for operation on maintained trails or hard-packed snow conditions. These machines typically have (relatively) short tracks, and a wide ski stance for stability on twisty trails. Designated trails don't seem to be the issue the OP is discussing. Mountain sleds typically have much longer tracks to provide floatation and allow them to operate in many feet (10 or more) of snow. They typically are operated on deep snow off of groomed trails. They don't perform well on trails or hardpack conditions. The snowpack in preferred locations for these machines would tend to put seedlings and brush out of reach most of the time. That of course assumes that riding areas in higher elevations where these machines truly have no impact has not been closed to the snowmobiler. The specific conditions that these machines excel at are typically devoid of vegetation (above tree line and buried under snow) and have no wildlife during the winter season. This is not to say that there can't be issues at certain times of the season, and when operated in sensitive locations. Perhaps some snowmobile riders familiar with the area in

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

question will chime in.

Prediction-The USDA and the Obama administration will bury the results of this forum. This is purely speculation on my part, but I predict that the Obama administration and the USDA will ignore and do their best to eliminate any record of the results of this forum. My opinion is that this forum was intended to provide justification for expansion of designated Wilderness areas, and for additional restriction to access on Forest Service and BLM property. I don't believe that they expected (or wanted) a large variety of actual users of our public lands to actually get on here and comment or vote, nor did they anticipate that ideas favoring multiple use would become prominent among the top 10 ideas. Opinions?

I, and I believe most other OHV users, agree that there is a need and benefit to Designated Wilderness areas, off limits to motorized recreation and management. They should exist in as near an untouched condition as possible. I'd go so far as elimination of manmade hiking trails, but that's for another thread. We also are a country that needs natural resources, including mined materials, timber and energy products. We need to be able to utilize some portion of our public lands for these purposes as well. In between are what some are proposing for "backcountry" designation. These areas could be utilized for ORV use on designated trails, a limited road system to allow access for camping, hunters, fishermen, etc. In addition, some logging, when done in areas where thinning and fuels reduction promotes forest health and recovery, makes sense. This type of compromise is opposed by at least a portion of the environmental community. A great many people, and I believe this includes both of us, recognize that there is need to achieve a balance between these uses. However, the perception is that there are extremists on both sides. The perception is that some in the "environmental" community want to eliminate all resource extraction and motorize recreation on public lands, and would restrict nearly all areas without a paved highway as wilderness. The opposite perception is that some that ride an OHV or supports some logging wants to see every inch of public land developed and cares nothing about nature, wildlife or our scenic backcountry. Like most issues, the truth, at least among rational people, is somewhere in the middle.

"If the President cites this forum (as a *whole*), indicating that it will have significant influence on policy (perhaps recounting a few salient details reflecting the breadth of viewpoints expressed) in the next State of The Union Address (i.e. as formally and publicly as possible)...would that do it?" There are several things the president could do that would convince me that he truly wanted public input fro all users. If the president were to discuss this forum, if he were to inform the public that 6 of the top 10 ideas heavily promoted continued or enhanced opportunities for recreation involving OHVs, and if he were to do so during the state of the union address as you suggest, yes that could convince me. If he were to quote those results and direct the various land management agencies to re-evaluate their policies and efforts with regards to trail closures, that would convince me. I'm easily convinced, all he has to do is "walk the walk". I hope he does so. If he fails to mention that multiple use was strongly supported in this forum, promotes expansion of Wilderness designation and National Monuments over the opposition particularly of those in areas affected by them, it will also lead me to conclusions about his character.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Close hiking trails of no proven economic use that are degrading environment. Close all federal public land hiking trails unless it can be proven through EIS process that those hiking trails are necessary for long term economic benefit and are not causing environmental degradation.

Where will the funding for this program come from? It should be via the user groups that utilize these spaces. Hunters and fishermen already contribute via license fees and tags, OHV users by registration and permits. We need a means of collecting from other users to make this happen. To the OP, please define what you mean by "fully fund", and explain how you propose to do so. With this, I could promote the idea.

Someone on a snowmobile can get 50 miles from a parking area, climb several thousand feet, enjoy the view from the top of a mountain, have lunch and be back home that same day. Do you want to try that on snowshoes sometime? I doubt that most people on snowshoes or XC skis will cover more than 10 miles in a day. In my area, and most of the west, that barely puts you out off the plowed roads, let alone into the nicer parts of the backcountry where you are up in the mountains and enjoying the views. As such, I would say that this makes that area "unreachable" by any but a tiny portion of the population that are both willing to XC travel an extensive distance, but also to winter camp to do so. There is room for both groups. Designate some non-motorized areas near trailheads, and route motorized rec off into the deeper backcountry, where the related noise is less of an issue. Hopefully the non-motorized community is willing to meet half way here.

I can understand why so many national or state parks feel the need to resort to money making activities like golf courses, boating, camping, etc., but it seems an oxymoron to set aside land to "protect" natural resources and wildlife and then interfere with it by over use and excessive human activity. Do we really need to subsidize an 18 hole golf course with taxpayers money? I would like to see state and national parks protected in every sense of the word: limit human activity to the enjoyment of the available resources, not man made, and limit the number of people visiting places like Yellowstone. The excessive amount of visitors has created some serious problems that is costing animals lives. Just like the NYC marathon has a lottery system, parks like Yellowstone should establish a system by which to limit excessive human interference. WE all need to be on board and willing to sacrifice if programs of conservation stand a chance for success. I am willing, are you? Set limits on how much land "developers" are allowed to destroy and demolish in order to build human habitats. Limit how much open space can be destroyed. Set restrictions on how far into wildlife habitats we can extend our cities. We buy homes in the canyons off LA county and then complain when coyotes visit, or build in the mountains and demand the extermination of raccoons and bears. Set limits. No more unrestricted "development". "Real Estate" is a growing venture to the detriment of our open spaces and wildlife. A Separation of agencies (National Wildlife Refuge System} and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), this union reeks conflict of interest.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Creating a national park in the Maine woods is a great idea. For people who are not from there, or do not have experience with the Maine woods, it's very hard to know how to access the wonderful places we hear about. In other states, there are national parks/national forests/national recreation areas that provide easy access and knowledge. I know that if I go to a national park I will have a place to camp, a place to hike, a place to fish, etc. When I look at a map of northern Maine, I don't know where those opportunities exist. A national park will make access easier and bring people and money to the state. It's a great idea.

In Oregon, particularly because of the checkerboard pattern of O&C lands, the agencies, particularly BLM, already do this.

I don't know where you live. I'd guess Washington state, since you mention Weyerhaeuser. But you're wrong about the tax breaks if you're in Oregon. Privately-held timber land is taxed at a different rate because it takes many, many years to grow commercial timber. There are a variety of tax structures for timberland in Oregon, including a harvest tax. Harvest taxes on timber are significantly higher than other "agricultural" crops. Lower property taxes are not "because of the public benefits to forestland." Though that might be an interesting idea.....

The National Wildlife Refuge System is not a mystery to those of who are aware of its existence and importance to the professional conservation of wild lands across the width and breadth of the United States. The problem has been for many years that the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) has supported the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) rather than the USFWS supporting the NWRS. Both the NWRS and the USFWS are important to the natural resources of our great country but now it is time that the NWRS and the USFWS become separate entities in order to garner political and public support for both. The NWRS must become its own separate and distinct agency so that Congress, the President and the American public can give the NWRS the attention that it so richly deserves. It's not a complex or unreasonable idea. If one thinks about the situation, separate agency status for the NWRS is the logical, practical and only way to go. I have been retired from the USFWS for 16 years after working for the agency for 34 years, primarily for the NWRS on 10 refuges, the Washington office, and two regions, so 50 years of experience should give some credence to my viewpoints. Thanks for taking the time to read what I have written.

Outdoor activity/education as an alternative to "regular physical education" would bring youth into contact with the great outdoors and offer ways of staying fit and having fun at the same time. Children who may not do well in competitive and/or difficult sports often excel in outdoor activities such as canoeing, kayaking, fishing, swimming, archery and wilderness survival or team building challenges. The results are more confidence and higher self-esteem.

How about donating some of your Manhattan address lands to the Wilderness Preservation Project and leave ours alone. Has it occurred to all of you east coasters that you are the ones who have destroyed what were once beautiful lands in the East? We, out here, preserve our lands well on the state level in Utah. The lands that we always find are managed poorly are the ones you have taken from our state without our permission. In Utah we need less federal regulation and bad advice from people who already messed up all their lands. Demote.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Education. Teach kids every phase of conservation. Let them know the jobs of everyone in the field. From the Rangers to the office workers. What the importance it is for them, and their future generations benefit. What an interesting and rewarding career choice it can be for them.

Wetlands such as those at Edison Farms are essential to maintaining the ecological health of SWFL. The DR/GR Planning effort has targeted lands such as these for preservation allowing development to occur in more acceptable areas. These Wetlands provide habitat, ground water recharge, water treatment, and natural beauty. Purchasing lands like these and putting them into permanent conservation is the right thing to do.

Michigan has Sleeping Bear National Seashore, Pictured Rocks National Seashore, Isle Royale National Park, quantities of state forest lands and national forests. We are already a state with great outdoors trails and lands for all kinds of activities. A problem with state or federal land is that local governments have a funding problem, since those lands don't provide taxing revenue. I agree with ____ about the CCC -- their work is still a pleasure and inspiration that I wish our current politicians would replicate.

Create an "Agency for Obesity and Flatulence Reduction". We must stop the toxification of our planet by flatulence-spawned pollutants such as methane. This toxic and stinky plague that is forced into our planets lungs (our atmosphere) contributes to a larger than previously known extent to global warming and climate change! Flatulence is harmful and it reeks! And not only from cows, pigs and other livestock, but from selfish, uncaring people. Especially obese computer workers who sit on their aeron chairs and pass gas all day long. Like big fat sweaty _____ who sits in the cube next to me. Obesity-driven flatulence is a huge problem in our Federal government offices. I know from experience as a Federal Government G-5 worker. When the Federal office doors open at lunchtime and at the end of the day, all that gas (that hasnt been recirculated through the HVAC system to the nostrils and lungs of every Federal worker in every Federal office building in America) escapes to pollute the atmosphere. We are creating a huge problem for our suffering planet. Im not purposefully omitting all the private enterprise office building workers flatulence as contributors to this problem - because they are guilty also. I am simply pointing out an idea that fits the topic of the Federal Government Role and what the Federal Government can do. So tighten up and stop eating those freaking bean burritos Ernesto!!!! Praise be to Mother Gaia!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I support the creation of a Maine Woods National Park. I have been fortunate to visit 37 of our 58 national parks. Each day spent there was a day of wonder and fun. I shared the experiences with my wife and friends who visited with me. On many of these occasions, I recall reflecting that at least our government got this one right. To preserve and protect vital national resources for all time for all the citizens of the USA was a brilliant movement that should not end today. We the people of America who built a nation and inspired its people to be free, fair, and just ask our government to do the right thing; preserve the North Woods of Maine and New Hampshire, its forests, lakes, pristine rivers and streams, wildlife, valleys, and majestic mountains for the people for all time. The congested noisy Northeast needs a pressure relief valve to recreate, renew, and rejoice that we too have an enduring treasure to share with our children and grandchildren who also may inherit our legacies of conservation of the very ecosystem that provides us jobs, homes and food. Man cannot live without nature and nature cannot live as we know it without man.

Being from Michigan, I have seen first hand the kind of thing you are talking about. That is one reason I have always advocated roadless areas and wilderness areas.

Trout Unlimited and other sportsmen groups advocate unroaded areas, especially in Colorado, because the large wild areas draw a lot of revenue from hunters and sports fishermen locally and world wide. Most hunting and fishing groups are trying to preserve some of these wild aspects of Colorado. Another piece of information about roads in national forests is due to the huge cost of maintaining the extremely large amount of roads in our national forests, it is believed that there will be less roads as we go forward into the future just because of cost alone.

Roads that are not maintained can contaminate rivers and degrade fish habitat. Also, unroaded areas are excellent habitat for big game animals. I don't advocate closing every road, access is important, of course. I do advocate not building new roads into unroaded areas. We have deer near my house, and I live close to a city. The fact you see deer or fish is not really the point. I think at least a portion of government land that is in our country should remain wild. It's kind of hard to go backwards once the area is developed. That leaves areas that are not developed, which are fewer and fewer. If nothing is preserved, I would think most of the country will look pretty much the same, eventually, without much room for wildlife.

Access is important. Areas without roads are also important. Here is something I read recently that I agree with. While roads are important for providing sportsmen with access to the lands they use to hunt and fish, too many roads are associated with increased big-game vulnerability and fewer mature bucks and bulls. Too many roads also can decrease the quality of important spawning habitat for fish. Because you saw wildlife does not mean we should not preserve some areas for the good of people and animals. I think there is room for both, motorized access in some areas, and areas without roads, for all the benefits that provides. Some people in past generations saw the benefit of preserving wildlife and wild areas. I think most understand that if we want to ensure that enough habitat will be around for future generations, we must plan carefully today.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This type of thinking is one good reason why I advocate preserving enough wild areas to support all types of wildlife. As soon as there is a conflict between people and animals, some argue how incompatible certain species are with people. There is a portion of the population who somehow think it would be beneficial to eradicate wolves entirely. I'm not against hunting, I'm just against the backwards thinking that people have the right to every last area and nothing should be left for the other creatures that depend on the same environment that we are so eager to dominate.

I don't understand some who are against wilderness when there is so much pressure for development everywhere. If we are mining new areas that are wilderness in one area and building roads and drilling in another area, soon these wild areas will be gone. You would think it would be clear that wilderness is not an infinite resource. Access and development are very important. They shouldn't be our only legacy. I'm not against OHVs. I also think, checking all the voting, that there are a lot of people who are concerned about the environment and advocate wilderness and wild areas. I think most understand we need to plan carefully today if we want to ensure wild areas are still around for future generations.

Anywhere that is not a truly wild area. How about some place that already has roads and possibly other development. We need to start moving in the direction of more recycling and less landfills. There are plenty of places to mine in the lower 48 states. 50% of our national forests alone are open to things like mining. There is also BLM land, state land, and private property.

Most people understand that if we want wild areas to be available into the future, we have to plan carefully today. People of past generations who advocated preserving wild areas were also criticized. Now, it is apparent that they were forward thinkers and the areas they preserved are some of our most treasured areas. Development is important and there is room for it. We have used a lot of land for every need and recreation people enjoy. Wild areas are also important for both people and animals. I would have to disagree with some of the numbers I have read about the amount of "truly undeveloped land". There is some sort of development on almost every area of our country. Even our national forests, which most would think are there to preserve wildlife, are used for development (mining, logging, etc.). If we actually preserved the wild areas that are left, we would probably have a good amount available. The only problem is we are using more than we are preserving and that trend does not seem to be changing. Our population is growing and we are using more and more. You would think in today's modern society, more could see the benefit of preservation and living with nature.

Excluding the accommodation of human desires to visit public lands that they are as natural in as a cougar along with the fact humans vote and pay for the lands protection only breeds animosity and negative attitudes towards conservation and land preservation.

All citizens in a supposedly free country ought to be able to go and jump off a cliff if they choose to. Now some commenting here may worry about if you are on a designated trail to the jump point and want to generate more government jobs to research, regulate and issue permits to do Base Jumping. Makes sense though since once you are dependent upon an agency for a permit you will be less likely to criticize them even when they blatantly screw up.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In addition to this idea Nat'l. Parks, Preserves etc. should be mandated to recover all expenses entailed in providing campgrounds by charging rates and fees that will do so. That way the rates would reflect the true value of what we tax payers are providing for the camping public and local small campgrounds might stand a chance of surviving the currently very unfair business practices of the Federal and State agencies. There should also be a prohibition against State or Federal agencies giving away campsites to select people and/or contractors who work for agencies whether for free or not so that they can support local campground owners.

With all due respect to what I believe is a well intentioned idea, America's ability to compete in the Global Economy should not be imperiled, threatened or endangered by undue concerns about site selection of cell phone towers. America's ability to communicate is paramount.

Wilderness Lost in Tourism. It is my personal opinion that "wilderness" is losing its allure to vacation spots, gift shops, and casinos. It is becoming far too commercialized, even with modern advantages. Often times these are located immediately outside of the designated wilderness areas. The Carlsbad Caverns, for example, has a giant gift shop in the bottom of the cavern equipped with electricity, elevators, and restrooms. While you're walking through this natural underground world, you notice signs everywhere reminding visitors not to touch the walls, yet those signs are illuminated by bright lights that are found all throughout the caverns. I loved walking through Carlsbad, but these modern advantages took away from the natural elements. I may even go as far as to say that I would rather miss that experience than have the caverns turned into my own personal tourist attraction. A similar experience occurs along the rim of the Grand Canyon. Once a visitor steps foot inside the Grand Canyon, they are in wilderness and enjoy it as thus. However, once your voyage through one of the most beautiful spots in the world is finished, you instantly find yourself surrounded by gift shops and hotels. These are wonderful amenities, but I believe that they should be spread out. There was a wonderful glass skywalk built over the Grand Canyon. How amazing it would be to look down on the Grand Canyon! That is, if it didn't cost from thirty to seventy dollars a person to walk around the overlook. This money does not go towards the Grand Canyon. I'm sure it goes towards the huge lounge that sits right on the edge of the skywalk. I would like to remind the Nation that wilderness is not our personal property. It was not created for profit, and thus should not be dominated by investors with buildings. I like the way the Yellowstone and Yosemite National Park's handle their tourism. Yosemite's gift shops blend in with the nature around them. They are not huge and are not located every three feet. If we could make our wilderness follow this model, the entire experience of a wilderness trip would be much more enjoyable.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Overall there are many aspects of your proposal that I agree with, but there are a few that I would like clarified, revised, or removed. I do think there should be some trails left natural for the more experienced and patient hiker, as well as areas that should be maintained for more accessible use. To an extent, I would even agree with distinguishing the two areas. I concur that the wilderness should be wild, left for man to fight through for himself, and that parking lots are a large distraction to the wilderness aesthetics. However, I have always been told that no more than ten people can be allowed in a group in a wilderness setting. So this concentrated use that you're speaking of cannot have an extreme impact, unless every trail and park that I have ever visited made up that rule coincidentally. I also prefer to hike in a more solitary state. That is why, when I know it is going to be a beautiful hiking day, I choose a trail less known and less accessible to all people. If I cannot find one of those, I enjoy the beauty around me and the comradeship of meeting new people on a trail, and maybe that is something that you could look into. As for technology goes, I agree that cell phones take away much of the experience and a GPS ruins the excitement of blundering through the wilderness alone, and yet I cannot agree that signals for rescue should be ignored. That is not only irresponsible to our fellow citizens, but also far too dangerous. I'm sure that the many people who have died in the wilderness would highly disagree with that idea. If help had been available, I have a feeling even the most rugged wilderness man would have accepted it. Since you disagree with GPS systems, do you also disagree with maps of the wilderness? Do you wish that we all had to make the deathly trek through the Sierra Nevada's for the first time, or even through the Appalachians? As much as I love the wilderness, I am appreciative of the work that volunteers do to keep up trails. Your last paragraph is very interesting to me. By "these areas" I'm assuming that you mean the designated areas that you were speaking of. I'm sure that you know that Section 4 C of the Wilderness Act of 1964 bans any permanent or temporary road systems and use of the vehicles you mentioned. "Except as specifically provided for in this Act, and subject to existing private rights, there shall be no commercial enterprise and no permanent road within any wilderness area designated by this Act and, except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area" (Wilderness Act of 1964). I am just slightly confused by the fact that you want wilderness to remain wild and that overcrowding is a problem, but you would be okay with OHV's going through the wild? Or with trails being cut down and maintained so that a jeep can fit through? Does this make your quest for absolute wilderness a selfish act, since it seems like you only want the areas you will be in to be kept as close to their natural state as possible?

Nobody proposed closing the Skutumpah Road. Kane County is making a big legal issue of it because they want to get control over a whole network of two-tracks and jeep trails within the national monument boundaries and in proposed wilderness areas. But RS 2477 didn't give the county ownership of every vehicle route, as some offroaders hope.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

No environmental impact statement has ever been written for the Pebble Mine. The mine will need a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers, so it's definitely a federal issue. It has been opposed by many Alaskans, including the late Senator Ted Stevens, who was seldom a friend of the environment. They will need the help of people from across the United States to stop this project.

Like OHV trails, hiking trails have been closed in many places because of excessive impacts. This started with getting them out of mountain meadows in the high Sierra in the 1950s. Closures and relocations are still being done. My own trail club just opened a relocation several miles long, all done with volunteer labor. Any trail should be closed if it is degrading public lands and waters.

Too many OHV groups insist that every mile of trail is sacred. I'm for negotiation and compromise, based on the principle that every user of federal lands has an obligation to keep the lands and waters in good condition. OHV routes that abuse the land need to be closed and restored to nature. The same goes for hiking and horse trails.

The Bureau of Land Management found 6.6 million acres to qualify under the Wilderness Act criteria, but BLM is allowing ORVs to run all over them on a network of routes. The vehicles should be kept out of these areas until Congress decides for or against wilderness status. That would still leave more than 15,000 miles of routes open in southern Utah. My wife and I have visited most of the areas by walking in, as they are readily accessible from public roads. It's America's greatest unprotected wilderness.

I support the land exchanges, but they should be restricted to public lands identified as suitable for exchange through the BLM resource management planning process. That process includes public participation and environmental analysis, which are essential to protect the public interest.

Blockage by private lands is a genuine problem in some national forests and in some BLM public lands. This is worth more effort by both agencies to acquire rights-of-way. If the private landowners hold federal grazing permits or buy federal timber, they should be required to grant a free public right-of-way.

Everyone has a right to use the federal lands, but nobody has a right to abuse them. For more than 50 years hiking trails have been closed or rerouted when they were found to hurt the lands, waters, or wildlife habitat. In the same manner, OHV trails need to be cut back to a system that can be sustained without impairing the lands and waters. National forests and BLM public lands now contain thousands of miles of unauthorized OHV routes that were never designed for sustainability. Most of those should be closed and rehabbed to stop erosion. I'm not for a total closure, but the abuse needs to be stopped.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Give Recreational Anglers Better and More Consistent Opportunity for Input . It is critical that across the federal agencies that have a role in water and fishery resource management, the 60-million-strong recreational fishing constituency be given adequate opportunities for a formal voice in resource management decisions. Currently, this is not being addressed in marine resource management in particular and this needs to change. The main challenge to this goal is inconsistency. There is too great a variety of current interfaces between federal resource managers and the sportfishing public. Some federal entities, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (<http://www.fws.gov/sfbpc/>),¹ give the recreational fishing community a voice in federal resource management decisions. Unfortunately, there are far too few of these opportunities, particularly when it comes to more local and regional decision-making. This is particularly true with respect to marine resource management and the current make-up of regional fisheries councils. What has worked in the past to achieve timely and regular input from the recreational fishing community is to establish formal and well defined input opportunities. The country's recreational anglers are primarily casual, occasional users of the resource. To obtain their perspective, one must bring this constituency into very specific, structured stakeholder-input systems. The federal government can address this challenge by conducting a thorough review of exactly how and where the recreational fishing public is interfacing with resource management decision-making. The next step would be to determine a consistent standard across the federal agencies for both freshwater and saltwater resources. The best tools to be used in a new more consistent approach can be found with the non-governmental organizations that already are tapped in to the sportfishing communities around the country. Vice President, American Sportfishing Association

Passage and Implementation of National Fish Habitat Action Plan. A tremendous amount of work has been undertaken to conserve, restore and enhance aquatic habitats because of their recreational, ecological and economic importance. While there are numerous efforts underway to address the health of aquatic habitat on local scales, there is a need for conservation action on a range-wide scale for these efforts to be successful. Given the diverse array of federal, state, tribal, local and private jurisdictions, the need never has been greater for increased action and improved coordination of fisheries conservation actions across boundaries and jurisdictions. The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) is most comprehensive effort ever attempted to conserve, restore and enhance fish habitats throughout the United States. The goal NFHAP is to foster partnerships among conservation groups to achieve coordination of on-the-ground efforts for aquatic systems across the country. Combining the collective energy of state and federal agencies with local partners offers the best chance of success. Legislation to formalize and fully fund NFHAP - the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (NFHCA) - has been introduced in the 111th Congress. The American Sportfishing Association urges the administration and federal agencies to fully support passage of this legislation. By restoring fish habitat and boosting fish populations, the NFHCA will improve fishing opportunities across the country, helping to ensure that individuals and their families and friends can get outside and enjoy our nation's aquatic resources. -Gordon Robertson, Vice President, American Sportfishing Association

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Full Funding for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). In monitoring the input the administration has received thus far through America's Great Outdoors, it is clear that this goal has emerged with a strong consensus of support. Without belaboring the benefits we have already seen from an LWCF funding that has received only a fraction of the funding it was meant to receive and the fact that full funding would dramatically benefit outdoor recreation throughout the country, we would simply state here that the American Sportfishing Association and the recreational fishing community strongly support full funding of LWCF. Vice President, American Sportfishing Association

Recreation and Reconnecting People to Outdoors. The American Sportfishing Association has joined with its partners in the recreational fishing community to focus on disturbing trends in recreational fishing recruitment and retention. Despite the fact that Americans currently have the best access to quality fishing opportunities they have had in over a generation, fewer young people are going fishing and older Americans who have fished in the past are no longer participating. We have a major overarching goal of getting new anglers out and on the water and returning lapsed anglers to the sport. To achieve this goal, which we are pleased to know this administration shares, we believe the federal government should have the additional goal of managing fishery resources to maximize recreational fishing opportunities. The more fish there are to catch, the more fishermen there are and the more funding there is for fishery management. Thanks to bag limits, seasons, catch-and-release, equipment restrictions and other regulatory restrictions, recreational anglers have relatively limited and manageable impacts on a given fishery. Given this, there should be a new commitment to keeping as many recreational anglers fishing as possible while sustaining health fisheries. Vice President, American Sportfishing Association

Increase Federal Support for "Take Me Fishing" Program. In 1998, the U.S. Congress passed the Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act. The Act required the Secretary of the Interior to implement a national outreach and communication plan to address participation issues associated with recreational fishing and boating, while ensuring public support for aquatic resource conservation. Through the efforts of the Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council, the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) was created as an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to implement the plan. Funding for RBFF is provided through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, and is administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. RBFF has established the "Take Me Fishing" Program which to date has given the recreational fishing community the most traction when it comes to reversing downward trends in fishing participation. The American Sportfishing Association urges federal agencies to partner with and support RBFF's "Take Me Fishing" Program to increase participation in recreational fishing and boating on our nation's public lands and waters. Vice President, American Sportfishing Association

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Clearly Identifying Public Access as a Management Mandate. The American Sportfishing Association has heard very clearly, from recreational anglers around the country, that loss of access is leading directly to declines in fishing participation. As busy as people are in today's society, if the slightest impediment is thrown up to a given activity, a person will turn to something else. It is our belief that access must be explicitly identified as a criterion in federal natural resource management decision-making and that a reduction in access can only be contemplated under extraordinary circumstances backed by unimpeachable scientific information. Indeed, not only should maintenance of access become a much higher priority of the federal government, there should be an active and concerted effort across the federal agencies to INCREASE access. Outdoor activities such as recreational fishing not only have significant economic, social and health benefits, but also increase public awareness and appreciation of the need to conserve and restore this nation's aquatic natural resources. It is therefore imperative that federal lands are managed to facilitate and encourage public recreation. A recent study found that 64 percent of recreational anglers access their primary fishing areas from public lands. This and other reports highlight the importance of public lands to connecting people with nature and the importance of sustaining our natural resources. Vice President, American Sportfishing Association

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Conservation and Management of Fishery Resources. The American Sportfishing Association's approach to conservation and management of our natural resources is focused on the resources on which the public depends for high quality, easily accessible recreational fishing opportunities. Over the last 30 years, significant strides have been taken to improve the health of America's aquatic resources, including water quality and fish habitat. We are faced with many fisheries resources challenges but by and large, state and federal agencies, backed by important pieces of legislation including the Clean Water Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Act, have succeeded in reversing a declining trend in many of our nation's rivers, streams, lakes and coastal areas. Much of this success can be attributed to the tremendous infusion of funding for federal and state water and fisheries management in the form of excise taxes on fishing and boating related purchases and fishing license sales. Since 1950, recreational anglers and boaters have, through a unique user tax on motorboat fuel, fishing tackle, and other sportfishing equipment, generated more than \$5.7 billion in funding through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund for fishery conservation and enhancement, habitat restoration, clean water programs and boating safety programs. In addition, fishing license sales generate nearly \$560 million in annual revenues for state conservation and education programs. American sportsmen have played an important role in the stewardship of our natural resources for over 100 years. This, in conjunction with the financial reality of recreational fishing, makes it increasingly important to ASA's conservation goals that the sportsmen's community receives acknowledgement and assurance of its formal and defined roles in the management of fisheries resources. American anglers have demonstrated time and again that they are ready, willing and able to modify how, when and where they fish in the interest of maintaining healthy fisheries. Whether it is through changes in regulations by the government or through voluntary changes in behavior, such as using more fish-friendly equipment, recreational anglers put the resource first. The recreational fishing industry recognizes the need for abundant and sustainable fish populations first and foremost. However, actions taken by the federal government, in particular, to conserve and sustain fishery resources must be met with parallel actions that ensure easier access to those fisheries for the public, a point we'll touch on further below. Recreational anglers will continue to act as good stewards of the waters they treasure, but progress must be made to maximize their buy-in when it comes to federal management actions. -Gordon Robertson, Vice President, American Sportfishing Association

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Collection and Use of Better, More Timely Fisheries Data. Federal resource managers have a decidedly mixed record when it comes to gathering adequate data on fish populations, habitat quality, etc. necessary for effective fishery management and conservation. The federal government should establish a standard that is applied across agencies, which will ensure that there is consistency when gathering fisheries data and a high national standard in terms of the quality of that data. A fundamental challenge to gathering adequate, timely fisheries data is the reality that recreational anglers disperse across broad areas and sampling can be very difficult. Enforcement and monitoring on the freshwater side, achieved through the state fish and wildlife agencies, tends to be more easily accomplished. Inadequate gathering of recreational fishing data on the saltwater side, where the federal government has jurisdiction beyond three miles, has been hugely problematic. Over the years, NOAA has been largely focused on commercial fishing to the detriment of the recreational fishing public. Apart from gathering and using higher quality data of recreational fishing effort, better data in general needs to be gathered regarding fish populations. Timeliness and frequency of marine fish stock assessments are far too inconsistent and a national standard for stock assessments should therefore be established. In terms of what works when it comes fisheries data gathering and use, new technology and techniques have been identified and are currently under discussion between our community and NOAA. The recommendations we are considering should be reviewed with an eye toward broad adoption. The federal government's role in meeting this need is fairly simple: a commitment must be made to achieve a much higher and consistent standard when it comes to gathering fisheries related data across the country. That requires making it a priority across the federal government and, as a result, dedicating adequate resources to this incredibly important and fundamental need. -Gordon Robertson, Vice President, American Sportfishing Association

Re-establish the Primacy of Science in Fisheries Management. Fishery management decisions should always be made on the basis of timely and definitive scientific information. There have been trends in recent years toward protectionist management that has been based on assumptions that simply are not born out by up-to-date, adequate scientific information. The challenge in this area has risen through the allowance of arbitrary, emotion-based management decisions made for fisheries in the absence of fully adequate scientific information. Standards have slipped in this regard and this slippage must be stopped. We know that it is possible to conserve and sustain our natural resources, but only when we manage them with the best scientific information in hand. Again, a review should be carried out across the federal agencies with fisheries management responsibilities to determine current standards for the use of science in fisheries management decisions. The results of this review should lead to the establishment of a clear fisheries science standard with obvious thresholds for what managers must have in hand, in terms of scientific information, before making a significant management decision. -Gordon Robertson, Vice President, American Sportfishing Association

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Create opportunities for urban youth to connect with nature where they live—in the city.. Most urban areas contain some level of "green" space, and we need to develop programs that use these green places to reach out to urban youth and introduce them to the natural world (even if the urban green space is not pristine). For example, through a partnership with the National Park Service, Wilderness Inquiry, the Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools and many others, we've created the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures program (UWCA). The UWCA provided enriching outdoor experiences and classroom curricula for 7,500 kids this summer, and it will serve more than 10,000 urban youth annually through canoe trips on the Mississippi River in the heart of the Twin Cities. Most cities in the US have rivers that run through them, and many of these rivers could be used for similar efforts. The key to success for efforts such as this is partnerships. The UWCA enjoys great partners at all levels of government as well as NGO's, private sector and volunteer organizations. We're planning to demonstrate this concept on the Anacostia River in Washington DC in November.

It is essential that this tract of land be preserved as it serves as an aquifer supply source for thousands of people living in the area. It also is a pristine natural habitat for numerous species of wildlife and plants indigenous to southwest Florida. These 4,000 acres must and should be protected from future development. My thanks to the Estero Council of Community Leaders and other organizations for their efforts in support of preserving this land.

Like _____, you keep getting hung up on a specific word. Two people go to a gas station and each fills a five-gallon can with gasoline. One uses it to work on a fuel-reduction project, the other uses it to put in his play machine. The worker gets no special fund from the government for the gas tax he spends, but the playboy does. That is fundamentally unfair. I never cried about hiking trails. I maintain that you get a much better outdoor experience on foot than you ever will on a machine. I'm not trying to destroy a program that creates trails....I'm opposed to a program that favors one special interest group, particularly a special interest group that exists for the optional purpose of recreation. Maybe what Uncle Sam's minions taught me about survival, plus what I learned in forestry school, plus my forty years on the land, would make for a great outdoor survival competition. But from your posts it appears you'll need more than the pocketknife I'll start with. AND it really doesn't mater why you call names. It's still immature.

ORVs Are Inappropriate for Wilderness-Quality Public Lands. In eastern Utah alone, there are over 20,000 miles of designated ORV routes and a few cross-country ORV "play areas." Some of these routes cross through ancient Native American cultural sites, scarce desert streams, and proposed wilderness areas. Many of these are trails that don't actually go anywhere, or there is no compelling reason for their existence; many duplicate another route. By eliminating only 15% of these trails - which would leave about 17,000 miles of ORV routes in eastern Utah available for use - some of Utah's most spectacular redrock country would be protected from off-road vehicle damage. A similar idea would help protect wilderness-quality lands in other states as well.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Even if some of the designated off-road vehicle trails are closed (and many miles would remain open), there still would be many ways to access these areas - hiking, horseback riding, paddling, etc. 80% of the lands that are proposed for wilderness would be within 2 miles of a road. Here is an example of the area near Moab (all of the routes in green would remain open to off-road vehicles if all proposed wilderness was designated): { Link }

While adequate law enforcement is certainly an issue, my "idea" is centered around that fact that, as _____ stated, the BLM has identified areas that qualify for wilderness designation but according to land use plans finalized by the Bush administration in 2008, has failed to manage these lands for their wilderness characteristics. Instead, the BLM decided to designate off-road vehicle routes through many of these areas. The Obama administration has the authority to reverse these decisions, which would only affect about 15% of the designated "trails" in eastern Utah. About 17,000 miles of trails would still be open in eastern Utah if all of the trail designations in proposed wilderness were voided - over six times the distance as the ride from New York to Los Angeles.

This new study illustrates potential positive effects from reducing ORV use and therefore dust in the southwest: { Link }

I am a frequent visitor to southern Utah, particularly the area surrounding Lake Powell and the Glen Canyon Dam. Each year I go there, damage from ORV use has been increasing by leaps and bounds. It astounds me that Utah residents and visitors from out of state seem to think of this beautiful 'moonscape' as a playground for ORVs. It's gotten so bad that it is next to impossible to photograph nature's grand design without hundreds, even thousands, of ORV tracks marring the landscape. There are already enough places where ORVs can be used legally, yet many on this and other boards insist on having more. Are these places becoming "boring" to ORV users? Is it not enough to destroy what God gave us where you're already allowed to do that? We NEED to protect the areas around Glen Canyon Dam and Grand Staircase/Escalante, Factory Butte, and others from this scar of human recklessness. I fully support ANY effort to restrict ORV use to certain areas until this scourge is brought to a decline, not the rapid increase I've been seeing since the early 2000's.

I volunteered at B.L.M. for Public lands day and recieved a day pass to any facility. I had no Idea I would receive a pass. I voluntered for the experience. On that same note the purpose of volunteering should not be a prize. Yeah it sucks that the government is screwing you over on an annual pass. If the only reason for service is the pass pay the \$80 (which would be much cheaper that 400 hour) and quit volunteering.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am in favor of acquiring this tract of land, especially to help the Florida Panther and the Black Bear as humans are taking more and more land away from wildlife. I would be in favor of a small part of it to be used for educational opportunities similar to the way that National Wildlife Refuges have multi-use such as canoeing, hiking, etc. I am not in favor of off-road vehicles or hunting, there are places to do that. However, I don't know what is available on the west coast of Florida. I think there should be places where humans do not have to go. Leave the animals alone to live out their lives. Why not simply appreciate the views and beauty of the land?

Keep America's PUBLIC land open to the PUBLIC. (all forms of use) Stop restricting areas that have historically been used by OHV's. Stop designating land as Wilderness that does not meet the definition. Stop changing the definition of "Wilderness" to allow for new designations. Stop allowing the Federal Government to manage State Lands. Place greater emphasis on local input rather than special interest groups (read environmentalists) Stop accepting comment on these issues from paid representatives of either side. Accept only individual comments. Place higher emphasis on comments from local citizens. Manage for true "Multiple use". Stop placing greater emphasis on plant / animal life over human life when contemplating land closure. Open new areas when current accessible areas become overcrowded. Make proposed closure areas pass a majority vote of local citizens.

Watch how a minority (equestrians are maybe 3-4% of all trail users) will say just about anything to protect their privileged access. Some of the nonsense read above: - Bicyclists don't show up for trail maintenance day: what a lie. I've yet to see an equestrian at a trail work day. On the other hand, I've seen plenty of trails pulverized by their animals' hooves, not to mention the feces left over wherever they go. - Wilderness bans wheels: that is the current interpretation of the act since 1984, not the intention of the 1964 Act. - Bicycles are power forms of transportation: muscle powered, unlike the equestrians who simply sit on their animal. - Cyclists are rude: wow, that's interesting. Apparently, the mere fact of riding a bicycle makes millions of people rude all of a sudden. Truth: most people I meet on the trails are nice. A minority is rude, and somehow it does not correlate with any singular activity. - Those trails are MINE: another lie. Trails are funded by taxpayers for the enjoyment of all as long as we do not impact them. Bicycles have the same impact as hikers and much less than horses. - Bicyclists and OHV have nothing in common. One is muscle powered like hiking (or maybe riding a horse, although the poor horse is doing all the work), and the other is motorized. - Cyclists spend much more time going up hill at 3-4 miles per hour than they spend going downhill. - Horses are spooked easily: that is true. Horses are prey animals that are spooked by just about anything including but not limited to: a dog, a snake, hikers, cyclists, etc. Frankly, if those animals are so easily spooked, and therefore so dangerous to other users (anybody seen a galloping horse coming at you on a narrow trail?), why are they allowed on public trails? Equestrians should train their horses to get along with other users. If they can't, then they should stick to private trails. Cycling is a healthy activity enjoyed by millions of Americans who want to be in the great outdoors. I support this idea.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As someone who is involved in putting on volunteer trail work parties on state and federal public lands throughout the year and on any given week, I will say that most consider the ATB 500 hour recognition insulting, and we generally choose not to mention it. Sure, the hours are accumulative, but to be honest, it is a hassle to track by volunteer organizations for each of so many different people, and it just reminds them of what an insult it is to have to do 500 hours of volunteering for a pass good for one year only. Better not to have it at all. As Derrick pointed out, volunteers start to boil it into a net worth agenda (like \$1.60 per hour). Just.....don't go there, or make it more functional like the USFS. As to the attitude that we should just be happy to volunteer and be happy to pay the fee or not volunteer.....well, that may work for some highminded, but has little value in the trenches. Trail volunteerism needs a lot of willing folks coming from a number of different political viewpoints and economic strata. We need these folks desperately to build trail and to run equipment, from tractors to chainsaws, particularly on the poorer funded USFS recreation sites. Frankly, any "pass" is a hassle for volunteers. I may visit sites multiple times over a couple of weeks, and so I have to carry a pass in any vehicle I may drive depending upon whether I am doing light work where a car will do or heavy work transporting tools and supplies where a truck is needed. Sure as shooting, my volunteer pass is in the vehicle I left at home. You have no idea how depressing it is to get a ticket for no pass when you just spent \$50 in fuel and a day's worth of labor and maybe \$200 worth of equipment time. Sure, you can usually get it removed later once you explain what you were doing, but the point is that pass management for volunteers is a pain in the rearend. Typically I have one volunteer USFS pass and an ATB pass that I buy, and even then, both may be left at home!! Anyway, if you care about volunteers, offer them a cheap credit system. It inspires them to come back even if they don't use it (since they feel appreciated), and I'm talking about the folks who swing pulaskis, dig with shovels, operate crosscuts and chainsaws, and pack heavy loads and materials into the backcountry. The USFS relies heavily on volunteers since they don't have in many places paid trail crews. The USFS gives a pass for 16 hours. The NPS is much better funded with many paid trail crews. So they want 500 hours. Fortunately, where local NPS parks must rely on volunteers, they have their own volunteer recognition system that is far more practical since they must deal with reality. So give me a meaningful credit system or don't waste the time.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Reduce irresponsible snowmobile activity. An expanding challenge in California and Nevada, as with a variety of other western states, arises from the fact that snowmobile motorists continue to be exempt from the license plate accountability that is required of ordinary (automobile) motorists. The northern Sierra Nevada is increasingly a showplace of 'rules optional' snowmobile practices - where mapped and posted motor vehicle limits are openly ignored. Nevertheless, land managers cannot be expected to effectively control this lawlessness so long as a moving snowmobile cannot be positively identified in California (or Nevada or some other western states). CA, for instance, requires snowmobile motorists only to purchase and display a single four-inch long adhesive decal (aka 'green sticker') bearing a tag # in characters smaller than your thumbnail. Federal land managers can address this chronic 'accountability gap' by requiring snowmobile specialty motorists to prominently display temporary permits (which can be issued without charge to permittees) for those who visit sensitive or intensively used areas - places where respectful and law-abiding conduct on the part of back country visitors, including specialty motorists, is especially important. Hikers, campers, hunters and fishers have long been managed by means of such permits; prominently displayed on a snowmobile, the accountability that comes with a specific permit can be expected to reduce motorized violations and thus preserve opportunity for responsible motorists, among other benefits.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thanks for asking. A snowmobile will run over whatever the operator drives it over (or through), or whatever he fails to avoid; snowmobiles can and do come into contact with stuff other than snow. While snow tracks of course vanish with spring thaw, snowmobile contact damage to overrun vegetation and unprotected soils does not disappear and thus may accumulate over multiple seasons. Sometimes impacts of a single misused snowmobile can be considerable: fall-line snowmobile ruts which are cut directly into soil or through thin, unresponsive snow can channel snow melt, fostering erosion, stream pollution and turbidity. Vegetation exposed above the snow can be overrun, damaged or destroyed. Slow-growing timberline vegetation is particularly vulnerable. Rare wildlife (like the Yosemite Toad) overwintering in snow burrows can be trapped or crushed, especially in late season. Such snowmobile problems can be acute since a snowmobile travels much farther per visit than can a self-powered user, affecting perhaps ten times more terrain per hour. In short, the range and impact of a negligent forest visitor (the inevitable 'bad apple') will be greater if he mounts a snowmobile instead of a pair of snowshoes. Another kind of damage resulting from irresponsible snowmobile activity is its negative impact on other forest users. In the northern Sierra Nevada, unaccountable (unidentifiable) snow motorists routinely drive out of bounds on specially protected mapped and posted state and federal lands (e.g. Fish & Game wildlife reserves, designated wilderness areas). The noise and odor of this unlawful activity undermine the atmosphere on these ostensibly protected lands, and omnidirectional snowmobile ruts - sometimes more than 18 inches deep and potentially lasting for weeks - can shred snow slopes to the extent that the terrain becomes inimical to knee-reliant travel. My suggestion - entry permits for snowmobile use in particular areas such as high-demand trailheads - does not propose to limit or restrict snowmobile use. Rather, prominent display of an entry/use permit can be expected to improve motorist compliance with the rules and restrictions that already exist. As I mentioned initially, entry/use permits have long been required of non-motorized visitors in particular locations. Aside from the fact that snowmobiles spread poisonous exhaust wastes into locations distant from roads, fairness requires that we recognize that a snowmobiler comes to play with several orders of magnitude more thrust than an ordinary visitor (100+ horsepower vs 0.3 hp); the motorist requires ten times more terrain for his satisfaction. That is an immense privilege on public estate with correspondingly large responsibilities: the motorist's numbered permit should be prominently displayed such that his snowmobile can be identified even when it is in motion. Operator accountability fosters sportsmanship: respectful, law-abiding motorists benefit, as does the resource and all its various admirers, when irresponsible motoring declines.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

According to _____, the use permits that make campers, hikers, hunters and fishers accountable for their conduct will be unlikely to improve snowmobile compliance because the ID # on the snowmobile permit will probably be obscured by snow. And since those paper tags surely cost money, he suggests that we should spend even more public funds on futile and ineffective efforts to police specialty craft that remain exempt from license plates! But take heart: we're told that the irresponsible, unidentifiable snowmobile off-road motorists who are willing to break the law need little more than the guidance of a few more signs and, of course, some 'education'. _____ is quick to follow with the first installment of instruction: while finally acknowledging that snowmobile motorists are indeed indisposed by occasional encounters with unsupportive snow, voids and discontinuities mid-mountain, we are told that the motorist need only throttle FARTHER UP the mountainside into the rarified alpine life zone where, he declares, snowmobile off-road specialty craft "truly have no impact." If we're to rely on education to address problems of snowmobile misuse, we better make darned sure that off-road specialty motorists come away with more than empty slogans like 'our tracks don't last'. Following is a list of snowmobile impacts that accrue in high alpine environments of the Sierra Nevada. I have personally observed, experienced, and recorded every one of the impacts listed here. As you might guess if you've read this far, I will be happy to elaborate in detail on any of the following points as the discussion proceeds: Snowmobile off-road impacts which occur at treeline and above: 1) sonic pollution of rarefied atmosphere (sound waves travel farther above treeline than in the forest) 2) chemical pollution (carbon monoxide, hydrocarbon, etc.) of rarified atmosphere (aesthetic and physical impacts on forest visitors) 3) chemical (sooty hydrocarbon) pollution of remote snow and riparian headwaters with long-lasting contaminants like PAH 4) trampling (breakage) of slow-growing timberline elfinwood exposed above the snow (300 year-old whitebark pines, not seedlings) 5) contact damage to alpine vegetation BELOW the snow surface (during soft snow conditions) 6) trampling of (unseen) scarce wildlife and riparian habitat (e.g. Yosemite Toads overwintering in snow burrows ABOVE 9000' - yes, some animals actually live high up in the mountains year-round) 7) snowmobile driving on high terrain unprotected by snow (overdriving exposed soil & tundra on high wind-scoured ridges to link patches of discontinuous snow) 8) debris stripped or lost from moving snowmobiles (such as busted windscreens, torn belts, red shards of shattered reflectors, torn rubber track lugs, etc.) 9) violations of law (out-of-bounds motoring) and attendant public costs 10) conflicts among snowmobile motorists (who aggressively compete for, and rapidly chop up, trackless natural snow scapes) 11) degradation of bipedal access and opportunity (fall-line vehicular snow ruts impede or foreclose knee-reliant travel) 12) unsafe practices - reckless driving endangering others in the alpine environment (high-speed passing, avalanche triggering) Recall again: these are snowmobile impacts which Brian claims don't even exist at high elevation. That said, I should mention that nearly all of the above-listed snowmobile off-road impacts can indeed be minimized and possibly even reduced to insignificance. It will take awhile, sure, and will certainly take improved enforcement efforts, improved (honest) education, improved snowmobiles... and, above all, operator accountability. There's no doubt in my mind that snowmobile recreation is dear to many persons and is one of the few outlets that bring satisfaction for some souls in the cold season. As well, I know that snowmobiling has responsible and respectful sportsmen who are now beholden to, and constrained by, the least respectful of the anonymous operators. This

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

state of affairs is unnecessary, unreasonable and should no longer be tolerated.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Snowmobiles, by their design, don't do anything without an operator. Nothing at all. By design! But at least someone here appears to recognize that, in careless or inexperienced hands, a snowmobile can make a costly mess... A snowmobile will run over whatever the operator drives it over (or through), or whatever he fails to avoid; snowmobiles can and do come into contact with stuff other than snow, both accidentally and deliberately. While snow tracks of course vanish with spring thaw, snowmobile contact-damage to unprotected soils and trampled vegetation does not disappear and thus may accumulate over multiple seasons. Sometimes impacts of a single misused snowmobile can be pronounced: fall-line snowmobile ruts which are cut directly into sodden soil or through thin, unsupportive snow can channel snow melt, fostering erosion, stream pollution and stream turbidity. Vegetation exposed above the snow can be overrun, damaged or destroyed. Slow-growing timberline vegetation is particularly vulnerable, and alpine forage suffers too. Rare wildlife (like the Yosemite Toad) overwintering in snow burrows can be suffocated or crushed, especially in late season. Such snowmobile impacts can be acute since a snowmobile travels much farther per visit than a self-powered user, affecting perhaps ten times more terrain per hour. It's no surprise that the range and impact of a negligent forest visitor (the inevitable 'bad apple') is greater when he throttles a snowmobile in lieu of a pair of snowshoes. A snowmobile does not automatically 'tread lightly' - operator discretion is crucial. The snowmobile will not keep itself out of unsuitable conditions, nor can it prevent its driver from pursuing clandestine bushwhack routes through breakable tree tops and other forest life. Even though thoughtless pedestrians may adopt unsuitable routes on vulnerable terrain, they quickly tire of post-holing into brush and soon turn around whereas a snowmobile just keeps going and going - even when it trenches foot-deep through unsupportive snow into underlying material. Like any remotely operated vehicle, a snowmobile must be driven with discretion to minimize its impact on the resource and on other forest visitors. This is true on private property and equally true on public estate. Yet, a pernicious disparity continues to grow between what is preached and what is practiced - a duplicity sadly corrosive of sport. It is disturbing to see this 'snowmobiles are magic carpets' fiction so ardently hawked when bare truth is plain to see - in the mountains, sadly enough, and much closer at hand for the cognoscenti here, a link to [verit@e...](#) Following is a brief but plain exchange which appeared on the popular Snowest.com snowmobile talk forum just three days ago (an ordinary, fairly common discussion). The conversants are referring to specialty snowmobiling in the region surrounding Lake Tahoe. Responding to a prospective visitor, the local motorist describes the expressly typical practice of local snowmobile off-road motorists: his warning (or is it a challenge?) makes it crystal clear that snowmobiles routinely - and indeed violently - contact stuff other than snow. I have added CAPS to TWO of the words to emphasize extraordinary additional concerns, which should be self-evident to every honest defender of sport. Note that the term 'sled carnage', as used below, most probably refers to significant damage received by the snowmobile as a result of contact with one or more terrestrial features that failed to yield when they were overrun or otherwise impacted: 10/4/10, 1:19 pm TWOSTROKE - ...where's are best bet for early season riding near tahoe? 1-2 hour drive okay. where gets the best coverage first or does it vary year to year? 10/4/10, 2:13 pm ZRIDER - It all depends when the 'white' starts flying... ...Early season riding down here is usually road/trail riding till the meadows and bowls fill in, unless we get a big dumper right out of the hole. Early sled carnage is NORMAL. To[o] many guys can't wait and go find

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

rocks, tree stumps and whatever else might be lurking BELOW the surface. A-arm and trailing arm [impact-absorbing snowmobile suspension parts] sales are usually good early in the season. Here's the link for fans of frankness: { Link } I vote to demote Tom Lund's 'snowmobiles don't touch the ground' sloganeering because the habits of too many (though not all) snowmobile specialty motorists in my neighborhood, and elsewhere, betray this myth openly and often. It's especially disappointing to find the even more flippant 'our tracks don't last' mantra hawked here under 'what works' because this simplistic feel-goodism works, above all, to deceive; an unabashed con - now even a 'motto' it seems - designed to dismiss, if not to deny, the potential for snowmobile misuse. Here we even see the slogan used as a pretext for officially excusing snowmobile motorists from common standards of conduct. 100 horsepower personal off-road chariots of any kind come with tank-fulls of responsibility - but snowmobiles don't even have license plates! (See the 'Reduce irresponsible snowmobile use' topic situated - justifiably - in the 'Challenges' idea space.) Snowmobile specialty motorists will have to offer more than repetitious 'we ride magic carpets' plainchant if they expect to be excused from all accountability, much less if they expect any sport to emerge from this wink-wink, nudge-nudge doublespeak.

It is easier for the Forest Rangers to maintain the forest by excluding the people, closing areas, locking gates, exclusions of every sort. This gives the Forest Service personnel time to sit around their offices and figure out how to close and exclude more public use from the forest. It is easier to designate wilderness study areas to keep human activity out, especially the handicapped. Do Federal lands really belong to the PUBLIC.....I think not...they are owned and controlled by the government and you have to have a permit to do any activity. Give these Federal lands back to the states and let them manage them according to their historic and cultural use.

You are so correct. I see closures all of the time, and am getting very tired of it. I think we should close off hiking trails, let's have no one in the wilderness. That should make the activists happy. I have been riding my bike since I was 8 years old, respect the trail and others on it. These narrow minded activists only want their way and don't care about anyone else.

comment #1 says it just fine : The places you describe already exist. It is called the national forest. No further designation is needed. Man and wildlife coexist all through our national forests.

Federal government land is Public land. My Public land should NEVER be closed to the public. to Comment #45 The FS could cut down 50% on maintenance and not many would notice.

One of the biggest problems we face in many Wilderness areas not meet the wilderness criteria but still are. The best thing they BLM could do is to leave things alone. DO NOTHING BLM!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I participate in all forms of outdoor recreation, mountain biking being one of them. Mtn bikers are already allowed on plenty of trails. Our wilderness should NOT be open to mtn bikers. As stated already, mtn bikers can often be rude, they do not help with trail maintenance in many cases and in many cases they break the rules by riding where they are not allowed or building structures that are not allowed or both. The wilderness is set aside for historic uses, mtn biking is not a historic use. The poster admits mtn biking was in its infancy in the 1990's and then later tries to imply mtn biking is a historic use?? Huh?? The poster stated any trail open to horses should be open to mtn bikes, absolutely not! Wilderness and other historic horse use trails should remain free of mtn bikes. Mtn bikes tear up the terrain on some soil types and steep areas. To a mtn biker this is great fun and too much of a temptation to miss even when it is not allowed. Dealing with the speeding bikers and ruined trails left behind is no fun for the other trail users or those of us who maintain them. Some of the trails I maintain are so trenched from mtn bike use on steep soft soils if myself and others did not volunteer and build water bars and rework the tread every year we would soon have the Grand Canyon out there. In all the years I have volunteered to maintain trails I have only worked alongside one mtn biker. The rest were all equestrians and hikers. There are plenty of trails out there open to mtn bikers already. You can even open more WITH PERMISSION and labor from the mtn bike community. But they should never be allowed in wilderness or on all trails. Some trails can not safely support mtn bike use and others like wilderness should remain free of all mechanical use! I support multi use trails where it is safe, I also support wilderness staying wild and trails designated for only those uses that are safe and sustainable. Sometimes one or more of the recreation community needs to be excluded from a trail and those rules should be respected and followed.

In my 35 year career with Refuges, serving on 6 different refuges during the process, I have worked and watched as the Refuges evolved from a struggling organization held together with bailing wire and surplus military equipment to one that is as professional in all respects as any other Federal or State land management Service. Transforming the National Wildlife Refuge System into the National Wildlife Refuge Service is an idea whose time has arrived.

I thought this was a forum for ideas and discussion - not an "IF YOU DON'T AGREE WITH _____ YOU GET SLAMMED" forum. Your idea has some merit but it is too inclusive. We are not fully aware of what the future might bring technology wise. In ten years from now there maybe some unknown resources found there that might make a complete difference to the world for the betterment of everyone. Drilling for gas and oil right now is slow in improving and is somewhat detrimental to the environment - but it may also improve in the future. If global warming does continue we may need all available resources to turn the cycle of global warming back around. We will hopefully be seeing tighter, more productive, and environmentally friendly restrictions coming soon (thanks to BP mishap) that can be put into place worldwide. If you take the Arctic Ocean and put it off limits now, it would be next to impossible to change it back in the future. Tight environment restrictions can be placed without putting the whole area off-limits. We don't know what is coming down the road in the future, but I don't feel we should limit the possibilities for future generations to succeed where we may have failed. Even if it does upset _____'s with his idea's!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The only person hung up on specific words is you! And specifically using words that are incorrect and flat out wrong only to suit your misleading and incorrect statements. The only reason you do this is to misrepresent and flat out lie! The program is no more special (not at all) than any other fuel taxes that are collected and used for other specified uses. You know in the past they were eligible for return back to the person that paid the taxes - now they are put to better uses for ALL of the public. In the case of the RTP program is "... to help the States provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail use. The program provides funds for all kinds of recreational trail uses, such as pedestrian uses (hiking, running, wheelchair use), bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles." - Federal Highway Administration. Your statement - "The worker gets no special fund from the government for the gas tax he spends..." he gets the exact same fund with a different allocation. THERE IS NO SPECIAL FUND!!!! Motorfuel tax is motorfuel tax with different allocations - it is all the same and put to uses from maintenance, bridges, highways, walking, skating, equestrian, OHV ect, ect.! No difference than the government funding other projects in National Parks, forest, ect. ect with other tax revenues! Everyone benefits!

Bristol Bay. Bristol Bay has to be protected from the Pebble Mine being planned to be built there. The mine would create huge amounts of toxic waste, to be held back by earthen dams, but the area is frequented by earthquakes, so the dams are likely to fail, killing the area's salmon, bears, wolves and forests. Its native people should also be protected. The region should also be carefully managed, so that it is protected from poachers and loggers.

Ban All Mining In Bristol Bay. To allow any mining in such an irriplacable Wilderness is a crime against the Indigenous Peoples, Humanity, and a crime against all other life on Earth. It's time we saved the last vestiges of un-touched areas. At risk is everything: verdant tundra, unspoilt rivers and lakes. Grizzlies, wolves, seals and whales roam this nearly untouched ecosystem, all drawn by the same lure: tens of millions of thrashing salmon, charging upstream to spawn. Huge salmon runs are the linchpin of this wilderness, supporting valuable commercial fisheries, indigenous people and a vast array of wildlife. Yet the whole system could come crashing down if giant mining interests get their way. Foreign mining companies, including Mitsubishi, Rio Tinto and Anglo American, are eyeing low-grade gold and copper deposits on pristine land in the Bristol Bay watershed in an area known as Pebble. The only way to extract this ore is through destructive and pollution-producing hard-rock mining. A study of mines similar to the proposed Pebble mine showed that 85 percent of them polluted nearby waters. At Pebble, a proposed open-pit mine would be 2 miles wide (enough to line up nine of the world's longest cruise ships end-to-end) and 2,000 feet deep (enough to engulf the Empire State Building). As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams -- all of them taller than China's Three Gorges Dam and located just 20 miles from an active fault line. A single accident here would be disastrous. But even the construction and operation of the mine could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem. It's a risk most local Alaskans are not willing to take -- the true gold of this region, they say, is its fish and wildlife. Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned & the last fish has been caught will we realize that we cannot eat money. We need to stop this madness now.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Being productive does not include making accusations and being nasty to one another. While folks are speaking from their own experiences and or beliefs, it does no good in this forum to venture from the point. History has shown that NO ONE is supported and trails don't happen when the name calling and fighting are louder than the reality of each given situation. We all have our own perception of course but this forum did not ask you to attack one another. Here is what is has asked.

- Challenges - What obstacles exist to achieving your goals for conservation, recreation, or reconnecting people to the outdoors? Time, money and other resources are the biggest challenges. We have space and trails but getting access to most is costly in so many ways.
- What Works - Please share your thoughts and ideas on effective strategies for conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors. Working together for the common goal and taking into consideration every appropriate user group for each area and trail.
- Federal Government Role - How can the federal government be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors? Cut the chit and move on appropriate access.
- Tools - What additional tools and resources would help your efforts be even more successful? This is an ever work in progress! We'll never make progress unless we get to work and stop the fighting.

Willingness to Change. The Wilderness Act defines wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain" and should be "administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment". The inescapable fact that human manipulation of the land accounts for about sixty percent of America indicates that such designated wilderness areas are indirectly "impaired" by man. Simply because we exist, we are an impediment to the pristine quality that is generally associated with the concept of wilderness. In her essay Wilderness, _____ suggests that "Every environmental problem is a human problem. Civilization is the ecology being lost." Instead of emphasizing the importance of conserving the wilderness within wilderness, perhaps we should focus on changing the way we demonstrate our domination of nature in areas that are not deemed "wilderness". Although spending is an incredibly delicate issue when it comes to passing anything on the floor, it is my opinion that the Federal Government would do well to allocate more attention and money to the research and development of alternate energy. With our constant, continuous depletion of natural resources, we are inevitably destroying the environment, much less wilderness. Hydrogen energy, wind energy, solar energy, and other alternative sources already been proven practical methods for potentially bettering the environment, and may, in turn, prolong our impairment of both our immediate surroundings, as well as the distinctive areas defined as wilderness. However, it is not the responsibility of the government to protect us from the self-interested dependency on modernization, or our incessant devotion of power. I believe that these two factors largely influence our inability to change the problems we so readily admit as problems. A motivation to change the way we view our relationship with nature, as well as the willingness to spend some money are necessary in bettering the environment and conserving the wilderness.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

re "America's National Wildlife Refuge System is our only federal conservation land system devoted primarily to wildlife, plants and their habitats. Its status remains an unfortunate artifact of history ... Any such land conservation system, created today and containing as it does 150 million acres with astounding reach and diversity, would automatically be established as a separate, stand-alone federal agency"..." it needs to be at the peak of its capabilities" The Gov mis manages too much land that fails to maximize public access to OUR living natural resources in the public trust, including free roaming wild horses and burros. They are aboriginal by fossil evidence, re introduce in the 1500s, and a historic wild life heritage by Congressional Act of 1971. There are between 16-27,000 left on the western ranges which constitutes less than one percent of all grazing/browsing wild life and livestock . Habitat critical and necessary for genetic health herd has been diminished to the point that distinct population segments are extinct on Our historic landscapes. Herd areas that remain contain small herds that are threatened and endangered by loss of critical habitat. Unfortunately these icons of Western Settlement, supposedly protected under the Public Trust Doctrine, are non gratis on public lands in the wild life and multiple use communities. Americans that experience their living resources now are most likely to conserve them for every generation.

Southwest Florida is critical habitat for endangered wildlife, including the Florida Panther. Human development into these areas closes off pathways for territory and migration and diminishes ecosystems. Please help to expand the wild and undeveloped land here and give it permanent protection.

Mountain bikers travel much faster then hikers & horses on trails like the PCT. I do not feel it would be safe to have them on trails that are so popular with hikers, and horseback riders. They can come up very fast, and tend to spook horses and could cause serious injuries to riders.

Create a new federal land-use designation "wildlife corridor". Create a new land-use designation titled "wildlife corridor" within each federal land management agency's planning process, so that when managers are considering the most appropriate management of a parcel of public land, they may choose to administratively protect wildlife corridors. There is plenty of science literature available to use in determining an appropriate definition of "wildlife corridor." This land use designation should apply at least to BLM and USFS managed lands, and should entail a consistent management protocol across units, with allowance for limited site-specific tailoring. The purpose should be to manage such designated parcels primarily for the conservation of wildlife and retention and/or restoration of habitat values. This would not necessarily prohibit human recreation/access, but would disallow resource extraction and new roads.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here's an idea to make paying fees really really simple: collect them on April 15 as part of our taxes! Oh wait, we used to do it that way and then _____ led the effort to start nickel and diming us to pay a la carte for every forest trail and picnic table. The idea was that the fees would stay at the site where you paid them. Oh, but that became complicated so we got regional and then national passes, and then interagency passes, and then regional interagency passes, and now you have to navigate some pretty complicated websites just to figure out who and where to pay for the privilege of taking a walk in the woods without getting a federal ticket. And none of those pass vendors have any idea what specific sites you visit so there is no way to tie what you paid to the facilities you used. Thanks _____ you took a system that was fair and equitable to all and worked well for over 30 years and gave us the cluster we're dealing with now. You have a lot of nerve to presume to tell us how to fix what you broke.

Whoa _____ you need to get out of the office more. In southern California, Washington, Oregon, New Hampshire it's not possible to park your car at a trailhead and take a hike without risking a federal misdemeanor if there's no pass displayed on your dashboard. Can't drive to the top of Mt Lemmon or Mt Evans without paying - or at least you can't stop, get out, and take a walk or enjoy the view. Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, American Fork Canyon, Sandia Crest - pay up or stay out. Tonto National Forest? \$95 bucks for an annual pass. Wilderness areas with by law no developed amenities? You'd think at least those would be free. But try Aravaipa Canyon, Paria Canyon, Desolation Wilderness, Gunnison Gorge, many others, and they are making a play for Cloud Peak and Sangre de Cristo. I suggest you stop reading what the law says and go out and see how it's being implemented on the ground. A federal judge in Flagstaff just found the Coconino National Forest in gross violation for charging a fee in the entire 160,000 acre Red Rock Pass area around Sedona - developed facilities and backcountry alike. The decision is a glimmer of hope that we might finally regain access to our own land without being double taxed, but your friends at the Forest Service are probably going to appeal it. Why? Because fee retention, which you love so much, has made them greedy. They have lost sight of their role as public servants and now think of themselves as entrepreneurs, using our public lands as their working capital. It was the worst idea you ever had. If it's facts you want you'll find plenty more at our website.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For most Americans, our public lands ARE an emotional issue. Labeling other people's emotions "ridiculous" confirms my opinion, Derrick, that your approach to public lands is solely based on a cool analytical assessment of their profit potential. That is the heart of where you and I disconnect. Glad to hear that you only support fees for use of developed sites. If the FLREA were being followed according to its plain language that would be the case. Instead, Forest Service and BLM are charging for backcountry access, including designated Wilderness, parking, entrance, and just "walking in the woods." To get an idea how widespread backcountry access fees are, check out the interactive map at www.WesternSlopeNoFee.org. ARC was created to promote the idea that the Forest Service should be marketing outdoor recreation as a consumer product. Francis Pandolfi, former Chairman of your Recreation Roundtable who moved to the Forest Service as Chief Operating Officer, wrote: "For example, a product or brand could be defined as 'Hiking,' 'Fishing,' 'Camping,' 'Skiing,' and other activities. Thinking of outdoor recreation activities as products or brands, of course, suggests applying the principles of sound, private-sector marketing as an approach for meeting recreation demands and providing satisfying outdoor recreation products and services." Americans are surrounded day in and day out by marketing, advertising, and "branding." We go to the outdoors to escape that, not for more of the same. As far as fee retention by the public lands agencies without congressional oversight, that is just another tax. Why should we have to open our wallets, again, when we already support the public lands agencies through our taxes? Do you think that we should have to make up in direct cash what the agencies squander in tax revenue? That's the definition of "double tax." In 1998 you testified to Congress regarding the Forest Service, "It appears that 50 percent or less of the funds appropriated by Congress actually reach the forest district level," and, "We find that a substantially higher portion of congressional appropriations for recreation appear to be vanishing before hitting the ground today than ever before. Our attempts to investigate don't give us a clear picture as to where that money is going." Elsewhere in this online forum you said "Lucky if \$1 in \$3 hits the ground." The GAO agrees. They testified in 2009, "the agency has not always been able to provide Congress and the public with a clear understanding of what its 30,000 employees accomplish with the approximately \$5 billion the agency receives every year" and noted that the Forest Service's lack of fiscal accountability is a longstanding problem that has never been effectively addressed. (GAO-09-443t) Derrick, this is one thing that you, the GAO, and I do agree on. In fact I would put the administrative overhead at more like 80%. Yet you want Americans to throw good money after bad. What makes you think that an agency that cannot account for its appropriated funding can do any better job of accounting for a direct stream of cash revenue?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I know that you have great influence in Washington. You have lobbied in support of recreation fees since the earliest days of the Reagan administration. In 1998 you wrote the Secretary of Agriculture that Fee Demo was "the direct result of our [ARC's] efforts." The fees we now pay for recreational access to our National Forests and BLM public lands are your handiwork. You are also the man who can bring much-needed reform to these recreation fee programs. Wouldn't you agree that what we have now is a mess, both legally and from a public relations standpoint? If we can find some common ground, would you and your cohorts use your influence to make things better? In this forum you have said that you do not advocate recreation fees for use of public lands without significant services, but that a fee for a developed campsite or other developed or specialized facility is appropriate. I agree with that. Do you agree with me that it's equally important that the authority to charge fees for developed facilities must not be used as the justification for putting such facilities in places where dispersed facilities, rustic facilities - or no facilities at all - are working fine? The deeply flawed language in the FLREA is not doing the job of limiting fees to use of developed sites. Even if you haven't been out on the ground personally, from the posts on this forum it should be clear to you that people resent being charged for basic access, and that they are in fact being so charged. What are you and your industry colleagues telling the congressionals with whom you have influence today? What new ideas are you and the interest groups for whom you speak presenting to them for the next, new and improved, version of recreation fees? Is there a solution that will stop the war between the agencies and the public?

Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act regulating wetlands and sediment runoff exempts farmers. More sediment pollutes our rivers and streams from open till and grazing up to and into streams than anything from construction. Wetlands disturbance and destruction by farmers is less of an issue, but if wetlands are important why exempt anyone. Regulate wetlands the way Canada does, by the quality of the habitat rather than a political definition. Replacing wetlands created by man made roadside ditches doesn't make sense and adds costs to the American public. I have been delineating wetlands and dealing with sediment control for over 20 years.

Link this idea (getting young people outdoors) with using volunteers as teachers/docents/leaders, and giving the volunteers credits toward park and program use. There are a lot of older people with skills who like to work with young people. And it could work the other way, too. Young people could help older people who want to get outside but have trouble navigating on their own. Open up some park areas to habitat gardens, maintained by volunteers. Have community events at parks. We live near a state park which is used by people from all over our county, yet the Governor was ready to close it, rather than enlisting volunteers to keep it open - many of us were ready to work. People want to be involved!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Defend our national resources for Americans, shut down Pebble Mine!. Pebble Mine must be shut down and blocked at any cost! Destruction of US lands, environment, wildlife, and natural resources cannot be given over to greedy foreign interests that will stop at nothing. BP, Shell, and the list goes on are all foreign business that have made false promises, created massive environmental disasters such as the Gulf, destroyed livelihoods for American citizens, caused billions in economic damages and continue to promote their own self serving interests. Now the Anglo American company wants to do the same with the Pebble mine. They cannot ever protect lands, waters, and wildlife that do not belong to them, nor will they! Generations of families have depended on that area for food, shelter, businesses and economic support. Now Anglo wants to erase all of that permanently with a massive destructive mine. Our government has an obligation to protect our citizens, our lands, our waters, and our wildlife from foreign invasion and that is what the Pebble mine represents. Invasion by British interests! The time is now to fight this problem before we have another "Gulf disaster" on our hands!

Lack of access for hunters and fishermen. Provide better access for hunters and fishermen- there are places where groups buy up all the land that surrounds the forest service, or state forest, or BLM lands to prevent people from gaining access. Some states are working to solve this issue, but it needs to be done at the federal level in cases of forest service, or BLM lands where private property blocks access- due to group purchases of land. In W.Va. my relatives have some property that is surrounded by the Monongahela National forest- and they have to allow people to access the trails, and the National forest land, they can not block off access. There have never been any problems- it's a narrow trail on the edge of the property that we built so others could get through to the National forest lands, it is marked, and keeps people from wandering around the property. This costs the government no money, the forest service no money- it just allows people to get to the forest service land.

I agree 100% with the fact that the Bristol Bay area needs to be protected, and the Pebble Mine plan should be stopped. Several groups of people have been opposed to this plan for quite some time now, and more people need to get involved with the issue, or the mine may be allowed to proceed! This is one of, if not the most important spawning grounds for salmon in the entire world- the mine could destroy it forever. Off road vehicles are NOT allowed in National Parks. They are allowed on some BLM, and Forest Service lands, also on some state run recreation areas, No off road vehicles are permitted in the National Parks. I am voting your idea as promote, but please understand that off road vehicles, while not allowed in our National Parks, should continue to be allowed on BLM, Forest Service, and state recreation lands, the parks don't allow them, go there for quiet, otherwise, please respect the people who do use off road vehicles right to enjoy recreation as they see fit. Most Off road groups maintain their own trails, and help maintain BLM, and Forest Service trails too. They are not damaging the environment any more so than people who ride horses, or hike in backcountry areas that normally would get no foot traffic.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Access for Fishing. There is a need for more, and better access for those who want to fish the rivers and streams in our parks, on Forest Service lands, and in wilderness areas. Many places are surrounded by private land, and no one can get to the rivers and streams to fish, unless by water. There are many places, in many states, all across the country, where more streamside access is needed. How can we get children to enjoy the outdoors, and learn about aquatic life, if we don't have any way of getting them to the rivers and streams? This would not require a lot of money, or a lot of land, just a simple gravel road, and a parking area, so people can park their cars, and not have a 5 mile hike carrying fishing equipment with them, which is next to impossible to do when you are taking children fishing. This has nothing to do with people being too out of shape to hike, or any other health issues, just make it so we can get to the rivers and streams to fish, not everyone can afford a boat, or canoe. We just need a way to get somewhat close to the rivers and streams.

I'm not talking about a paved road, in most areas there are already dirt/gravel roads that could be used, with permission, and minor disruption to the land, how much would it hurt to dump some river gravel, or recycled concrete gravel on an existing dirt road, or driveway to an abandoned campsite? The state of W.Va. added some gravel parking areas along the roads to give fishermen better access to some of the rivers, and it did not create any problems. There are many areas in the Rockies where a simple parking area along a road would give access, no new major roads-just short, side of the road areas, so people can park somewhere while they fish.

Access for Hunters. Many areas of Forest Service, National Forest lands, BLM, and state lands- where hunting is legal- have access blocked by the surrounding private landowners. There is a lot of public land that hunters can not get to because there is no nearby access. To get to some of these areas would take a multi day hike, or horseback ride, when there could be access points much, much closer. Our land in MT borders National Forest land where hunting is legal, and we let people park on our property, as long as they ask permission, and do not leave trash laying around. We have never has any problems with the people we allow to use our land as an access point. We still hear about the lack of access every year though. How hard can it be for the state game agencies, or the USFWS to get permission from a few landowners to let some people park on their property? Maybe charge a small fee? The little money collected could pay for some gravel and a trash can for a small parking area.

Good idea, as is the ED OUT idea, kids need up off the couch, away from the non-stop video games, and TV. Our children all went camping, hiking, fishing, rode dirt bikes, and 4-wheelers, there was not a lot of mountain bikes around when they were young, or I'm sure they would have done that too. They learned to ride horses, how to care for the horses, and other animals, they all learned archery, learned to shoot rifles and shotguns, and they still hunt to this day. All our children were girls, who now have their own families, and their kids all spend far more of their free time outdoors than they do inside. They learned to respect the land and the animals, to leave an area as good, or better than you found it, and how everything you do in the outdoors affects the animals and the land, and to not do anything that is bad for the ecosystem.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

No new parks until existing parks can be maintained with no backlog of repairs.. All existing repairs,maintenance,and improvements need to be finished BEFORE ANY NEW PROPERTY is added to the property owned by the Federal gov. Including National Parks,National Monuments,and Wilderness areas. The government can NOT afford to pay for the upkeep on the lands it already owns-so why should more land go to the government? There are enough parks-there are National parks, state parks,city parks,national forests ,state forests, national wildlife refuges,state wildlife refuges, national wilderness areas,state wilderness areas, there are national,and state scenic rivers,there are national seashores, there are millions of acres of BLM land,there is enough land designated as wilderness-the federal gov. owns way too much land as it is.

Bristol Bay is one of,if not the most important spawning areas for salmon in the entire world,not just the US and Canada,this mine could destroy it forever.

Support Collaborative Efforts to Restore Habitat and Connect Communities. Thank you for holding an America's Great Outdoors Initiative Listening Session in Bangor, Maine. The America's Great Outdoors Initiative is providing a wonderful opportunity for your Administration to see partnerships that are achieving tremendous results for conservation. The Penobscot River Restoration Project represents an excellent model of collaboration that will lead to restoration of an entire suite of sea-run fish that are key to the health and resilience of the largest watershed in Maine. Full completion of this project, and the return of self-sustaining runs of American shad, endangered Atlantic salmon, river herring, endangered shortnose sturgeon, and other migratory fish will support a thriving ecological system while revitalizing recreation and economic opportunities that will benefit residents of Maine as well as many thousands of visitors to the state annually. The federal government should continue to deliver and develop programs that encourage landscape-scale collaboration between industry, tribes, non-profit conservation groups, communities, and state and federal government agencies. Funds to support habitat restoration and improve access to historic spawning and juvenile habitat for sea-run fish should be increased and sustained. Restoration at this large-scale ensures the rebuilding of resilient systems that sustain natural resource- and recreation-based economies such as what we find here in Maine. Allowing Federal agencies to implement and fund programs at the local scale will best meet the needs of Maine communities that are working toward long-term regional planning and in support of healthy natural systems as well as strong economies. Funding for initiatives that allows for flexibility in their application to adapt to changing circumstances is also key to project success. Investing in community-based conservation and restoration programs also encourages people to connect with their natural and cultural heritage, and provides opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy, learn from, and become good stewards of their local environment. Sincerely, Laura Rose Day Executive Director Penobscot River Restoration Trust

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I like this idea, with two adjustments: 1) The jobs that received pay cuts should be the ones in which there are consistently a large number of highly qualified applicants. No sense in reducing the pay for a job which is hard to fill with the most qualified people already. 2) Extend this to other federal land agencies. I sometimes work seasonally for the National Park Service, and have been applying for the last year to get a new position. Even though I rate 100 on most all of the jobs I bother to apply for, and have a good dozen years of highly varied park experience, I haven't had offers, largely due to the abundance of other highly qualified people (many of them veterans who can rate up to 105, or 110 if disabled). Not only would a temporary lowering of the pay scale enable the agency to hire more of us, but it could reduce the competition somewhat, between people who are committed to working in the agency because we believe in what they do, as opposed to those for whom it would just be a neat job.

I will add to my post that most of the jobs that I am considered highly qualified for are GS-05s, but I would have no problem with a recession-time pay cut of as much as 10% even at that grade, so long as the money saved was used to employ other people. Most of these jobs do not require a college degree if you have suitable experience, and the current rate of \$15/hour at most locations is quite good compared to the private sector.

It is sad to impugn an entire large agency full of many talented and conscientious people based on the actions of a few administrators one disagrees with. "Out of control, rogue agency"? Hardly. The Forest Service is a multiple use agency and as such has a lot of balls to juggle. One of the benefits of having recreational user fees which are retained in the area they are collected, is that this counterbalances other economic interests, such as logging, mining, and, to a lesser extent, hunting, that are not always compatible with hiking and backpacking. I support the basic concept of Forest Service fee collection in high use areas, while recognizing that any organization, public or private, is subject to administrative errors made by fallible humans. If you think they have misinterpreted the law, by all means, challenge them. But judges are fallible, too, and other judges may or may not agree with what was decided in _____'s case. Meanwhile, hyperbole does not help your cause, _____. The fee program was meant to address the highly variable and usually inadequate congressional appropriations that were allocated for National Forests in the past. The only realistic alternative I see that would help keep them properly funded but which would place the greater revenue burden on the actual users, would be to have a special federal tax on recreational equipment. This could be even more problematic than the system of collecting fees on site, because of the difficulty of defining what constitutes recreational equipment. When is a shoe a trail boot, for example? What kind of backpack is primarily recreational, versus used to carry books to school? How would you readily define tents used for camping, versus those used only in a backyard to screen a picnic table from bugs?

Protect the North Fork of the Flathead. Complete the oil and gas lease buyout and withdraw minerals from development in the North Fork of the Flathead River in Montana. The North Fork of the Flathead is a wild and scenic river and is the western border of Glacier National Park. British Columbia recently announced a ban on mining and oil/gas development in the headwaters. The United States needs to reciprocate and complete the protection of water quality and the World Heritage site of Glacier National Park.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Standards for Non-point Source Pollution. Our public waters will not be clean until there are standards for non-point source pollution like there are for point source pollution. Voluntary-only practices for non-point sources like agriculture and urban lawns will not be sufficient to restore our public waters to swimmable and fishable conditions. Some practices, like appropriate fertilizer management could be required for Farm Bill commodity subsidy participation as well as through setting of enforceable standards.

PROTECT BRISTOL BAY AND DISALLOW PEBBLE MINE. The Pebble Mine would be TERRIBLE. Destroying the environment for living animals would be a tragedy. As Americans, we take for granted our pleasant living conditions and set our expectations high. At the same time, we often turn the other cheek when something like this occurs. The pebble mine would make animals suffer, lose their homes, die, and for what? A mine? Humanity needs to step up and speak for those without a voice. DO NOT ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF PEBBLE MINE TO GO FORWARD. Bristol Bay in Alaska desperately needs to be protected from tampering with its natural beauty and wholesome watershed. Pebble Mine is threatening, all for the sake of the almighty dollar in someone's/some corporation's pocket. The mining will not really provide anything substantive for the people, and it will mar the pureness of the watershed, and destroy the clean water the salmon need to carry on, endangering the livelihoods of many Alaskans, and a crucial member of the ecology. Studies have been done on the damages that develop if Pebble Mine is allowed to proceed. Bristol Bay is touted as one of the most beautiful and undeveloped areas in the country. Bristol Bay needs to be protected.

The Pebble Mine would be TERRIBLE. Destroying the environment for living animals would be a tragedy. As Americans, we take for granted our pleasant living conditions and set our expectations high. At the same time, we often turn the other cheek when something like this occurs. The pebble mine would make animals suffer, lose their homes, die, and for what? A mine? Humanity needs to step up and speak for those without a voice. DO NOT ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF PEBBLE MINE TO GO FORWARD.

It is critical that this large parcel of land known as Edison Farms located within the DR/GR be preserved. From an ecological perspective, the DR/GR contains not only extensive intact wetland systems but also a mosaic of interconnected habitat for listed species. The DR/GR is also important for residents of Southwest Florida for its hydrologic features, primarily its role as providing approximately 70% of Lee County Utilities potable water supply. The DR/GR planning effort officially commenced with the release of the McLane Report in May 2007 and since that time has involved all stakeholders and interested parties, including environmental organizations, civic groups, landowners and mining interests. Over a two-year period, there were 23 official DR/GR advisory committee meetings and no less than 9 public hearings to solicit input on DR/GR planning. Countless technical reports and data sources were utilized in the creation of the DR/GR documents, resulting in a proposed overlay that is comprehensive, data-driven, equitable and defensible. Purchase and preservation of this large tract of land located within the DR/GR fits perfectly with the years of work that has already been done. Thanks to the Conservancy of Southwest Florida for spearheading this superlative idea.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mountain bikers should have places to go, but not in the wildernesses or the PCT. These trails were created for (and are built & maintained by) hikers and stock people, both historic users, so that they can enjoy the quiet & solitude of the areas. One can not have a relaxing and scenic hike or ride when worried about bikes screaming around corners and confronting us as we already have to deal with in non-wilderness areas. (#53) did a great job on the 'why not's' of bike use in some areas. They need their own designed, designated and maintained areas to ride or share the ORV trails and abandoned roads. They can help that user group get more trails and facilities that they desperately need. Unfortunately the bike user #'s are growing so fast that the good guys of the sport can't keep up with the education needs of the newbies. I either meet extremely gracious & helpful bikers or extremely rude ones, very few in between. This is a big problem that needs to be dealt with soon.

National Heritage Areas within National Park Service family/system. The individual legislative bills which established each of the current 49 National Heritage Areas indicated funding authorizations; however, most NHAs do not receive their full funding as appropriations. These vital community revitalization and historic preservation entities should be classified as full members of the NPS family/system, with solid base of federal funding which they in turn will match from other public and private sectors to accomplish the positive heritage tourism projects, cultural preservation, and enhancements spelled out in their respective approved NHA Management Plans.

Conservation. I think the Endangered Species Act is a wonderful tool enabling the conservation of species. The problem is that it doesn't protect the ECOSYSTEMS that these individual animals live in. It is impossible to save a specific animal if it doesn't have it's particular ecosystem to survive in. Also, I think all government entities need to work in conjunction with the species on the list. For example, the government has spent millions of dollars raising Black-Footed ferrets in captivity, preconditioning them for release, and then releasing them in the few remaining prairie dog colonies. On the other hand, another government entity is paying millions of dollars to poison prairie dog colonies. In fact, even persons who own private land are forced to poison any prairie dogs living on their property. This just doesn't make sense. They contradict one another and once again, this brings up the whole ecosystem that prairie dogs create. Not only are Black-Footed ferrets on the Endangered Species list, but so are Swift Foxes and Burrowing owls, which both also depend on these prairie dog colonies. The obvious solution is to stop poisoning Prairie Dog colonies and the animals that depend on them will no longer need to be on the Endangered Species list saving the government and people millions of dollars. I think the governments needs to create a new bureau dedicated solely to animal and ecosystem conservation. They need to hire more biologists and environmentalists who understand these complex systems to help manage our wildlife and public lands.

I would like to see a one-for one balance of OHV land for Equestrian land. In my area there are tons of places to ride horses, but almost none to legally ride an OHV.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would like to start by stating that I am an avid trail runner and mountain biker. I have also been a park representative for a few local and state wilderness parks. This being said I have dealt with all of these issues many times. One thing that everyone has to understand is that these trails are here for all of us to use responsibly, no matter what your mode of transportation. Each group has rude people and very friendly, respectful people, that is just human nature. Both horses and bikes are controlled by humans. It's our responsibility to operate them with control and consideration of all trail users. There is no doubt that horses can be startled by bikes, runners, hikers, snakes etc. With this in mind we all need to be considerate when using trails in multi use areas. One of the main issues I have seen over the years is trail users not understanding or not knowing the trail rules or etiquette. As the economy has gone south and healthy living has become more popular, we have many more trail users than ever before. Rather than arguing about who can use what trail, maybe we should focus on educating people on responsible trail use. We all love the outdoors and there is no reason we shouldn't be able to work together to satisfy all users.

Complete Park and Trail Maps. Maps and Trail system maps and databases are not updated, ie. USDA's National Forest and Park maps do not include all trails in their publications which are distributed to the public. In a publically distributed, Mount Rogers National Recreation Area Trail Location Map. 18 trails are listed, and an additional four trails illustrated. Four trails and an access road are omitted. Sawmill Trail (4556), Buzzard Den Trail (4582), Wright Hollow Trail (4548) Feathercamp Ridge Trail (4550) and Forest Service Road FS287. Recommended Edit: The insertion of SR 731 and SR 605 roads on the map and showing more four trails, the Income Generating Consumers realizes there is more national park located on the north side of Iron Mtn. I'm sure there are 100's of similar maps out there which direct the consuming public away from private businesses which have been encouraged to start with the many economic development programs across rural America.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

core areas and wilderness. Conservation Principles/Land Management Securing sufficient recreation areas (for us) and core areas of habitat (for wildlife) in the Southern Appalachians will require protecting a variety of conservation lands. Fortunately, the region is rich in such lands. SAFC proposes that the areas identified in this section be protected and managed for their conservation value. This protection can take many forms, from wilderness designation to management by wise forest planning. Through protection plans, core areas of forest can be secured as habitat for our native species. Management that assures conservation protection also provides many human benefits, including clean water, quality recreation, and the knowledge that we are restoring and preserving the health of ecosystems on which human well-being ultimately depends. Our Public Lands It is therefore vitally important that we consider the wise management of large core areas, much of which is already in public ownership. The most critical of these lands are those that retain a high degree of their natural ecological function. These areas provide the healthy and stable sanctuaries from which recovery and restoration can proceed. They can also furnish the best reference data to guide the recovery of more-damaged ecosystems. Key conservation lands include forests with few or no roads, tracts of old-growth forest, biological hotspots, and critical watersheds, all of which must be wisely managed over the long term to protect and enhance their natural value. A successful approach, especially here in the Southern Appalachians (but across the nation), should concentrate its efforts on identifying conservation building blocks where national forest ownership offers opportunities for protection. Conservation building blocks include (1) currently protected natural areas, (2) unprotected natural areas, (3) old-growth areas, (4) biological hotspots, (5) aquatic watersheds, (6) high-priority areas for public acquisition, (7) conservation easement areas, and (8) cultural and heritage areas. Management of these components to achieve their highest conservation potential will help establish and restore landscape-scale conservation areas in much of the region. These comments focus on two priority areas of focus: 1.) wilderness protection, and 2.) watershed/water quality in our national forests. Wilderness Priority We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds, and recreational opportunities. Action: Direct land managing agencies (e.g. Forest Service) to conduct consistent and fair reviews of wilderness quality lands. Currently, there is no clear or consistent direction to federal agencies for recommending wilderness in their management of our nation's public lands. It is imperative that the land managing agencies maintain complete inventories of wilderness-suitable lands and provide inclusive recommendations for wilderness designation to Congress... and to achieve this we need to have strong Presidential leadership and direction from the Administration. Roadless Roadless areas in Southern Appalachian national forests are among the

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

last truly wild places in the Southeast. They harbor unbroken wildlife habitat, clear-running streams that feed our rivers and drinking water supplies, and backcountry places where we can experience the kind of solitude and spiritual renewal that only undisturbed forests can provide. Since these areas represent the last wild areas of the east, the goal should be to secure strong, long-term protection for the 723,000 acres in the Southern Appalachians. Nationally, roadless areas encompass nearly a third of all national forest land, but only 15 percent of the Southeast's national forests. The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule Roadless areas are identified and "inventoried" by the U.S. Forest Service and should be kept free from logging and other harmful resource extraction. The standard of protection we seek to uphold is the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, a Forest Service regulation that places roadless areas off-limits to commercial timber cutting and road building. It was signed by the Secretary of Agriculture on January 12, 2001, following years of scientific study, 600 public hearings held around the country, support from eminent scientists and economists, and a record number of comments from the public.

Action: We urge the Obama administration to uphold the protections of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

Watershed/Water Quality Priority Our national forests may soon be the most important natural system capable of capturing, retaining and releasing water. According to the Forest Service, more than 60 million Americans get their drinking water from national forest headwaters. The role of the Forest Service in protecting and managing drinking water supplies affects approximately one-fifth of United States communities, yet few Americans know or understand the important links between forest management, watershed and fisheries health, climate and change and community drinking water supplies. We believe the management of watershed and fisheries resources should be an important priority for the agency. A New Future for the Forest Service - Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack's Restoration Vision: In August 2009, the Secretary' articulated a bold, new vision to conserve and restore our national forests. He outlined a complete commitment to restoration which he defined as "managing forest lands first and foremost to protect our water resources while making our forests far more resilient to climate change". To achieve the Secretary's 21st century vision, the Forest Service needs a 21st century structure. We suggest the agency would benefit from a major reorientation that prioritizes watershed and fisheries restoration and protection. Water is likely the most important ecological and economic resource that the Forest Service manages. Water derived from our national forests is estimated by the Forest Service to be valued at \$7.2 billion, while timber is valued at a mere fraction of that amount. Despite this, the agency is still operating under a structure focused primarily on silviculture and resource extraction. To make restoration as a priority for the agency, we believe a watershed and fisheries restoration program is necessary and restoration experts need to be moved into leadership positions to effectively achieve that goal.

Action: Restore forest watersheds and fisheries, protect drinking water quality, enhance declining fisheries and provide connectivity for wildlife migration. In order for landscape conservation areas to function as a regional conservation network, there must be ecological connectivity between the areas. This requirement is difficult to fulfill in a region that has been roaded and developed as much as the Southern Appalachians. However, there currently remain many viable connections across the landscape, and in the long term the potential for connectivity is great -- if we as a culture understand its value and give it the high priority it deserves.

Action: Fully Fund Land and Water Conservation Fund Honor the original intention of the LWCF Act -

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

ensuring a selection process that allows the Forest Service to acquire a significant portion (greater than 50%) of lands east of the Mississippi (where the population pressures exist and the opportunities for recreation are maximized). Roads The absence of roads is one of the primary prerequisites for landscape conservation areas. Past attempts by the Forest Service's roadless inventory have failed to identify many unroaded areas relevant to ecological functioning. The Forest Service inventory, while identifying many important areas, omits important areas of the national forest that are unroaded. In addition, the agency's inventory of roadless areas was confined to public lands. In fact, many unroaded areas that do not satisfy official size, configuration, and ownership constraints still provide significant habitat and ecological connectivity. Even the smallest such areas can serve as vital "stepping stones" that provide connections between larger areas.

A Plea, Our wildlands are disappearing in the face of constant resource extraction. Clean air, water, wildlife and the integrity of the earths health is being compromised. We must stop the ceaseless taking of the earths natural resources and begin a path of reusing, recycling, conserving and doing with less. We cannot allow the desire for more, more money, more things to dictate our future. It is time to change the way we do things. For the hope of a future worth living. Stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay. Thank you.

As a teacher of elementary students, I think this is an excellent idea. It will benefit both the students and their families to become more involved in the outdoor world. I think it might be beneficial and more practical in teaching to have students be involved on a regular basis, like once a month, to see how many opportunities there are, rather than full immersion for a week. And maybe more feasible and affordable as well.

Stop Pebble Mine!!!!. Pebble Mine would destroy the most beautiful and valuable part of our American ecosphere. Seems the government will allow the multinational corporations to do ANYTHING these days. Lets's not allow that to continue! Here's a video i did about Pebble Mine a couple of years ago. { Link }

Following the Bush admin decision of "closed unless posted open", all roads and trails on Federal lands are now "closed" unless they are specifically posted open. As previous comments indicate, no process is needed to close roads and trails. On the contrary, EIS procedures are necessary to REOPEN roads and trails closed with no public input and by arbitrary decision. We need MORE trails for OHV and motorized use, not less. Exploding population numbers dictate that a more dispersed impact will only be possible by increasing the number of trails available. This is common sense...which unfortunately, is no longer common.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I live in Colorado, and I spend a lot of time in Southern Utah camping and hiking. I have seen many beautiful desert plants and biotic soil trampled and destroyed by ORVs going off the dirt roads and driving right across the landscape. In addition, as I have grown older, I have watched the Utah landscapes become more and more degraded due to years of illegal ORV damage. In the Southern Utah wilderness quality lands, there are less plants and less biotic soil than there were 15 years ago. Remember that these are endemic desert plants that I am referring to, which already grow slowly in a harsh environment, so being trampled and crushed only makes it more difficult for them to survive. The overuse of ORVs has already significantly affected the ecosystems of Southern Utah. Shutting down 15% of the dirt roads in Southern Utah will undoubtedly lessen the degree of damage to these fragile desert ecosystems. This is a solution that makes sense for both humans and the ecosystems, as people will still be able to access the land, but the plants and animals will get a small reprieve from the effects of human activity. Considering the high number of ORVs that (illegally) leave their designated roads and destroy wilderness quality lands in Utah, I think that ORVs should have limited access to wilderness quality lands. ORV users have proven themselves to be irresponsible and have already damaged a large portion of land in Utah. I believe that ORVs should only be allowed in designated recreational ORV parks and on certain, carefully selected dirt roads.

(per Comment #1): "Thank you, Judge Donald W. Molloy of Missoula, Montana for ordering the re-listing of the Gray Wolf in Montana and Idaho as an endangered species!"

Contrails are another example of "externalized costs" -- those who fly jets should compensate the public for the imposition. Instead of an unworkable "ban" why not charge jets permit fees for leaving contrails in the viewsheds of National Parks? If the fees are high enough, at least some jets will adjust course to stay out of those areas. (Perhaps that should be the measure of the monetary value of a clear blue sky over a National Park.) Also, airplane lights are more the issue at night, which might or might not warrant a different fee structure then. Since jet flights are already tracked electronically, automated fee collection would be fairly simple...the political will to "internalize costs" in this area is another thing altogether.

If the Pebble Mine were to extract every ounce of recoverable gold according to the most optimistic estimates of its proponents, then by the end of this century it would add slightly more than 1% to the world's gold supply. This is far, far less gold than we could recover by reducing, reusing, and recycling it and at an astronomically higher environmental price. The Pebble mine is all about privatizing profit for a few and externalizing costs for the rest of us. King Midas tried eating gold and it didn't work out so well. I prefer wild Alaska salmon.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here are some specifics on just part of what would be at risk if the Pebble Mine is permitted: The Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska ({ Link }) states that: "no where in Alaska, do so many salmon return as to the Bristol Bay watershed. Just a few of the superlatives in this region include: The Kvichak River is home to the world's largest sockeye salmon run and is also within Alaska's designated trophy wild rainbow trout area. Other species found in the Kvichak include Chinook (king), Coho (silver), pink and chum salmon, Arctic Char, Arctic Grayling, Dolly Varden, northern pike, and whitefish. The Nushagak and Mulchatna Rivers support the largest Chinook (king) salmon runs in Alaska, and perhaps the world. Other species found in these drainages include Sockeye, Coho (silver), pink and chum salmon, Arctic Char, Arctic Grayling, Rainbow Trout, Lake Trout, Dolly Varden, northern pike, and whitefish. Lake Iliamna is Alaska's largest lake and America's last undeveloped "great lake" as it is the same size as Lake Erie. It is home to one of only two freshwater seal populations in the world, as well as all five species of Pacific salmon, Arctic Char, Arctic Grayling, Dolly Varden, Rainbow Trout, northern pike, and whitefish."

Thank you for the clarification (and for making Comment #1 obsolete). While I agree that federal land managers need to implement federal policy diligently "on the ground" to properly serve all U.S. citizens, I would hope that they would also be very good listeners -- particularly soliciting suggestions from locals (i.e. their neighbors) -- and that they would pass all reasonable input to the appropriate decision makers for proper consideration when policies are reviewed. In addition, the federal government must be a good-faith partner in coordinating with state and local governments where their policies intersect. Does your Idea allow for such things?

Thank you for raising this additional critical issue. While our democracy is equipped to follow the wishes of the people over the long run on broad policy issues (e.g. "Should significant resources be devoted to save species from extinction in their native range in our country?"), it is not equipped to inform all citizens and take a vote on every individual issue every time a decision is required (e.g. "Should OHV traffic be more restricted in the Imperial Sand Dune Recreation Area to save Peirson's Milk Vetch?") At some point, as you suggest, we have to hire/retain qualified professionals and let them do their job/duty, including making decisions on a scientific/rational basis in the face of counterfactual 'information' provided to them by local (or distant) interest groups.

Implicit in the last two sentences of your Comment #1 is the argument that a few animals must sacrifice their freedom for the sake of others. This is one of the many sad results of human destruction of their native habitats, but we can make it much less sad by holding zoos to the highest standards in how they house and treat their animal guests while they are there (e.g. providing ample room in naturalistic enclosures) and by helping zoos "to restore endangered and threatened species back into the wild" as you say.

Naturalize our new citizens amidst our natural wonders. Welcoming our new citizens by holding their naturalization ceremonies in our National Parks/Monuments would show two great things about our country at once. Credit: This originated as my Comment #1 on (part of) an Idea posted by ___ on Sept. 10th.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for the additional information. Although the urban national park units are beautiful settings and I'm glad to hear that they're being used in this way, I must admit that the image I had in mind was of a group of new citizens being sworn in under the brow of Half Dome rather under the glare of fluorescent lights in a low-ceilinged room as we usually see on the 4th of July television coverage. Also, I think it's a great idea for **all** citizens to get a free one-time park pass, as you described, in recognition of the country's value to them and their value to the country. However, I'm not sure how new citizens would feel being referred to as a "natural resource." ;-)

(per Comment #1): Cell phone towers can be sited sensitively, where needed. Cell phone towers are not the only way to communicate and can be avoided where appropriate. Cell phone towers should not usurp our national symbols.

It is encouraging to see the USFS working on multi use trails and bringing many users groups together for the benefit of the many rather than the few. I agree that more access is important rather than less as our lands are a treasure to be shared responsibly rather than restricted arbitrarily. Mountain biking is a responsible non-motorized use appropriate for many of the areas currently restricted to it's use. I feel reconsideration of current designations needs to be considered in all of our lands. I agree that many Wilderness areas need to be set aside to hiking only, but many of the previous and upcoming designations are over reaching and excluding Americans and visitors from the outback experience.

It is nice to know that many high schools have adopted mountain bike teams as an addition to conventional ball sports. I'd like to see more trails made available to America's youth as well as the public in general. I see this as a nice gateway to encourage people to get outdoors and enjoy the open spaces that are too often taken for granted.

The biggest problem with OHV use on our public lands is that these machines take away any sense of reward you get for working hard to get somewhere--everything, whether a sweet viewpoint, or an archeological site, is just another place to pass by on a machine. If you have to actually strive to achieve a location, then it places an intrinsic value on said place--a value that can never be understood or appreciated by those whose conveyance places them apart from the joys of the natural world. That's why you see so much more vandalism at a site accessible to machines than those with foot-only access. The second biggest problem? there's no way to identify specific OHV riders, so until they have legible identifying tags, folks like me will continue to classify ALL OHV riders as destructive and irresponsible (and I ride a dirt bike and have a vehicle built for desert travel--but I still support balance and Wilderness).

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

After all the so-credible hype from the NRDC, it's good to hear from a native. Most of us will never see Bristol Bay, but we have seen such places and cherish them as untainted resources. The Pebble Mine project is intended to add a few kilotons of metals to the culture's foundries and a few billion dollars to investors' accounts, then it will play out and be abandoned, leaving -- what? Can such an environment survive the release of that much mine tailings, sulfides, fossil fuel exhaust, noise, and kinetic physical presence? Where will the salmon go from there, or the people who fish them? I agree that this ecosystem deserves the regulatory oversight to prevent mining unless it can be guaranteed not to impact existing flora and fauna.

I had thought you would follow the link at the top of the story. I'll give the link to the actual story posted. { Link } Pay special attention to the fact that this road was in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. What was illegal was the fact that the state has jurisdiction over the road under RS 2477 and the federal government decided that they could just do whatever they wanted.

Even though Kane County does indeed own the right of way, I would prefer to see them leave the road a two lane dirt track. We have many here in AZ that would classify as a level 3 road and many that would classify as Level 2. If Kane County decided to maintain it as a level 3 or level 2 road, which would require minimal maintenance, then it would in essence be a high clearance vehicle road. If the federal gov't cannot understand a written law that is only 26 words long, then what recourse are we left with. By the way, the federal gov't is also spending big taxpayer dollars to close these roads even when they do not have the authority to do so.

Kane County has also taken control of other roads too. { Link } I suspect that we will see more of this in the near future.

I agree that if you can volunteer that much time, then you could get a free pass not only to your area, but the entire country. This is something that can be used to give people a sense of ownership of our lands. Put in a couple of hundred hours and get a free nationwide pass. Imagine what could get done. Oh, the possibilities.

Whether you realize it or not, there has been a shift in the thinking of a lot of OHVers. We have been trying to and succeeding in rerouting some of the more sensitive sections of trails. Many areas have been "hardened" to protect areas that have a problem with standing water. This was done to keep these areas from turning into giant mud bogs. There where bypasses closed recently at both the Rubicon Trail and at Fordyce in the Tahoe National Forest. The main problem with us getting some of the more environmentally sensitive areas either rerouted or having work done to protect them is the USFS, the BLM, and the whole process with the gov't. The OHVers have been doing a lot of work on our trails. There is a massive amount of work currently being done on the Rubicon to meet water quality standards. Some of it needs done and some of it is just plain silly. I have no doubt over the next two years that this will be the model for the rest of the country.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Since we are proposing fees in accordance with damage, then let's charge a fee to all hikers to cover the damage they do when they inadvertently start a wild fire. Considering the Rodeo-Chediski fire here in AZ burned nearly 500,000 acres, I would propose a fee of \$10,000 dollars per hiker per year to be put in a fund to help restore the habitat destroyed by those wildfires. According to some, OHV damage is so prevalent that AZ should look like a virtual wasteland. Yet since we have had a normal amount of rain this year where I live, the once brown desert is once again green.

As I alluded to earlier, another and I have been working on something for the last 12 years. We are very close to finally realizing what we wanted to do. This has been kept very quiet until recently. There have been two 10kW Tesla turbines running for almost two years without problems. And recently a 50kW was built and is currently running. Now 50kW is the equivalent of 200 amps at 240 volts. Enough to power the average home. There is also a 50kW turbine currently being adapted to a vehicle. A Tesla works through laminar flow, fluid dynamics, and gaseous expansion. I currently hold the equivalent of a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering through 15 years of hard won experience and the other one working on this holds a Master's in electrical engineering. Now before anyone here starts screaming that a Tesla Turbine doesn't work, then you had better do A LOT of research. One of the first powerplants was built at Niagara Falls with a Tesla Turbine to power NYC. And a version of a Tesla is used in every steam powered power plant in the world. We just found a way to do it very effectively on a smaller scale. We should be doing a full release in the next year, depending on how the whole OHV thing goes. Both of us have agreed that if we cannot have equal and equivalent access then we will keep this for ourselves.

I'm not sure if I know what you mean, but are you threatening OHV users with your last statement? I certainly hope not. And no, I won't SHUT UP either! Guess what dude, your Jeep.... it's an OHV as soon as you drive it off the highway. I'm glad that at 64 you're content to ride a Horse in the forest. (Good luck with that over the next 10 years.) But that doesn't give you any rights to take away mine! _____ #110, who wrote: "No longer can you see wildlife close up from the trails, no longer can you dispersed camp without the loud buzzing of motor vehicles screaming across the desert nearby, or doing "donuts" in the fire roads of the forest. Riding up the sides of the banks of the creeks, and screaming across the forest duff making narrow tracks for natural rain to cause erosion and foul the watershed." Another page of unsubstantiated, generalizations from the Anti-OHV Book! Last Month, I was in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, driving OHV down the trail. I saw wild cattle, Deer and a coyote all within 20 feet of the trail. This summer, I was in the California Desert for a week. I saw snakes, lizards, Hawks, Fox and Kangaroo Rats. So, I have no idea what you mean that you can no longer see wildlife close up from the trails. As for the rest of your generalizations, It's nothing short of unfortunate that OHV users around you are acting irresponsibly. Some of what you post about calls for existing laws to be enforced while others can probably be addressed with some education by your local governmental agencies. Regardless, you have no right to use the examples of a select few to smear and condemn the rest of us for it!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

#7, who wrote: "Tread Lightly" doesn't work when the very purpose of an OHV is speed and thrills." Can you please substantiate this as a fact by linking the source of your information? Or is this just another unsubstantiated Anti-OHV Opinion being stated as a fact? I say this, as the very purpose of OHV's for my family is togetherness and bonding, NOT "speed and thrills" as you attempt to lead everyone to believe. At this { Link }, you will see that Tread Lightly! Inc, has a OHV division to their program. In addition, at this { Link } you will find that the USFS has a TreadLightly! Page in the "Kids OHV" portion of their site. Not to mention, countless numbers of OHV Organizations have embraced and preached the TreadLightly! ideas. I can't see how anyone can say that "Tread Lightly doesn't work". In regards to your quote from "The consumer's guide to effective environmental choices: practical advice from the Union of Concerned Scientists"... Consider the source! Please source your 5000 acre definition of "Wilderness Quality", as I don't find that on the web and it seems that you are referencing the definition of a "Congressionally Designated Wilderness Area". The OP coined the term and then noted that the area contained "proposed wilderness areas". Given such, I deducted that these lands were "Wilderness Quality" on the basis that they contained Nice Ares that "should be Wilderness Areas". If _____, or anyone else is breaking the Law, this is a different story. Given that others here have already posted that illegale OHV activity is taking place, I trust that this is the true cause of the concern. As I have already advised you guys, this is an ENFORCEMENT issue. Limiting access or reducing accessible trails will not address the problem at hand. Irresponsible or uneducated OHV users will still be breaking the law. Education and Enforcement! While you have concern for yourself and your kids while walking on an OHV trail, you express expectation in the same breath that OHV access and areas should be further restricted while the OHV community expands. I cannot advocate your idea as more users on less area leads to increased Safety Issues and more wear on the Areas. (The very concerns that you expressed about yourself.) OHV Users and Lands are already seeing the results of "compression" (more on less). Given that Environmentalist Orgs love to point at these results in the effort to ban the sport entirely, I will fight Compression at every opportunity. While you push for exclusion of OHV on wilderness quality lands and restriction to only designated trails, there is an intermediary step that you are skipping. Enforcement and Education! Education and Enforcement! Deena Ainge#9, who wrote: "We MUST protect the last wild places and OHV use controlled and strict laws enforced or there will be nothing left for anyone." I agree that OHV use should be controlled that that laws need to be enforced. OHV is not for everywhere, and from what ___ indicates, I don't think it is "everywhere" at present. D. Smyth#10, who wrote: "Seems to me there is enough land to go around for all of us if we are willing to give some consideration to the rights of others." I agree! This 'balanced' way of thinking is more my style. But when folks lean left with claims like "ORVs Are Inappropriate for Wilderness-Quality Public Lands", I will lean right. I don't know where you live, but I wouldn't say that any OHV user in this country has "unfettered access" and I question how you can say that. From what _____ indicates, the majority Eastern UT is already closed to OHV use. If this is true, and you truly believe that "there is enough land to go around for all of us", then why are you advocating additional OHV Restrictions here? I can see the enjoyment of walking through

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

the natural quiet of wilderness areas and wilderness study areas and I respect those lands for their allocated purposes. I am aware of your Anti-OHV stance. And if you know me on this forum, I am Pro-OHV advocate with an attempt to achieve Balanced Land Use. I have already addressed your theory that OHV's contribute to the expansion of invasive/exotic weeds. You know that I've proven this to be absurd, yet it's still in your Anti-OHV speech? Can I just call it Propaganda now? If "BLM and Forest Service rangers are spread way too thin" as you report, then this Idea to address a problem that is actually caused by a lack of Enforcement should be an idea to properly staff our governmental agencies. Right? Instead, you've personally endorsed the effort to Restrict Access and Close Trails. While I understand that this endorsement suits your personal agenda, aren't you (as a resident of Utah) at all concerned that the lack of enforcement will still see the same level of "illegal OHV route proliferation" and Use? With all due respects, can you put your personal agenda aside and look at this particular situation from a fresh perspective? "The Bureau of Land Management found 6.6 million acres to qualify under the Wilderness Act criteria, but BLM is allowing ORVs to run all over them on a network of routes. The vehicles should be kept out of these areas until Congress decides for or against wilderness status." I gather that this the same Lands that the OP called "proposed wilderness areas". Sounds like the BLM is taking 6.6 million acres of previous OHV accessible lands and attempting to seek a Congress Designated "Wilderness Area". I question if this is true, as in my area the BLM doesn't make those determinations. The DOI does via the USFWS and the BLM just manages the Rule put down by the USFWS. If you want this area to be closed from OHV use prior to Congress Designating it as a Wilderness Area, you will need to go to court and seek a "Temporary Administrative Closure". Or do you only care enough to post your concerns from the comfort of your keyboard. Consider this folks: If existing laws are not being enforced (as ____ have stated) push for the enforcement. If trails are not marked as closed to OHV (on a map and on the ground), then push for the marking of trails. If trails are marked, then push of the Education of the OHV Users (Governmental Agencies can call on local OHV Clubs, implement a 30 minute Land Use Classes for Children, etc) !!!Heads Up OHV Community!!! In 2000, 49,000 acres of OHV accessible land in California was taken from OHV users with a "Temporary Administrative Closure" pending a 9th Circuit Judges decision. Over 10 years later, on Sep16, 2010 (today) that decision is still pending and the "Temporary Closure" remains in effect.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As an Avid OHV User and "Tread Lightly" advocate, I can't stand this uneducated tone #5, Let me understand: Because OHV has some "bad apples", and because OHV's can "destroy a stream crossing" then "their vehicles deserve to be locked out of wild lands.". WHAT???. #5, who wrote: "The problem with OHV use is that the minority of OHV-ers who are badly behaved can destroy vastly more territory than the same number of badly behaved hikers or equestrians." Ok. The trick is in your statement in "the same number". If you really want to get into a tit-for-tat with Hikers vs OHV, myself and a couple others can provide you with a weeks worth of bathroom reading in articles and references showing the past damages that hikers have done in one foul swoop. But, then both of us recreationalists will walk away with a Black Eye! You already gave us one, so I'm game either way! #5, who wrote: "Three or four of them can destroy a stream crossing or sensitive site in minutes." Do you know that in some areas, riding in streams is not against the law? Refer to my alternate post earlier today. If you would like to constructively address this concern, then you can advocate the construction of access bridges and work with your local governmental agencies. Or do you only care enough to post such concern from the comfort of your keyboard? #5, who wrote: "the fact is that the few bad apples in their bunch are incredibly destructive and, sadly for the others, that's why their vehicles deserve to be locked out of wild lands." IS THAT A FACT???. If that's really a FACT (Cause you said it was), you must have some Science I've never seen. Until you can post said Science, I'll just consider this another unsubstantiated, vague LIE from an Anti OHV advocate! Even with said Science, I'll still question how you go from Bad Apples and Stream Riding to "vehicles deserve to be locked out of wild lands".

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The brutalizing aggressive assaults on mustangs have been highly criticized by AZ Congressman Raul Grijalva in a letter of last October, and a letter of CA Senator Barbara Boxer of February 2010. The public is shun out from witnessing ALL operations, under the guise of "safety concerns". I have seen round ups and am one of those appealing to the BLM to include us, an independent humane observer that is, in their apparently covert operations. The transparency that Don Glenn preached about here in Denver remains yet to be seen. The horrific fatal outcome of the Calico/Tuscarora round ups is yet another evidential reason to doubt the whole conduct of BLM outfit. It is time BLM stops its propaganda and becomes more professional in it's program, which has fundamental problems, that have not been corrected. BLM has failed to take a hard look at the findings and recommendations of the GAO's report and is clearly violating not only the managing of horses, but is based on inhumane and fiscally irresponsible practices. The round ups under the current management regime are only another failure to address the effectiveness for the true protection of the horses, whilst other goals such as cattle, mining and drilling - are the true agenda carried out under the guise of "managing excess horses", whilst there are none of those, only excess lies. (How is the loss of 19 million acres range, assigned by federal law to the horses, justified by BLM?) The American people and Congress have been deceived and betrayed. BLM's outstanding problems and it's promise to integrate "transparency" with an allocated budget of \$ 500'000.00 according to Don Glenn, BLM Nat'l Advisory Board Meeting Denver, of summer 2010, have yet to be explored and corrected. It is time the failings in regards to BLM's systematic removals of entire herds, inaccurately determined HMA's/AML's numbers, more horses in holding than in the wild, no long-range plan that is ethically, morally and fiscally appropriate, and the irresponsible use of taxpayer's dollars to finance the current claims to gather, which are in violation with the 1971 WFRHB Act, are fixed. Despite thousands of calls and letters, BLM ignores the public and Congress. Craig Downer, wildlife ecologist, has repeatedly presented effective long-term solutions to BLM, which are conveniently ignored. BLM Board is not balanced with representatives of both sides, only consists of those whose interests are with BLM's and Salazar's main agenda and ulterior motives. It is time BLM agency is stripped of it's abusive powers and reformed.

I am most concerned that a proposed Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay Alaska, will not only become a threat to a wild, primitive area and its wildlife inhabitants, but a threat to the very way of life of indigeneous tribes who live a subsistent way of life there. Establishing a mine, even with strict Federal and state regulations and oversight is no insurance that some unforeseen future accident--like the recent oil "spill" in the Gulf--will not happen! Wild, pristine environments--the few that are still surviving--should not be ripe for exploitation by a business culture which concerns itself not with the environment and living creatures therein, but with extracting the earth's wealth only for a profit motive. Bristol Bay should be protected and preserved, not mined and exploited.

The Administration must fulfill the promise made int 1976 to withdraw annually the \$150,000,000 deposit for States and tribes to preserve America's historic places and revitalize America's communities through the rehabilitation tax credit--billions of dollars of private investment to create sustainable, liveable communities, like Midtown in Detroit, Michigan.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Policy Recommendations America's Great Outdoors Initiative-American Society of Landscape Architects. Policy Recommendations For President Barack Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative The American Society of Landscape Architects September 27, 2010 In April, 2010, President Barack Obama announced the establishment of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, which seeks to reconnect Americans, particularly young people, with America's landscapes of national significance, great parks, ranches, farms, forests, rivers, and waterways across the country. The Initiative is led by Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson, and Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley. Under their leadership, the Administration has conducted several listening sessions across the country to engage the American people about their ideas on conservation efforts and how to encourage more Americans to use the great outdoors. Landscape architects across the country have participated in these listening sessions and offered their insight on how to best protect our nation's natural and cultural resources. The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) applauds the Obama Administration for establishing the America's Great Outdoors Initiative and for encouraging more Americans to make better use of our great outdoors. As the Administration begins to develop a concrete policy plan to accomplish this goal, ASLA recommends that it include steps to create more urban parks, adequately restore the National Mall, encourage environmental education in grades K-12, and provide adequate funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS). Creating the Next Generation of Urban Parks: ASLA encourages the Obama Administration to establish and support policies and legislation that will create and maintain more urban parks across the country. Urban parks provide critical recreational, environmental and economic benefits to millions of Americans that live, work, and recreate in urban areas. As the nation faces an obesity epidemic, urban parks provide the open space for children and their families to exercise. A recent study demonstrated that the creation of outdoor open space produced a nearly 50% increase in the frequency of physical activity. Further, parks also serve as the "lungs of our communities," by helping clean the air, mitigate carbon emissions, counteract the urban heat island effect, and provide natural filters for stormwater runoff. Also, parks have been proven to increase property values of surrounding homes and businesses and serve as economic catalysts for communities by spurring job creation, and private investment. Finally, parks serve to connect neighborhoods and foster a sense of community pride and cohesion. Frederick Law Olmsted, the founder of landscape architecture in the United States, is perhaps best known for his magnificent urban parks. From Central Park and Prospect Park in New York to Forest Park in St. Louis, Olmsted left these public spaces as his enduring legacy. Today, landscape architects continue to plan and design innovative urban parks across the country, ensuring that each park fits the unique needs of the community in which it is located. Landscape architects look forward to partnering with the government and the private sector in planning and designing the next generation of urban parks for all Americans to enjoy. Strengthening the Land and Water Conservation Fund: ASLA also recommends that steps are taken to strengthen the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which is used to acquire, conserve, and develop public lands and outdoor recreation facilities. Many states and localities access the LWCF as a revenue source to create and rehabilitate much-needed local parks, playgrounds, wildlife habitat, and

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

other open spaces to help strengthen the health and vitality of their citizens. LWCF is primarily funded through the offshore oil and gas drilling receipts. When LWCF was established in 1965, lawmakers intended for the extraction of our nation's offshore energy resources to result in a permanent conservation and recreation benefit to the American people. Unfortunately, royalty revenues from federal offshore drilling leases far exceed funding for the LWCF. ASLA urges the Administration to take steps to ensure full funding of this program that has become so vital to states that want to provide outdoor recreation benefits to their citizens. Protecting and Preserving Cultural Landscapes: ASLA shares Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's vision for protecting and preserving America's important landscapes as outlined in his Treasured Landscapes Initiative. From federal lands and parks like Yosemite National Park to New York City's Central Park, Civil War battlefields and local community parks, gardens and plazas, these culturally- and historically-important spaces "tell America's story." Thus, ASLA urges the Obama Administration and particularly the Department of Interior to provide adequate funding for the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS), a National Park Service program which documents important landscapes across the country and stores them in the Library of Congress for future use and enjoyment. Since its inception in 2000, HALS has not received a dedicated budget and therefore has been unable to fulfill its mission of documenting treasured landscapes throughout the nation. Securing adequate funding for HALS will ensure the program's ability to provide lasting records of these special places that may be threatened by neglect, sprawl, invasive plants and other negative impacts. Further, HALS' measured drawings, written history, large-format photography and other baseline documentation assist with compliance of the Historic Preservation Act in federal undertakings, and are critical in facility management of our many national parks and other federal lands. Finally, both the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) consistently receive dedicated budgets to document important buildings and engineering structures. It is only fitting that their sister program, HALS, receives similar treatment. Restore Our National Mall: ASLA recommends that the Obama Administration take steps to restore and properly maintain the National Mall. Any national agenda about re-connecting Americans with the outdoors must include repairing the most important outdoor space that Americans use - the National Mall. The National Mall is perhaps the most significant and resonant landscape in the United States. Also known as "America's Front Yard," the National Mall has served as a stage for history, a statement of accessibility to government, a verdant setting for many significant national treasures, and, not incidentally, a place for people from all over the world to gather to express the freedoms and principles that are at the core of this nation. However, because of lack of funding, our National Mall is in a grave state of disrepair, with miles of barren landscape framed by dying trees and cracked sidewalks. The Capitol reflecting pool is so polluted that the National Park Service may drain the water to protect the waterfowl. Even more pressing, parts of the Jefferson Memorial are sinking into the Potomac River. While some funding has been provided to deal with some of these immediate concerns, sustained efforts must continue in order to address the serious backlog of maintenance projects for the National Mall. More than 25 million people visit the Mall each year - more than Yellowstone, Yosemite, and the Grand Canyon combined. This fact alone demonstrates the significance and importance of this great outdoor space to the American public. It also reveals the constant and considerable strain placed on this historically-significant

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

landscape. It is therefore imperative that the Obama Administration continue to work to take serious steps to restore and maintain this revered landscape in a fitting manner. Re-connecting Youth with the Outdoors: Finally, ASLA encourages the Obama Administration to support policies and legislation that would facilitate environmental education and encourage America's youth to reconnect with the outdoors. As our nation and the world are faced with serious environmental issues, including poor air quality increased carbon emissions, polluted waterways, and dwindling natural resources, it is paramount that we prepare the next generation of citizens to respond to these pressing issues. Research has shown that students who have access to environmental education are more likely to understand the importance of conservation and environmental stewardship. Further, environmental education provides the critical tools for establishing 21st century "green workforce." Currently, a few model states like Maryland and Colorado have school systems that include environmental education as part of their core curriculum. However, a national policy could encourage and assist all states to develop environmental literacy plans, train teachers and make the outdoors an extension of the classroom experience. Landscape architects are committed stewards of the land and seek to help the next generation of Americans share their commitment to protecting and preserving our natural resources. ASLA believes that creating sound environmental literacy plans throughout K-12 education is the first and much-needed step in achieving this goal.

Protecting Bristol Bay is good for people, business, salmon and wildlife. The Bristol Bay region is a treasure - both locally and internationally. The tens of millions of salmon that return to the region every year provide food for people and wildlife, pump \$445 million into the local economy each year and provide almost 5,000 full time jobs and as many as 12,000 seasonal jobs. Thousands of Alaska native people live in this region and depend on clean, healthy rivers for their survival. Hundreds of local Alaskans own small businesses that depend on a healthy watershed to thrive. Thousands of people visit this area for the world class hunting, fishing and recreation opportunities it provides. One excellent program that I've had the privileged of working on that supports a healthy local economy and watershed is the annual Bristol Bay Fly Fishing and Guide Academy. Its a week long conservation and outdoor education course that teaches local Alaska Native youth the ins and outs of fly fishing, owning/operating a fly-fishing business in Bristol Bay, river ecology and much more. In the long term it prepares students for local sustainable jobs based on healthy watersheds. You can learn more about it here: { Link } The proposed Pebble Mine would put all of this at risk. As an Alaskan, I urge the Administration to do whatever is in their power to protect this world-class region and stop the proposed Pebble mine.

Great idea on the taxing of planes who fly over national parks. I say the money from those taxes should go to national park restorations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Get youth outdoors and "getting to know" local wild spaces through creative arts.. Taking responsibility for the global environment can be overwhelming to youth - but caring about a local greenspace (park, garden, school yard, etc.) is not. Tangible, heart-based connections with nature can be created if children and youth just spend more time in a local greenspace. Even better, they can use creative arts like photography, art, writing, video, etc. to enhance their understanding of local nature. Canadian artist Robert Bateman's Get to Know Program (www.gettoknow.ca) is based on this concept. The program's signature initiative is the Get to Know Contest, which invites youth age 5-18 to submit art, writing, photography and videos based on first-hand experiences in nature. Its "Virtual Hikes", "Natural Treasure" and "Best Practices" resources introduce youth to local wildspaces and help teachers incorporate nature into the curriculum. Some resources are location-specific, but more locations are being added over time. With partners like the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Wildlife Federation, the program is popular due to its simple philosophy: Something as simple as allowing youth to just be outdoors and connect with local animals and plants, even just for a few minutes a day, through arts or simple observation, can serve as a foundation to them becoming healthy, active adults and engaged citizens who will passionately care about the environment.

Migration Highways through the Madison Valley, Montana. Delineate the centuries old migration highways that animals use to migrate/disperse in and out of Yellowstone National Park through the Madison Valley, MT Hwy 87 and US Hwy 287. Erect effective wildlife crossing signs, reduce speed limits, paint the road with wildlife crossing messaging, erect point of interest signs for travelers to see where these corridors are and what animals use them and where they are going and coming from, create an educational component where school children study these corridors and the wildlife in their area and they develop ways to protect them while crossing the roads, they make suggestions on how to reduce the astronomical number of vertebrates killed on US highways every day (one million).

More Funding for Conservation. In areas with significant population growth and rapid urbanization, land and easement acquisitions are often the only way to achieve conservation and recreation goals. More LWCF funding is needed to fund land acquisition. Furthermore, now is the time to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Paul Sanford Director of Stewardship and Public Policy American Canoe Association www.americancanoe.org

Change the Paradigm on the Use of Public Lands. Complete the transition away from our historic emphasis on resource extraction (minerals, fossil fuels, trees and water) towards a greater emphasis on protecting the human experiences that occur on our lands and waters. Continue to allow necessary resource extraction where appropriate, but let the human experience drive your management decisions. The experiential value of lands and waters must given greater, or at least equal weight as resource extraction. This shift will contribute to a more sustainable economy. Director of Stewardship and Public Policy American Canoe Association www.americancanoe.org

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Restore the Full Jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. Make a national commitment to clean water by restoring the full jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. Pass Congressman James Oberstar's House Bill 5088, the "America's Commitment to Clean Water Act," and restore protections for the streams and wetlands that are the source of drinking water for more than half of America's citizens. Director of Stewardship and Public Policy American Canoe Association www.americancanoe.org

Provide Incentives for Conservation. We need to provide incentives to farmers and others to reduce nutrient discharges and help eliminate the dead zones in the rivers, lakes, bays and coastal areas of the U.S. Paul Sanford Director of Stewardship and Public Policy American Canoe Association www.americancanoe.org

Navigability. The availability of many rivers and streams for floating and other water-based recreation often turns on whether those streams are considered "navigable." Boaters and anglers need clearer guidance from federal and state governments on stream navigability, and more support from governments when using streams they have a legal right to access. Paul Sanford Director of Stewardship and Public Policy American Canoe Association www.americancanoe.org

I think this is a great idea! However, let's not get into debt over it. Look what Lee Iacoco(sp?) did for the Statue of Liberty! Americans should be proud of their "front yard" and be willing to donate a little to help maintain it, BUT NOT WITH GOVERNMENT FUNDING! Remember "many little hands make great work". Just think, if each American donated one dollar, that would be over ~\$200 million not counting those under 18 years of age who could very well donate.

The National Wildlife Refuge System was born March 14, 1903 when Theodore Roosevelt's Executive Order established the 5.5-acre Pelican Island Refuge near Sebastian, Florida. Now at 150 million acres, the National Wildlife Refuge System has clearly outgrown its position as a mere "program," one of the many "programs" of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The time is now for the National Wildlife Refuge System to stand on its own and be recognized as the most significant system of lands and waters in the world dedicated exclusively for wildlife. Visit the web site of the non profit Blue Goose Alliance (bluegoosealliance.org) for in depth information regarding its mission: "To Promote The Establishment Of The National Wildlife Refuge Service As A Separate Agency Within the U.S. Department Of The Interior."

web access to trail maps. Set up a website that catalogs wilderness trails and non-wilderness public land trails for hikers, horseback riders, mountain bikers and ATV users. (The ATV trails are already well defined by BLM's Resource Management Plans, but the other uses...not so much!). Enable the public to search for trails by locality and use type and download maps and trail descriptions.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Economic Advantages of Wilderness. Public lands designated as wilderness bring value to communities and enrich our lives. These values include clean air, protected watersheds, serene viewsheds, wildlife habitat and opportunities for recreation. The economics of wilderness are described in the 2005 book, "The Multiple Values of Wilderness," published by Venture Publishing. Stake-holders involved in the public lands debates are keenly aware of the value that mineral extraction brings to local communities, but rarely value the benefits to a community that wilderness brings. In my community, wilderness is often thought of as a "taking" from the American people, rather than "giving" to ourselves and future generations. The federal government could be helpful by providing a discussion of the economic benefits of wilderness areas on the DOI webpage and in other media.

I promote this idea. But, OHV use is just one of many user groups. Its my observation that the OHV users are the most vocal and therefore, OHV users are not in danger of losing their rights to existing, designated trails on public lands. OHV riders' appetite for new trails appears insatiable. There should be some land preserved as wilderness for its intrinsic value. Future generations of families will be thankful for that, just as we are thankful to our predecessors for preserving our national parks.

_____, You should indeed get out from behind your desk and see the real world. Fees in general are an abomination. Whether it be in business or government they are simply either another tax or a price increase. You cite toll roads. Toll roads are usually an enhanced travel option that is often implemented by private entities. There is usually an alternative tax funded travel option. Not so with the fee program. It's a government agency money grab with no alternative. Let's not hide behind the names. A Fee is a TAX. And these taxes are being implemented and raised by non-elected officials who have no accountability to the voting public. That is just about as close to "taxation without representation" that you can get. Your facts are incorrect and your statements turn a blind eye to the reality of poor administration by the USFS. This government agency will assess a fee wherever they think they can get away with it. Even on unimproved sites. It is a fact that the USFS spent MORE to administer the test fee program than it brought in. Here is a great example for you. My empty boat trailer was ticketed for being parked in a trail head parking lot. Why would I park an empty boat trailer in a trail head parking lot? Because before the fee program that lot was where we were told by the Forest Service to park the trailers (for 25 years). After Fee implementation, Fee happy rangers conveniently forgot that this was a general purpose lot and that they had done nothing to improve it in over 35 years and ticketed anything that had wheels. Needless to say I refused and the USFS decided not to pursue such an idiotic tactic that would have made them look even more foolish. The fact remains that the Fee program is a deeply flawed piece of legislation. Finally, you propose that "volunteers" get a free pass. I would gladly volunteer to help on forest conservation projects but I have a job and have to work to feed my family and PAY MY TAXES. I don't have time to volunteer. So you want those who have the time but don't pay taxes to get a free walk in the forest? Why not drop the TAX increases masquerading as FEEs and give us all a free walk in the forest??

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in NE MN is a beautiful, peaceful, place - but at over 1 million acres, very few people are able to enjoy it. If you are elderly, too young, too busy, or too poor to make the trip, you can't enjoy the "wilderness." You can enjoy the lands surrounding it - the also beautiful Superior National Forest and the MN State Forests - if you have clear skies overhead, beautiful lakes, wildlife around you, you should be content. This restrictive designation of "wilderness" is divisive - it pits motorized vs. non-motorized forest users against one another. And it should not. Only extremists are one or the other. Most people, like my friends and family, enjoy the forest in many ways -- snow-shoeing, snowmobiling; paddling, motorboating, or tubing; hiking, biking, riding horses, or ATViing. We are not one dimensional earth-destroying motorheads. We love being outdoors - we just use a motorboat or an ATV to get where we're going sometimes. We are ALL motorized users. We just stop at different points. I love the BWCA wilderness - but it's big enough!

As a Utah resident, I support and applaud this idea. I've posted some ideas relating to OHV problems and apparently incurred the wrath of some OHV users. However, I've seen the problems first-hand. Anyone paying attention can see the progression over the years of continuing, illegal OHV route proliferation and the resulting soil erosion, expansion of invasive/exotic weeds, visual scarring, and habitat fragmentation. And anyone who spends much time in rural Utah knows that BLM and Forest Service rangers are spread way too thin, and the odds of OHV scofflaws getting caught are very low. In addition, the dominant political culture and most politicians in Utah are so far to the extreme right wing that they make Bush and Cheney look like tree-hugging liberals by comparison. These Utah politicians profess to love the land and be good stewards, while they push OHV recreation virtually everywhere, and appear largely oblivious to the many problems and conflicts those OHV uses can cause. By the way, I'm not averse to OHVs per se, so long as they are used responsibly. I've ridden both dirt bikes and ATVs on primitive routes, but I stay on those routes.

Actually state and federal levels are engaged in current planning to kill large numbers of wolves regardless of ESA designation. To the wolves one can add America's wild horses, the Yellowstone bison, bears, the rare Florida panther, the even more rare ocelot and so much more. Stewardship is not an option going forward, but rather an imperative. If we can leave no room for other lives and voices, we will ultimately find none for ourselves.

And behind ranching is banking that loans them the money. Without the ESA many species would have already joined the Passenger Pigeon and the Carolina Parakeet. If the majority of people working in agencies are good environmentalists and listen to good science rather than suppressing it, we can do better. There are reasons for words like environment and ecoSYSTEM. When we ignore the whole and interconnected nature of all things we end up destroyers, even when we mean well. In the above case, it is the prairie ecosystem that was essentially wiped out in an earlier era and now suffers abuse even in the effort to bring something back.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Regarding comment 1: One does not usually treat an addiction by feeding it. Wildlife, conservation, etc. were largely absent from the national election debates. Supposedly, the AGO itself is an effort at remedy. True leadership is a valuable and scarce commodity. We could use some more.

How did nature ever manage without logging? Much of the revised view of forest science has to do with trying to avoid the effects of past management. Sometimes old growth forest can and should be allowed to get along without the lumber business. Where management is more active, it should not become an excuse to clear cut. Timber interests are not all that excited about thinning diseased and dead trees. The author's idea sounds nice enough, but could as easily serve as speech writing for the head of a timber company. Bottom line is to honestly respect the ecosystem and the resource, something that seems hard to come by.

Having large visible permits on snowmobiles will probably not reduce the incursions in to wilderness by the willing participants. I find that much of our boundaries are poorly marked and would help in reducing those incursions. Simply putting a sticker on a sled that will likely be covered with snow or hard to see anyway is not the answer. Education and enforcement of the boundaries will do more for the stopping of the suggested violations than creating another government cost with this additional label. I just hiked and signed a local wilderness boundary that has common encroachment and the damage I seen to any of the land was from the hikers. Trash and trail issues had made more of an impact than any snowmobile from winter use. Find a way to increase education and enforcement of existing area and you'll get the support.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have to chime in again for the benefit of _____ and others: "currently 96% of the undeveloped land in America is developed and no longer functions as habitat." Sorry, but you contradict yourself. Of all of America, only about 10-15% is "developed". Another 25% or so is agricultural. This leaves about 60% as truly undeveloped. Much of the ag land, and some of the suburban development functions as some sort of wildlife habitat, as has been pointed out by other writers. Some of that undeveloped land is commercial timber land, which also functions as wildlife habitat, even though some of you would call that "developed". Easier than looking out a plane window is cruising google earth. Vast areas, hundreds of millions of acres, are relatively undeveloped and are great wildlife habitat. Managed forests, with controlled logging, actually provide better habitat with more habitat diversity than unmanaged. I work in the northeast, and the Adirondack park is an excellent bad example. This is 2 million acres of "forever wild", and has not been logged in over 100 years. The forests are unhealthy, lacking diversity. Oh, yes, there are plenty of large trees, but fewer tree species, and a lack of the young forest habitat needed by a large majority of wildlife species at some stage in their life. Western forests are in worse shape with high risk of conflagration in overcrowded, overmature forests. This is from lack of management, lack of harvesting, and lack of smaller scale, lighter intensity fires. By leaving it alone and putting out fires for 100 years, now the fires are too hot and too large to be beneficial. Take a google earth tour of Yellowstone Park. After 23 years, much of it is still gray ash. Million acre fires are not "nature's groovy way of rejuvenating the forest". As others have said, rural folks love wildlife, and understand that balance better than urban folks. The fact that we make a living close to the land gives us an appreciation. What we do as foresters (myself), loggers, farmers and other rural workers does have an effect but it is not always negative. Just to make another correction, we probably have more trees than 200 years ago, but not 400 years ago. Much of the east was cleared for farming, and a lot of that has regrown to trees. Most of the regrowth is natural forest, but some replanted. Much of the west is more stocked with trees than 200 or 400 years ago, due to the lack of fire over the last 100 years. Perhaps that makes up for the cleared land in the east, I'm not sure. But that is besides the point. We aren't going back in time to "pre-Mayflower" unless we all want to move back to Europe or wherever. And you don't because you could have but didn't. So lets make the best of it here. The air and water are a lot cleaner than 40 years ago, we have done a lot to clean up "the environment". But we did it by moving our dirty manufacturing to places like China and Romania, so worldwide, there are places getting worse. By providing more of our raw materials: food, fiber and energy, here, where we frankly will do a better job of it, we are helping the worldwide environment. And we have to maintain a strong economy to be able to afford a clean environment. Go ask someone in Romania if they really care about air pollution from smelting. They care about having food for another day.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

New Forest System Land Management Planning Rule. From..... Blue Ribbon Coalition Comment

We are concerned that the NOI strays far from the core purpose for revisiting the agency's planning regulations. In fact, the NOI threatens to create new, undefined goals and criteria which will exacerbate, not resolve, the planning gridlock accelerating through the agency. It is sadly ironic that the agency remains mired in a decades-long effort to promulgate valid rules intended to make more streamlined the content of Forest Plans and more efficient the process by which they are created. At the risk of belaboring the obvious, it should not take a Forest 10, 8 or even 5 years to revise Forest Plans, which are supposedly obsolete in 10 years. The NOI does not attempt to borrow from the best ideas of prior efforts, but instead threatens a new vision fraught with uncertainty. We urge the Forest Service to steer this effort back to its necessary focus- (1) to fill the current regulatory void; and (2) to redouble proper focus on the primary goals of efficiency and expediency in the Forest planning process.

C. Background The National Forests were originally set aside to provide a continuous supply of timber and for the protection of water sources for local communities and agricultural needs. Later, through the adoption of the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, Congress determined that the forests should be "administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes," which purposes were declared to be "supplemental to, but not in derogation of" the original purposes. (16 U.S.C. §528) The Forest Service is required to "use a systematic interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences" in its land and resource plans. The Forest Service must assure that the plans "provide for multiple use and sustained yield of the products and services obtained there from in accordance with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960, and, in particular, include coordination of outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish, and wilderness." The plans must "determine forest management systems, harvesting levels [of timber] and procedures" based upon all of the uses mentioned above, the definitions of multiple use and sustained yield as laid out in the law, and the availability of lands and their suitability for resource management. (16 U.S.C. §1604(b) and (e)) The regulations of the Forest Service have defined fundamental principles of planning for the Forest Service's natural resources. (36 C.F.R. §219.3) Land management planning is an adaptive management process that includes social, economic, and ecological evaluation; plan development, plan amendment, and plan revision; and monitoring. The overall aim of planning is to produce responsible land management for the National Forest System based on useful and current information and guidance. Land management planning guides the Forest Service in fulfilling its responsibilities for stewardship of the National Forest System to best meet the needs of the American people. (36 C.F.R. §219.3(a)) The Forest Service is also required, as part of the development and interpretation of information for plans, to consider and incorporate the concept and conditions of sustainability. "Sustainability...has three interrelated and interdependent elements: social, economic, and ecological." (36 C.F.R. §219.10) The overall goal of the social and economic elements of sustainability is to contribute to sustaining social and economic systems within the planning area. To understand the social and economic contributions that National Forest System lands presently make, and may make in the future, the [Forest Service] must evaluate relevant economic and social conditions and trends as appropriate during plan development... (36 C.F.R. §219.10 (a)) Important to interpreting this guidance is a proper understanding of the multi-

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

layered nature of forest planning. There are at least three tiers to this process, which have been described as "existing at the national, regional and local levels." *Citizens for Better Forestry v. U.S. Dept. of Agric.*, 632 F.Supp.2d 968, 970 (N.D. Cal. 2009). The third, project-level of this hierarchy is that which most directly has concrete impacts on specific sites and forest resources, and must necessarily contain adequate site-specific analysis to disclose the range of proposed options and justify the agency's chosen course of action. For the planning process to be even moderately efficient, it is therefore necessary that each level removed from the project level must be more general, less detailed, and less voluminous so that it may be completed more quickly and without inappropriately diverting human, financial and other resources to the planning effort.

D. The Planning Regulations must be efficient and yield timely results. The NOI threatens an excessively broad and unnecessarily complex planning framework. Indeed, a framework more unwieldy than that presented by the 1998/2000 regulations or either of the approaches rejected by the *Citizens for Better Forestry* courts. The planning process must function and advance the agency's mission which requires that management activity actually affect and conserve Forest System resources. We fear we are poised on the brink of creating a fatuously self-indulgent planning process even further removed from the ground. Our planning vision should advance the interests of a broad individual and ideological spectrum. Put differently, it is not tilted toward allocating resources toward one form of use or another. Those decisions are properly made in project level analysis, or at least in the generation of each Forest Plan. There is only one special interest class that benefits from planning gridlock. The ideological extremists, who seek to disown the unavoidable impacts that humans have on the environment. We are often perceived to be (albeit inaccurately) playing a role in an allocation debate such as "Wilderness" vs. "multiple-use", but in the current process the debate should be between "use" vs. "ideological preservation." Planning regulations that prevent timely completion of any plans serve only the perspective of those who would have minimal, if any, on-the-ground human use of the Forest System. We reach out to truly-interested officials, agency employees, organizations and individuals to stand up in this process for active and continuing use of the Forest System. Whatever our differences, we face a common foe who would seize this point in our bureaucratic "evolution" to transform the visions of Pinchot, Roosevelt, and Leopold into a Forest System that excludes meaningful use. The core vision is valid, only its implementation need be improved. We need incremental change to existing planning frameworks, not a dramatic new vision that only threatens continuing judicial skepticism.

E. The importance the USFS has in providing a diverse range of recreation experiences for a wide range of visiting public should be emphasized in the planning regulations. In the materials we reviewed regarding the planning rule revision we noted that the agency may be operating on the assumption that recreation opportunity is being lost because lands are being degraded or used in an unsustainable way. Such a rationale is often cited to support limitations on recreational use and for more land being "protected," or otherwise made off limits for recreation. However, this assumption is not consistent with the facts, at least for USFS-managed lands. The agency's own planning activities results in much more loss of recreation opportunity than any other factor. The overriding reason for loss of recreation opportunities is the yearly additions of the primitive recreation classifications, the thousands of miles of roads and trails that were closed via the agency's travel management rule, and the many miles and areas closed via other site-specific planning.

1. A diverse range of recreational

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

activities should be identified as one of the key "Ecosystem Services" that Land Use Plans should address. According to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, the popularity and importance to USFS visitors of off-highway vehicle and snowmobile recreation has drastically increased in recent years. Ditto for mountain bike and equestrian use. Conversely, the amount of USFS lands available for motorized, mountain bike and, on some Forests, even equestrian trails, have been reduced via legislation, implementation of Forest Plans and site-specific recreation plans. Therefore, there is a need to emphasize a diverse range of recreation in the planning regulations.

2. Please identify the need to emphasize a diverse range of trail-based recreation as a formal planning issue and develop at least one alternative where the planning regulations identify motorized and non-motorized recreation as a key ecosystem service and provides direction to enhance and expand opportunities for these popular activities.

3. Loss of recreation opportunity must be properly analyzed in the DEIS/EIS and addressed in the final planning regulations.

4. All of the Alternatives should reflect, and at least one Alternative should enhance the importance given to recreation in the agency's multiple use sustained yield (MUSY) mandate contained in NFMA.

F. The socio-political and economic importance of multiple use sustained yield (MUSY) must be reflected in the planning regulations.

1. All Alternatives should include a complete analysis of the history of the MUSY Act and its socio-political importance to states with large areas of federally managed lands.

2. The issue of "cumulative loss of multiple use sustained yield management" should be identified as a formal planning issue and brought forward for analysis. Each year more and more USFS lands are removed from multiple use management. Past planning activities and litigation have significantly expanded preservation oriented management and significantly reduced areas available for multiple use. The reduction of MUSY lands has been identified by many states and counties as a key problem affecting the health and economic well-being of local communities. MUSY is extremely important to states with large areas of federally managed lands. There is a reason Congress embedded MUSY in the NFMA; it is because management of federal lands directly impacts the lives and livelihoods of nearby residents.

3. At least one alternative should include planning direction to enhance multiple use sustained yield management. Both the Forest Service and the BLM are required to manage the lands under their jurisdiction pursuant to the principles of "multiple use" and "sustained yield." These terms have been defined within the provisions of FLPMA for the BLM and within the provisions of the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 for the Forest Service. Both definitions are lengthy and worthy of a detailed narrative of the history and the importance of MUSY in the DEIS. The new planning rule should re-emphasize that MUSY management is to be considered in the context of the best combination of land uses that meet the present and future needs of the nation with respect to "recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural, scenic, scientific, and historical values." The term "sustained yield" is defined to mean the achievement of "a high level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the public lands consistent with multiple use." (43 U.S.C. §1702(h)). See also 16 U.S.C. §531 (b)).

G. The agency's stated focus on "Restoration" must be defined and carefully considered.

1. It is vital that the agency clearly define what it means by restoration. The agency must also disclose the effects of this new focus on how the agency will develop and revise land use plans.

2. Restoration, or any other agency initiated planning focus must not override the MUSY mandate. The stated focus on restoration in the Notice of Intent is of great concern to

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

BRC's members. Restoration is not listed as a multiple-use objective in either MUSYA or the NFMA. Other NFMA provisions confirm that MUSY is to be the overriding directive for the management of National Forests. The agency must not substitute its MUSY mandate with any other focus or initiative, including restoration. H. Planning regulations should focus on procedures for developing, amending and revising land management plans, not on policy

1. The agency should reevaluate the "Substantive Principles" and remove any that do not specifically address procedures for developing, amending and revising land management plans. The NOI states that this new rule will "consist of procedures for developing, amending, and revising land management plans" and it lists several "principles" that could be used in the development of a new planning rule. Note that none of the "Substantive Principles" have anything to do with procedures for developing land management plans, and only one of the "Process Principles" directly address the planning process. The agency says its existing planning regulations are costly, complex, and procedurally burdensome. We believe this is because the previous regulations attempted to address policy instead of planning procedures. Congress sets the policies for management of federal lands, and administrative agencies must act within those legislative limits. The new planning regulations should focus exclusively on planning procedures, not policy direction.
2. Planning regulations should avoid setting management direction. The new planning regulations should stress that Congress prohibited national level planning, specifically noting that "there is not to be a national land management prescription" in the NFMA or implementing rule due to the wide range of biological and socio-economic conditions in the national forests. (S. Rep. No. 94-893, at 26 and 35, reprinted in 1976 U.S.C.C.A.N. 6685, 6694.)
3. Regulations should clearly state that Forest Plans should be limited to:
 1. Establishment of forest multiple-use goals and objectives, 36 CFR 219.11(b);
 2. Establishment of forest-wide management requirements (standards and guidelines) to fulfill the requirements of 16 USC 1604 applying to future activities (resource integration requirements, 36 CFR 219.13 to 219.27);
 3. Establishment of management areas and management area direction (management area prescriptions) applying to future activities in that management area (resource integration and minimum specific management requirements), 36 CFR 219.11(c);
 4. Designation of suitable timber land (16 USC 1604(k) and 36 CFR 219.14) and establishment of allowable timber sale quantity (16 USC 1611 and 36 CFR 219.16);
 5. Non-wilderness allocations or wilderness recommendations where 36 CFR 219.17 applies; and
 6. Establishment of monitoring and evaluation requirements, 36 CFR 219.11(d).
4. The planning directives should ensure that planning guidance is based on the 10 key legislative mandates from Congress:
 - * Forest Service Organic Administration Act (Act of June 4, 1897) (16 U.S.C. §§ 1. 473-478, 479-482 and 551, June 4, 1897, as amended 1905, 1911, 1925, 1962, 1964, 1968, and 1976).
 - * Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 (Act of June 12, 1960) (P.L. 86-517; 2. 16 U.S.C. §§ 528-531).
 - * National Forest Management Act of 1976 (Act of October 22, 1976) (P.L. 94- 3. 588; 16 U.S.C. §§ 1600-1614, August 17, 1974, as amended 1976, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1988 and 1990).
 - * Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (Act of July 1, 1978) (P.L. 95-313; 16 4. U.S.C. §§ 2101-2111, July 1, 1978, as amended 1990, 1991, 1992, 1996 and 2008).
 - * Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978 (Act of June 5. 30, 1978) (P.L. 95-307, as amended by P.L. 100-521, Forest Ecosystems and Atmospheric Pollution Research Act of 1988, Section 3 (c), and as amended by P.L. 101-624, Food Agriculture
 - * Food Conservation and

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) (P.L. 110-234) (Title VIII - Forestry and Title IX - Energy) * Foreign Operation Appropriations Act of 1978 (Act of November 5, 1990) 7. (P.L. 101-513, 104 Stat. 2070; 16 §§ U.S.C. 4501 note, 4501, 4502, 4503, 4503a to 4503d, 4504, 4505, 1641, 1643, 2101, 2109). * National Environmental Policy Act (Act of January 1, 1970) (P.L. 91-190; 8. 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4347). * Endangered Species Act (Act of December 28, 1973) (16 USC 1531-36, 1538- 9. 40).

I. There is a need to streamline the planning and appeal process We agree with the agency's assessment that current regulations are costly, complex, and procedurally burdensome. There is a need to reduce the agency's costs and delays associated with administrative appeals. However, many of the "Substantive Principles" are likely to exacerbate this problem. It seems reasonable to ask: are we repeating our past mistakes? It was interesting to learn that even back in the 1970s there was a concern that professional foresters, not the federal courts, should manage National Forests. It was surprising to learn that Senator Hubert Humphrey submitted a report to Congress stating that the NFMA is "designed to get the practice of forestry out of the courts and back to the forests." 122 Cong. Rec. 33835 (Sept. 30, 1976). It is unfortunate that the courts are still managing much of our Forests.

1. The new rule should attempt to streamline the planning and appeal process. The analysis should disclose NFMA's legislative intent in this regard, and perhaps seek clarification from Congress regarding what level of environmental analysis is appropriate for both programmatic and site specific planning.
2. The issue of cost and complexity of planning should be brought forward for analysis and incorporated as a formal planning issue.
3. At least one alternative should be formulated that streamlines and simplifies the planning process.
4. The agency may also wish to ask Congress to clarify its intent on both policy and requirements for environmental analysis.

J. There is a need to clarify the distinction between programmatic and site-specific planning as well as what level of environmental analysis is required for both The proper relationship between Forest Planning and project planning is a topic of frequent discussion. In the past, the agency asserted the "programmatic" or "general" nature of Forest Plans. However, recently completed Forest Plans blur the line, viewing subsequent site-specific processes as mere reiteration or "implementation" of the Forest Plan decisions. In addition, the agency seems to suffer from a multiple and often redundant requirements for environmental analysis. Although not perfect, we supported much of the (attempted) flexibility contained in the 2008 planning rule.

1. All alternatives should clarify the distinction between programmatic and site specific planning and at least attempt to describe what level of environmental analysis is required in each.
2. We support Forest Plans that are strategic as opposed to prescriptive.
3. The new rule should address only forest plan-level issues in Part 219, and leave project-level considerations to the Forest Service Directive System. See 67 Fed. Reg. 72773-75, 72791.

K. Comment regarding state and local government coordination during the Forest Planning process

1. New planning regulations should support and enhance close coordination with state and local governments All of the alternatives should include direction to involve local governments in the planning process. Local governments, because they are elected by those who are most directly effected by the agency's land use planning, often adopt plans, programs and policies to directly influence federal natural resource and land planning efforts. Current planning regulations require the agency to coordinate "with the land and resource management planning processes of State and local governments." (16 U.S.C. §1604(a)) Current regulations state that "the Responsible [Forest Service] Official must provide

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

opportunities for the coordination of Forest Service planning efforts...with those of other resource management agencies." Current regulations also provide that "the Responsible Official should seek assistance, where appropriate, from other state and local governments...to help address management issues or opportunities." (36 C.F.R. 219.9) In addition, the agency is required to "discuss any inconsistency" between the proposed plan's provision and "any approved State or local plan and laws." Further, if any inconsistencies exist, the plan must "describe the extent to which the [Forest Service] would reconcile its proposed action with the plan or law." (40 C.F.R. §1506.2(d)) Recently, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has supported an invitation to state and local governments to become a quasi-cooperating agency in the preparation of federal land and natural resource management plans and associated EISs. The invitation to become a cooperating agency is not based on the fact that state or local government are entities that may be affected by the outcome of the process. Instead, cooperating agency status is specifically based upon state or local government's position as professionals having jurisdiction by law in the planning area or professionals holding special expertise in an issue that will be addressed in the analysis or decision (memo from _____, Chairman of the CEQ). Of course, this quasi-cooperating agency status does not relieve the federal agency of the responsibility as the decision-maker, and does not guarantee a decision that the cooperating agency may necessarily favor. Cooperating agency status does allow the cooperators to participate in the scoping process, the inventory of data and analysis of current situation process, the preparation of alternatives, the impact analysis, and in the preparation of the draft and final EISs. This existing guidance should be incorporated in the new planning rule.

L. It is unwise to "proactively address climate change" in the planning regulations. 1. Please remove climate change as a "Substantive Principle" The agency's own Climate Change Considerations in Project Level NEPA Analysis (January 13, 2009) states that the effects of climate change are unknown, will vary regionally and will range the gamut from increased droughts to increased flooding. The document states: "It is not currently feasible to quantify the indirect effects of individual or multiple projects on global climate change and therefore determining significant effects of those projects or project alternatives on global climate change cannot be made at any scale." it also states; "Complete quantifiable information about project effects on global climate change is not currently possible and is not essential to a reasoned choice among alternatives." The only thing that is certain is the climate will change from its current and/or its historical condition. Effects of climate change are unknown. Impacts to the climate from human activities occurring on the forest, as well as the impacts of climate change on the forest cannot be made at any scale. Please remove this issue from consideration as a "Substantive Principle." In addition, incorporating "climate change" into planning will be redundant. For example, the NOI says Responsible officials will also need flexibility to be able to adjust plan objectives and requirements where there are circumstances outside of agency control: For example, where increasing water temperatures resulting from climate change make it impossible to maintain a sensitive fish species in its native habitat. However, such "flexibility" is already embedded in land use planning, and specific management prescriptions, standards and guidelines already address important issues such as "increasing water temperature." Indeed, existing Forest Plans contain very specific guidance regarding the monitoring of and management for sensitive habitats, including aquatic habitat. 2. The agency's planning regulations should discourage utilizing data

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Current planning directs planners to draw on existing "synthesis and assessments" prepared by the IPCC. As recent media reports indicate, this data contains information that was not properly "peer reviewed" and some countries have even expressed a "vote of no confidence" in IPCC's data. Given the issue of climate change is controversial, and could conceivably affect a wide range of agency planning activities, the new planning regulations should require independent verification of any data from the IPCC. 3. Should the agency ignore our request and include direction to include climate change as a Substantive Principle, the agency should include an alternative that attempts to sequester carbon via aggressive vegetation management. As noted above, climate science is too "young" to be effectively incorporated into the planning regulations at this time. However, should the agency attempt to do so, we recommend an alternative that directs aggressive approach to terrestrial carbon sequestration. The "sink" of carbon sequestration in forests and wood products may help to offset sources of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, such as deforestation, forest fires, and fossil fuel emissions. Aggressive forest health practices can increase the ability of forests to sequester atmospheric carbon while enhancing other ecosystem services, such as improving soil and water quality by avoiding "fatal" wildfires, insect and disease. Planting new trees and improving forest health through thinning and prescribed burning are some of the ways to increase forest carbon in the long run. Harvesting and regenerating forests can also result in net carbon sequestration in wood products and new forest growth. If the agency insists on incorporating climate change concerns into its planning rule, these activities should be emphasized in at least one alternative M. We strongly oppose the "all-lands" approach. Please remove this from consideration as a "Substantive Principle." 1. The USFS lacks jurisdiction over state and private forests. It should not waste valuable resources attempting to plan for lands outside its jurisdiction The agency has this exactly 180 degrees backward. Instead of trying to force adjacent landowners to abide by the agency's wishes, it should be mindful not to let the deteriorating condition of its own forest to result in damage to adjacent lands. 2. The "rationale" for the "all-lands" approach lacks the proper perspective On August 14, 2009, USDA Secretary Vilsack outlined his vision for the future of our nation's forests. ({ Link }) As part of his rationale for the "all-lands" approach, the Secretary made this statement: "The Forest Service estimates that over 40 million acres of private forest could be lost to development and fragmentation over the coming three to four decades." The agency's estimate may or may not be accurate. What cannot be denied, however, is that the Secretary's statement is completely out of context. While some private lands are developed, tens of thousands of acres are permanently protected each year. According to the Trust for Public Lands, many millions of acres of private lands have been "saved" from development. { Link } 3. If loss of habitat to development or fragmentation is discussed in the analysis, it must include a accurate accounting of the lands that have been protected. The analysis should incorporate a full accounting of the lands that have been conserved, lands added to the federal estate, lands added to state and local estates, and lands that have otherwise been removed from development (e.g. conservation easements). N. The agency should develop an alternative that emphasizes a more aggressive approach to achieving the historic range of variability outside

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Roadless Areas and Wilderness No one can deny that a very large percent of the agency's forests are unhealthy. There is agreement that moving to a historic range of variability, at least in as much as we understand it, is probably wise. However, the only tool available to manipulate those variables in designated Wilderness and Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) is prescribed fire. This will be a big problem for the new focus on Restoration. Unlike what the general public believes, IRAs include lands that are highly modified, and not just by decades of fire suppression. Many have been commercially logged in the past and these "plantations" are susceptible to unnatural wildfire, insect and disease. The agency's current Roadless area management severely restrict any attempt to restore these lands to the historic range of variability. Therefore, it is logical to develop an alternative that emphasizes a more aggressive approach to achieving the historic range of variability outside IRAs and Wilderness. This should include commercial logging where appropriate, which achieves the agency's mandates for community health and prosperity, and also protects against so-called "fatal fires," insect and disease outbreak. O. Comment about the distinction between restoration and "adequate protection of roadless areas." On August 14, 2009, USDA Secretary Vilsack outlined his vision for the future of our nation's forests. ({ Link }) In that vision, the Secretary stated: Our shared vision begins with restoration. Restoration means managing forest lands first and foremost to protect our water resources, while making our forests more resilient to climate change. The Secretary also stated: "An integral part of our shared vision must be adequate protection of roadless areas. President Obama was quite clear during the campaign in emphasizing his support for protecting roadless areas." There is an inherent conflict with the Secretary's desire for restoration and the intent to provide "adequate protection" of IRAs. The boundaries of IRAs are determined via the agency's mandate to determine which, if any, of its lands it will recommend to Congress be designated as Wilderness. The single most important criteria is the presence or absence of a certain type of road. That's why they call them Roadless Areas, after all. IRA boundaries are not, as the general public is often told, the last remaining pristine areas in our National Forests. Many IRAs include lands that are highly modified, and not just by decades of fire suppression. Many have been commercially logged in the past and these "plantations" are now in a highly unnatural state and extremely susceptible to unnatural wildfire, insect and disease. The agency's current Roadless area management, which is purportedly focused on "adequate protection," severely restricts any attempt to restore these lands to the historic range of variability. Except for a very few exceptions, the only tool available is prescribed fire. This situation begs the question; what is the agency's definition of protection? If by protection we mean moving the lands to a state that mirrors the natural ecosystem function then there is a conflict with his policy for protecting IRAs.

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Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Continued..... . . . Comment regarding state and local government coordination during the Forest Planning process

1. New planning regulations should support and enhance close coordination with state and local governments. All of the alternatives should include direction to involve local governments in the planning process. Local governments, because they are elected by those who are most directly effected by the agency's land use planning, often adopt plans, programs and policies to directly influence federal natural resource and land planning efforts. Current planning regulations require the agency to coordinate "with the land and resource management planning processes of State and local governments." (16 U.S.C. §1604(a)) Current regulations state that "the Responsible [Forest Service] Official must provide opportunities for the coordination of Forest Service planning efforts...with those of other resource management agencies." Current regulations also provide that "the Responsible Official should seek assistance, where appropriate, from other state and local governments...to help address management issues or opportunities." (36 C.F.R. 219.9) In addition, the agency is required to "discuss any inconsistency" between the proposed plan's provision and "any approved State or local plan and laws." Further, if any inconsistencies exist, the plan must "describe the extent to which the [Forest Service] would reconcile its proposed action with the plan or law." (40 C.F.R. §1506.2(d)) Recently, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has supported an invitation to state and local governments to become a quasi-cooperating agency in the preparation of federal land and natural resource management plans and associated EISs. The invitation to become a cooperating agency is not based on the fact that state or local government are entities that may be affected by the outcome of the process. Instead, cooperating agency status is specifically based upon state or local government's position as professionals having jurisdiction by law in the planning area or professionals holding special expertise in an issue that will be addressed in the analysis or decision (memo from _____, Chairman of the CEQ). Of course, this quasi-cooperating agency status does not relieve the federal agency of the responsibility as the decision-maker, and does not guarantee a decision that the cooperating agency may necessarily favor. Cooperating agency status does allow the cooperators to participate in the scoping process, the inventory of data and analysis of current situation process, the preparation of alternatives, the impact analysis, and in the preparation of the draft and final EISs. This existing guidance should be incorporated in the new planning rule.

L. It is unwise to "proactively address climate change" in the planning regulations.

1. Please remove climate change as a "Substantive Principle" The agency's own Climate Change Considerations in Project Level NEPA Analysis (January 13, 2009) states that the effects of climate change are unknown, will vary regionally and will range the gamut from increased droughts to increased flooding. The document states: "It is not currently feasible to quantify the indirect effects of individual or multiple projects on global climate change and therefore determining significant effects of those projects or project alternatives on global climate change cannot be made at any scale." it also states; "Complete quantifiable information about project effects on global climate change is not currently possible and is not essential to a reasoned choice among alternatives." The only thing that is certain is the climate will change from its current and/or its historical condition. Effects of climate change are unknown. Impacts to the climate from human activities occurring on the forest, as well as the impacts of climate change on the forest cannot be made at any scale. Please remove this issue from consideration

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

as a "Substantive Principle." In addition, incorporating "climate change" into planning will be redundant. For example, the NOI says Responsible officials will also need flexibility to be able to adjust plan objectives and requirements where there are circumstances outside of agency control: For example, where increasing water temperatures resulting from climate change make it impossible to maintain a sensitive fish species in its native habitat. However, such "flexibility" is already embedded in land use planning, and specific management prescriptions, standards and guidelines already address important issues such as "increasing water temperature." Indeed, existing Forest Plans contain very specific guidance regarding the monitoring of and management for sensitive habitats, including aquatic habitat. 2. The agency's planning regulations should discourage utilizing data provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Current planning directs planners to draw on existing "synthesis and assessments" prepared by the IPCC. As recent media reports indicate, this data contains information that was not properly "peer reviewed" and some countries have even expressed a "vote of no confidence" in IPCC's data. Given the issue of climate change is controversial, and could conceivably affect a wide range of agency planning activities, the new planning regulations should require independent verification of any data from the IPCC. 3. Should the agency ignore our request and include direction to include climate change as a Substantive Principle, the agency should include an alternative that attempts to sequester carbon via aggressive vegetation management. As noted above, climate science is too "young" to be effectively incorporated into the planning regulations at this time. However, should the agency attempt to do so, we recommend an alternative that directs aggressive approach to terrestrial carbon sequestration. The "sink" of carbon sequestration in forests and wood products may help to offset sources of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, such as deforestation, forest fires, and fossil fuel emissions. Aggressive forest health practices can increase the ability of forests to sequester atmospheric carbon while enhancing other ecosystem services, such as improving soil and water quality by avoiding "fatal" wildfires, insect and disease. Planting new trees and improving forest health through thinning and prescribed burning are some of the ways to increase forest carbon in the long run. Harvesting and regenerating forests can also result in net carbon sequestration in wood products and new forest growth. If the agency insists on incorporating climate change concerns into its planning rule, these activities should be emphasized in at least one alternative M. We strongly oppose the "all-lands" approach. Please remove this from consideration as a "Substantive Principle." 1. The USFS lacks jurisdiction over state and private forests. It should not waste valuable resources attempting to plan for lands outside its jurisdiction The agency has this exactly 180 degrees backward. Instead of trying to force adjacent landowners to abide by the agency's wishes, it should be mindful not to let the deteriorating condition of its own forest to result in damage to adjacent lands. 2. The "rationale" for the "all-lands" approach lacks the proper perspective On August 14, 2009, USDA Secretary Vilsack outlined his vision for the future of our nation's forests. ({ Link }) As part of his rationale for the "all-lands" approach, the Secretary made this statement: "The Forest Service estimates that over 40 million acres of private forest could be lost to development and fragmentation over the coming three to four decades." The agency's estimate may or may not be accurate. What cannot be denied, however, is that the Secretary's statement is completely out of context. While some private lands are

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

developed, tens of thousands of acres are permanently protected each year. According to the Trust for Public Lands, many millions of acres of private lands have been "saved" from development. { Link } 3. If loss of habitat to development or fragmentation is discussed in the analysis, it must include an accurate accounting of the lands that have been protected. The analysis should incorporate a full accounting of the lands that have been conserved, lands added to the federal estate, lands added to state and local estates, and lands that have otherwise been removed from development (e.g. conservation easements). N. The agency should develop an alternative that emphasizes a more aggressive approach to achieving the historic range of variability outside Roadless Areas and Wilderness. No one can deny that a very large percent of the agency's forests are unhealthy. There is agreement that moving to a historic range of variability, at least in as much as we understand it, is probably wise. However, the only tool available to manipulate those variables in designated Wilderness and Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) is prescribed fire. This will be a big problem for the new focus on Restoration. Unlike what the general public believes, IRAs include lands that are highly modified, and not just by decades of fire suppression. Many have been commercially logged in the past and these "plantations" are susceptible to unnatural wildfire, insect and disease. The agency's current Roadless area management severely restricts any attempt to restore these lands to the historic range of variability. Therefore, it is logical to develop an alternative that emphasizes a more aggressive approach to achieving the historic range of variability outside IRAs and Wilderness. This should include commercial logging where appropriate, which achieves the agency's mandates for community health and prosperity, and also protects against so-called "fatal fires," insect and disease outbreak. O. Comment about the distinction between restoration and "adequate protection of roadless areas." On August 14, 2009, USDA Secretary Vilsack outlined his vision for the future of our nation's forests. ({ Link }) In that vision, the Secretary stated: Our shared vision begins with restoration. Restoration means managing forest lands first and foremost to protect our water resources, while making our forests more resilient to climate change. The Secretary also stated: "An integral part of our shared vision must be adequate protection of roadless areas. President Obama was quite clear during the campaign in emphasizing his support for protecting roadless areas." There is an inherent conflict with the Secretary's desire for restoration and the intent to provide "adequate protection" of IRAs. The boundaries of IRAs are determined via the agency's mandate to determine which, if any, of its lands it will recommend to Congress be designated as Wilderness. The single most important criteria is the presence or absence of a certain type of road. That's why they call them Roadless Areas, after all. IRA boundaries are not, as the general public is often told, the last remaining pristine areas in our National Forests. Many IRAs include lands that are highly modified, and not just by decades of fire suppression. Many have been commercially logged in the past and these "plantations" are now in a highly unnatural state and extremely susceptible to unnatural wildfire, insect and disease. The agency's current Roadless area management, which is purportedly focused on "adequate protection," severely restricts any attempt to restore these lands to the historic range of variability. Except for a very few exceptions, the only tool available is prescribed fire. This situation begs the question; what is the agency's definition of protection? If by protection we mean moving the lands to a state that

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

mirrors the natural ecosystem function then there is a conflict with his policy for protecting IRAs. The agency should clarify the distinction between restoration and "adequate protection of roadless areas." P. The environmental analysis should provide accurate information on water quality and related infrastructure. We were interested to view the large amount of information on the agency's website devoted to water quality. We agree that USFS lands are an irreplaceable source of water resources and protection of water quality should be a priority. However, our "on the ground" experience with several projects over the years have taught us that water quality for human consumption is much more about big technology than forest management. One of our object lessons in this regard is the "Hayman Fire" on the Pike National Forest in Colorado. A large number of OHV enthusiasts were volunteers in mitigation efforts after that devastating fire, and subsequent rainstorms. Our members saw for themselves how wildfire can destroy water quality for wildlife and fisheries. What was interesting and surprising to our members, is that the human population, which shares the same water sources, was not impacted by same significant drop in water quality. Why? Because water is treated before it is made available for human consumption. Our intent is not to diminish the importance of protecting watersheds. To the contrary. Our request here is that the agency disclose water quality for human use and consumption in the proper context. Q. The environmental analysis should include accurate disclosure and detailed discussion of the social and economic impacts of the proposed rule. 1. The environmental analysis should include accurate disclosure and detailed discussion of the social and economic impacts of the proposed rule. 2. The analysis should include a detailed analysis in the DEIS of how the proposed rulemakings for planning, roadless area protection, and long-term road management policy, fit together so the American people can assess impacts, compare and contrast alternatives and develop informed comments. 3. The analysis should include a Regulatory Flexibility assessment of the proposed rules that discloses the potential impact on small business. R. Special attention should be given to providing clear definitions of all key terms in the agency's planning documents and the DEIS, FEIS and ROD. In our review of materials regarding the planning rule provided on the USFS website we came across two definitions of restoration: A Definition of "Restoration" FSM 2020 defines Ecological Restoration as "the process of assisting the recovery of resilience and adaptive capacity of ecosystems that have been degraded, damaged, or destroyed. Restoration focuses on establishing the composition, structure, pattern, and ecological processes necessary to make terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems sustainable, resilient, and healthy under current and future conditions." The new policy broadens the definition of ecological restoration beyond the traditional approach of reestablishing specific past resource conditions, such as those defined by historical range of variation. Because restoration objectives reflect diverse public values, ecological restoration is based upon collaboration. And Restoration means managing forest lands first and foremost to protect our water resources, while making our forests more resilient to climate change. ({ Link }) This demonstrates the need for the agency to provide clear definitions of all key terms throughout the rulemaking process. S. The agency should review and consider revising the Purpose and Need statement for this important rulemaking. BRC strongly encourages the agency to revise its Purpose and Need statement to focus on the addressing previous planning regulations that were costly, complex, and procedurally burdensome. Discussion: The NOI

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

articulates the Purpose and Need as: The Agency now has an urgent need to establish a planning rule that protects, reconnects, and restores national forests and grasslands for the benefit of human communities and natural resources. A new planning rule must be responsive to the challenges of climate change; the need for forest restoration and conservation, watershed protection, and wildlife conservation; and the sustainable use of public lands to support vibrant communities. It must be clear, efficient, and effective, and must meet requirements under the NFMA, as well as allow the Agency to meet its obligations under the MUSYA, the ESA, and the Wilderness Act, as well as other legal requirements. It also must provide for a transparent, collaborative process that allows for effective public participation. A new rule should also be within the Agency's capability to implement on all NFS units. After admitting that the agency's 1982 planning rule was "very complex; had significant costs, was lengthy, and was cumbersome for public input," and its 2000 planning rule was "costly, complex, and procedurally burdensome" it is very disappointing then to read a Purpose and Need statement with so many undefined terms and potentially conflicting management focus. For example, what does "reconnect" mean in this context? How can a planning rule be "responsive to the challenges of climate change" when the agency's own directives (Considering Climate Change in Land Management and Project Planning) admit that effects of climate change are largely unknown? How can any planning rule be "clear, efficient and effective" when it uses undefined terms like "reconnect" and desires to be "responsive" to effects it admits are unknown? T. Answers to questions posed in the NOI: Substantive Principles for a New Rule 1. Land management plans could address the need for restoration and conservation to enhance the resilience of ecosystems to a variety of threats. Specific questions we would like the public to address include: • What do you see as the biggest threats to forest and grassland health and ecosystem resiliency? The agency's own avoidance of hard questions, wishful thinking regarding the effectiveness and acceptability of prescribed fire, misinterpretation of technical and scientific information, and complete disregard of the legal requirement for timber production and other human benefit objectives. The following is from the Petition for Writ of Mandate and for Preliminary and Permanent Injunction in Quincy Library Group v USFS: On April 22, 1998, twenty-five government employees, all but one from the U.S. Forest Service [USFS], met in Sonora, California as the Sierran Province Assessment and Monitoring [SPAM] Team. They were working on pieces of their "Ecosystem Conceptual Model," a theoretical construct of how literally all the pieces fit together and interact to form the entire Sierra Nevada ecosystem, from geological processes of soil formation from bedrock and the effect of climate change on photosynthetic capture of solar energy, right down to th

Multi-use trails. We need multi-use trails in national parks that are open to hikers, bikes and horses. These groups can and should be able to share trails. Don't force cyclists out on the highways with the RVs; it's too dangerous and no fun.

COMPLIMENTS TO THE CONSERVANCY FOR SPEARHEADING THIS IMPORTANT EFFORT TO PRESERVE OUR GREAT OUTDOORS AND A WAY OF LIFE WORTHY OF GENERATIONS TO COME. WE ARE VERY MUCH IN FAVOR OF THE PURCHASE.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO USE THE MONEY THAT WAS TO BE USED ON OUR PUBLIC LANDS FOR THAT PURPOSE FOR A CHANGE. WE ARE SAVING OUR PUBLIC LANDS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS WHO WILL BE IN THE SAME BOAT WE ARE THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO USE OUR PUBLIC LANDS BECAUSE WE ARE SAVING THEM FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. LETS GET REAL LET US BACK ON OUR PUBLIC LANDS

Perhaps the greatest problem related to advocacy is the fact that the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) has only a part time advocate at the agency head. The Service Director is compelled to represent all Service programs and consequently cannot be a full time advocate for the nation's third largest land base. In fact, the Assistant Director National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge Chief) is one of eleven Assistant Directors in the Washington Office who report to the Director and Deputy Director. Leadership that is spread between several competing resource management disciplines of the Fish and Wildlife Service can never provide the focused advocacy that the NWRS deserves. A lack of refuge experience in the leadership is a further disadvantage when competing resource interests must be considered. For example, scarce water resources in Western states are allocated according to state laws, and the Fish and Wildlife Service must compete with other interests for water needed to protect fish and wildlife resources. When water needs for Endangered Species protection must also compete, they are usually given the highest priority while the poorly understood needs of migratory bird refuges can get less than fair advocacy and consideration. The same disadvantage of priority is apparent when scarce funds and manpower are allocated. Refuge priorities and needs are too often subordinated to the urgency and legal requirements of other resource management programs.

"The gunning down of wild wolves in the West is beyond appalling" News flash, all wolf hunts have been suspended in the West. You can thank Judge Donald Moley of Missoula MT.

Restore Our National Mall--Our Front Yard. The National Mall is in terrible disrepair and it is not only our nation's front yard but it is also the centerpiece of democracy in our country. Create a national fundraising campaign to supplement the taxpayer dollars necessary to properly design, rehabilitate and maintain the Mall for its multiple purposes. The design students working with Gary Hilderbrand at Harvard have created tremendous ideas and with Susan Spain's enthusiasm and passion the Mall could once again become our showcase of democracy in action and a role model of sustainable design and maintenance.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a retired U.S. Forest Service Professional in outdoor recreation management I am simply furious with _____ for literally hijacking recreation and his blatant attempt to commercialize and privatize the Recreation Resource on our precious National Forests. He has done much damage. The Washington Office of the Forest Service is abjectly culpable starting with Chief Dale Robertson of allowing this to happen. It is the American Taxpayer who is bearing the brunt of this tragic theft of our rights. These are OUR precious National Forests and we the people own the Commons. The Fee SCAM must stop! Fees disenfranchise lower and middle income recreation users and discriminate against ethnic groups. The ham-fisted and oppressive collection (extortion) of fees in inappropriate backcountry and dispersed venues by FS police agents is something the U.S. Forest Service should hang their head in shame over. The problem is they currently have no shame, and continue beating the Recreation Public over the head with a truncheon. Fees are simply a social and economic DISASTER. They are a circular self-defeating dead end. Mr. Crandall is a paid LOBBYIST. His group - the American Recreation Coalition (ARC)-- is an advocacy group for motorized Wreckreation. For goodness sake they previously lobbied Congress to drill ANWR! Their inner motivation is "cheap gas forever" to keep those half million dollar 80 foot long motorhomes tooling around. Anyone heard of global warming and PEAK OIL! The U.S. Forest Service has been in bed with the ARC for a long time. Scream bloody murder to the USFS higher ups to dissolve this unholy and destructive "partnership" with the ARC. Contact Chief Tom Tidwell and national recreation director Jim Bedwell -- ttidwell fs.fed.us jbedwell fs.fed.us -- and tell them loud and clear as a disgruntled taxpayer you demand they serve the recreation general public and CEASE serving corporate America. Do not be fooled one minute by either _____'s self-serving propaganda nor the out-of-control U.S. Forest Service. The Forest Service record of dismal financial mismanagement is well documented. Appropriated recreation dollars actually increased 13% between 2002 and 2009. They cry "woe is me--we don't have enough money." That's NONSENSE. They don't use the money they are allocated wisely nor efficiently. They can start by trimming the bloated bureaucracy at the top and getting the allocated Congressional recreation money down to the Ranger District level. I have studied and worked on the FEE MESS for 12 years and I will tell you that the literal future of Outdoor Recreation is at stake. Now is the time to help defeat these onerous fees once and for all! Urge your Senators and Representatives to step up to the plate & REPEAL the Federal Lands Recreation and Enhancement Act (FLREA). It is literally your future in Outdoor Recreation on the table. Please fight like mad for Fee REPEAL. Tell Mr. Crandall to take a hike and write a personal letter to President Obama. Enough is enough!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To the Obama Administration and interested citizens, My name is _____r and I am the Executive Director of an organization engaged in public land issues for the past twenty years. Since 1997, we have focused attention upon the efforts of certain commercial recreation interests to transform America's Great Outdoors into venues where access is offered for sale to those willing to pay to play. In this forum, _____ has made various statements about recreation fees and claims that we Americans are still free to experience the outdoors as we did before "Pay-to-Play" replaced traditional birthrights. In the paragraphs which follow, I offer some unvarnished history. As _____ has pointed out, _____ stated in Congressional Testimony: "Recreation fees on public lands were one of the issues which prompted the creation of the American Recreation Coalition in 1979." In 1996, Crandall got what he was seeking when the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program became law. In 1997, the Wild Wilderness website was created, in part, as an effort to provide factual information regarding the still nascent issue of recreation user fees. In that same year, Chief of the US Forest Service _____, speaking before a recreation industry gathering announced: "It baffles me that the Department of Agriculture tracks the value of soybeans, corn, or wheat to the penny by the day, yet, rarely is recreation and tourism on federal lands understood as a revenue generator. Instead it has been perceived as an amenity - something extra that we are privileged to enjoy. Fortunately, that's beginning to change." With those momentous words, something very important began to change and I feel strongly that that change should be the over-arching topic of discussion for the entire "America's Great Outdoors Initiative" forum. Quoted below are excerpts of a speech given the following year by _____'s boss, the Undersecretary of Agriculture. The speaking venue was the American Recreation Coalition's "Great Outdoors Week." The message was heard loudly and clearly by _____'s associates. I suspect it was barely heard by the American Public. I trust the outcry of the American Public on this topic is now being heard by the Obama Administration. More importantly, I pray they are listening. _____, Wild Wilderness --- begin quoted --- Outdoor Recreation on the National Forests Remarks of the Hon. James R. Lyons, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture June 8, 1998 Welcome to USDA and Outdoor Recreation Week.... During my tenure with the Department, we've not only tried to highlight our recreation program, but we've also tried to take a more business-like approach to its management and promotion. We developed a marketing strategy and an icon that we hope will become to outdoor recreation what the Nike swoosh is to sporting goods and that famous Mercedes Benz hood ornament is to automobiles - a sign that connotes high quality outdoor experiences and customer satisfaction... We're working to obtain more resources - through a proposed increase in the recreation budget, through fees collected through the demo program, and, perhaps, through an expanded role for concessions. What about a profit sharing arrangement with concessionaires where the taxpayer and the business benefit from the venue - in cold, hard cash - and the customer benefits from improved recreation opportunities. We're looking toward the private sector to provide more support for national forest recreation - for an expanded partnership with those who realize an economic benefit from recreation on the public lands. In this way, you can help us help you (as Jerry McGuire said) expand your business opportunities while helping us expand recreation opportunities on the national forests. Finally, to accomplish this and more, we need to develop stronger brand and name recognition for national forest recreation. Our challenge, in short, is to help

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

the public realize that when they're hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, or biking the Hiawatha rail-trail, or running the south fork of the Salmon River, or relaxing at Timberline Lodge, they're not on a national park - they're on a national forest. And we hope to achieve this through better marketing, through better information, and through improved development of our brand of outdoor recreation.... Can you think of any other entity - private or public - that has the breadth and diversity of outdoor recreation experiences that you can find on the national forests? I doubt it! We've got a great product to sell. And, with your help, we can make it even better! The national forests are truly America's Great Outdoors. Thanks for your continued support and partnership. We'll look forward to seeing you at Great Outdoors Week.

Bristol Bay has crucially important fisheries and wildlife habitat. These are resources, renewable in perpetuity, that are needed for our very survival. Mineral extraction is a temporary producer of wealth which could destroy these vital living resources. Protect the Bristol Bay watershed; don't risk the permanent value for the temporary.

Access is important, no doubt. There should be places where OHVs are allowed and places they are not allowed. To allow OHV access to every last area of our public lands would be a mistake. Like any other activity, balance is the key. Having natural areas without roads, trails, and development all over is what promotes good stewardship for some.

Emphasis should always be on wildlife and recreation on public land. Resource extraction should be given less weight and only in specific areas. When corporations use public land for resource extraction, a few make money over the short term and the majority of the population gain nothing. Don't forget, corporations have the option of using private land as well. It must be more costly and subtract from the "bottom line" when private land is involved.

I don't disagree. Although things like hunting, fishing, camping, even OHVs in areas designated for them, are all better than public land being used for drilling and mining. Drilling and mining should be allowed on less of our public land. Wildlife and the health of the environment should always come first.

Access is important, no doubt. Some areas should have roads, some should not. There are also plenty of economic benefits to unroaded areas as well. A lot of hunting and fishing groups advocate unroaded areas because of the benefits to wildlife. This in turn brings money from hunting and fishing. These are two groups that contribute significantly to the economy.

I would say some need to look past next week. With an exploding population, won't OHV trails become more crowded no matter how many there are. What do we do to "disperse" the impact then? There needs to be areas available to OHVs and areas that are not available, especially as the population grows.

I'm not against hunting or OHVs, but I believe we should preserve more of our wild lands from development. I think to be out in nature makes you feel closer to God.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I ride snowmobiles and have ridden dirt bikes, OHVs, etc. I'm not against this kind of activity but I demoted this idea because I can see the benefit of preserving some of our wild lands. There is room for wilderness and multi use areas. There are extremists on both sides.

I just wonder if they were to preserve this area, which is already public land, in the form of some sort of national preserve, which would incorporate some wilderness areas and non-wilderness areas, would that resolve the problem? We don't have BLM land in Michigan, but I would be glad to see more national (or even state) forests. I think to preserve 9 million acres here would be great. I am wondering what kind of activities you currently engage in that would be lost if the area was to receive greater protection. To save it from development sounds like a good idea to me.

I'm from Michigan, I'm all for more national and state land, too.

I hate to think the reason we don't preserve more forests in Michigan is because of tax revenues. The state gives tax breaks to large property owners to allow access. I would rather the state purchase the land.

There is room for all activities. There should be places where things like OHVs are allowed and places they are not allowed. With the huge increase in the amount of OHV use over the last decade, there should be more regulation.

If you look at what the government states the uses for our national forests are, one of the top ones is natural resource extraction. I think the focus should change to preservation of wildlife/wild lands and recreation. There should be places for all sorts of recreation on our national lands and places preserved as roadless and wilderness. There should be balance. This benefits wildlife and people.

There is room for both, wilderness and multi use land. What scares the crap out of me is no wilderness left. We don't need to develop every corner of our country.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Prioritize Watershed and Fisheries Restoration by addressing the FS road system. Prioritize Watershed and Fisheries Restoration by Addressing the Forest Service's Road System Group Comments for the America's Great Outdoor Initiative October 1, 2010 We appreciate the opportunity to provide the following comments as part of the Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative comments. Our comments address the challenges of managing our national forests and focus specifically on how to enhance the health of forest watersheds and fisheries in our national forests while providing jobs in rural communities. We believe the Administration should prioritize the protection of water in our national forests, restore forest watersheds and fisheries, protect drinking water quality, enhance declining fisheries and provide connectivity for wildlife migration. We believe that by emphasizing watershed and fisheries restoration we will make our forests more resilient and more adaptable to the effects of climate change and simultaneously sustain American families whose lives and work are tightly connected to our national forests. These comments focused on four recommended actions. Recommended Actions: 1. Increase funding for the Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative 2. Rightsize the National Forest Road System 3. Create a Forest Service Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program to develop the agency's capacity for restoration 4. Enhance jobs in rural communities

Historic Overview: Over the 105 year history of the Forest Service, the predominant management activity has been the extraction of timber, particularly since the close of World War II. The emphasis on extraction has often come at the expense of the health of the natural resources the agency is mandated to protect and improve. Water provides the link between all resources on our national forests. Rural communities, fish, wildlife and forests will benefit most from focusing on the protection and improvement of water and watersheds. It's important to realize that managing water is one of the oft-overlooked components of the agency's mission as defined in the Organic Act: "to secure favorable conditions of water flows." The Importance of Water - Impacts of Climate Change on National Forests: Climate drives the hydrologic cycle. Variation in climate can play havoc with our nation's water supply . Changes in the timing and intensity of snow and rain events can produce either regional flooding or droughts depending on the region. Reservoirs may be swamped early in the season and dry at the end of the season. There is considerable concern about possible water shortages across portions of the nation due to hotter annual temperatures. Water supplies are affected by shrinking glaciers and decreases in snow pack as they serve as reservoirs that provide summer runoff. Furthermore, meeting the water supply needs for the ever-increasing populace also adds to the concern over water availability. The U.S. has among the highest rate of population growth of industrialized nations . Our national forests may soon be the most important natural system capable of capturing, retaining and releasing water. According to the Forest Service, more than 60 million Americans get their drinking water from national forest headwaters. The role of the Forest Service in protecting and managing drinking water supplies affects approximately one-fifth of United States communities, yet few Americans know or understand the important links between forest management, watershed and fisheries health, climate and change and community drinking water supplies. We believe the management of watershed and fisheries resources should be an important priority for the agency. A New Future for the Forest Service - Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack's Restoration Vision: In August 2009, the Secretary' articulated a bold, new vision to conserve and restore our national forests. He outlined a complete commitment to restoration

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

which he defined as "managing forest lands first and foremost to protect our water resources while making our forests far more resilient to climate change". To achieve the Secretary's 21st century vision, the Forest Service needs a 21st century structure. We suggest the agency would benefit from a major reorientation that prioritizes watershed and fisheries restoration and protection. Water is likely the most important ecological and economic resource that the Forest Service manages. Water derived from our national forests is estimated by the Forest Service to be valued at \$7.2 billion, while timber is valued at a mere fraction of that amount. Despite this, the agency is still operating under a structure focused primarily on silviculture and resource extraction. To make restoration a priority for the agency, we believe a watershed and fisheries restoration program is necessary and restoration experts need to be moved into leadership positions to effectively achieve that goal.

Forest Roads - A Great Threat to National Forest Watersheds: One of the most significant threats to forest watersheds and their biotic communities is failing forest roads. Road-caused sedimentation fouls drinking water and is one of the least publicized but most widespread of the human-caused impact on coldwater fish. At least 15 different direct negative effects from sedimentation have been demonstrated to impact trout and salmon, ranging from stress, to altered behavior, to reductions in growth and to direct mortality. Muddy water from failing forest roads makes streams wider, shallower and more susceptible to warming, thus harming fish that thrive in clear, cold water. Silt harms the gills of salmon and trout and smothers fish eggs when it settles into the clean gravel bed. The same sediment fouls drinking water and may result in the need for communities to build expensive water filtration systems. Unmaintained roads, especially in mountainous regions, are more likely to fail in severe storm events, contributing massive amounts of sediment to streams. In 2006 and 2007 alone severe storms in the Pacific Northwest led to massive road failures and road-triggered landslides, resulting in tens of millions of dollars of damage to public and private lands. Storms such as this are increasing in both severity and frequency, likely due to climate change, further bolstering the need for an immediate investment in restoration. Roads fragment wildlife habitat, spread non-native invasive plants, pests and pathogens, reduce wildlife security, increase the incidence of poaching and increase edge effects. They also lead to direct mortality through wildlife-vehicle collisions. Studies have found road densities of one mile of road per square mile of land as an average threshold above which roads will start to have negative impacts on wildlife. For example, elk habitat effectiveness decreases by 25% at 1 mi/mi² and 50% at 2mi/mi². There is also a strong negative relationship between road density and population fitness of grizzly bears. Roads act as complete barriers to movement for some small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. When old jammer roads and motorized routes are added in to road density analyses, road densities exceed 20 m/m² in specific areas on numerous national forests, resulting in severe degradation of wildlife habitat.

State of Forest Roads: At best, only 21% of national forest roads are currently maintained to "standard." The Forest Service never planned for nor assessed the impact of its extremely limited maintenance capacity on forest and water resources, and the impact becomes exponentially more significant each year. In 2001, the Forest Service estimated that it could remove nearly a third of its entire road system (up to 186,000 miles out of the total 380,000 mile system), while still meeting the resource management and recreational needs of forest users. Many of these roads were built for obsolete logging systems and now are largely abandoned and prone to landslides from heavy rains or snowmelt. There is ample opportunity to

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

put people to work restoring watersheds and remediating road problems. Removing unneeded, ecologically damaging roads is a critical first step toward watershed restoration. Repairing culverts to restore fish passage and performing essential maintenance are crucial for those roads that we need to keep on the system to ensure they have the least impact possible on aquatic resources. We have an obligation to restore watersheds to provide the resiliency and adaptability necessary to respond to the impacts of climate change. Details of Recommended Actions: 1. Support Increased Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative Funding: In 2008 a new funding initiative, championed by Congressman Norm Dicks, emerged from the Interior Appropriations bill - the Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative. Funding was provided to protect American rivers, streams, endangered species, and community water systems by repairing the environmental damage caused by the vast legacy of Forest Service roads. The initiative specifically directs the funding "for urgently needed road decommissioning, road and trail repair and maintenance and associated activities, and removal of fish passage barriers, especially in areas where Forest Service roads may be contributing to water quality problems in streams and water bodies which support threatened, endangered or sensitive species or community water sources and for urgently needed road repairs required due to recent storm events." Legacy Roads and Trails (LRT) funding has been used to maintain needed roads; repair culverts, trails and bridges; and reclaim unneeded roads to meet these watershed protection and restoration objectives. In the first three years of this program \$180 million has been dedicated to national forest watershed restoration. The first two years (\$90 million) of the program resulted in a host of specific accomplishments including: • 1362 miles of road improved • 3395 miles of road maintained • 325 aquatic organism passages repaired • 1460 miles of road decommissioned • 38 bridges replaced or repaired • 1061 miles of trails maintained or improved LRT dramatically enhanced watershed restoration efforts within the Forest Service and with sufficient funding and programmatic support could well be the most important work being done within the Forest Service to conserve biodiversity in the face of climate change. The Administration should fully embrace this funding and support increasing the LRT funding in the President's budget to match the levels provided by Congress in FY2010 and proposed by the House for FY2011. Over the long-term, we recommend increasing funding of LRT to \$250 million annually at least until the Forest Service road maintenance backlog is eliminated. The increase is needed partially to undertake planning to identify a rightsized road system 2. Rightsize the National Forest Road System: To guarantee that Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation funds are spent effectively, it is essential that the Forest Service develops a strategy to rightsize its oversized, failing road system. The Forest Service estimated their road maintenance backlog at nearly \$8 billion in 2002 -- although when administrative and indirect costs are included the backlog may be closer to \$10.3 billion . Shrinking maintenance budgets have resulted in the downgrading of thousands of miles of passenger vehicle roads to high-clearance vehicle roads. At the end of 2006, the Forest Service estimated that the road maintenance backlog is now \$4.1 billion but it is likely that this reduction comes not as a result of improved road management, but as a result of maintenance level reclassification (the agency budgets far less money per mile to maintain high-clearance vehicle roads as opposed to passenger vehicle roads). This creates the fiscal illusion that roads have been repaired but, in fact, the majority of the system is not being maintained (80% of the system is high-clearance or closed roads). It is this 80%, the vast majority of the Forest Service

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

road system, that provides the least access and causes the greatest ecological harm. The identification of a minimum road system should be the first step in a comprehensive restoration program. In 2009, Congress provided direction that all national forests identify a minimum road system as part of the travel planning process. Leadership is needed to move this process forward in the Forest Service and to provide a model for comprehensive watershed restoration. Guidance is needed for the regions to enhance the overall success and uniformity of the process. Planning funds are needed to begin the evaluation of the road system. Identification of a minimum road system is needed to provide the data necessary to evaluate the progress being made by the national forests to comply with the Clean Water Act. A long-term plan for rightsizing the road system, and a viable and well-prioritized process for implementing this plan, is essential as the agency moves from resource extraction to watershed and fisheries restoration. Restored national forests will, by definition, have smaller and more sustainable (both ecologically and economically) transportation systems. 3. Create a Forest Service Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program to develop the agency's capacity for restoration: If restoration represents the future of the Forest Service and the protection of water is a primary goal of the agency, then these activities need to be structurally embedded within the agency. To guarantee that our national forest watersheds and fisheries are restored and protected and that all agency activities comport with that goal, we propose the creation of a Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program or its equivalent. This would allow for increased coordination of watershed restoration activities, (e.g. identification of the minimum road system, implementation of Legacy Roads and Trails or Priority Watershed projects), with greater guidance, accountability, and oversight. Key components of this program would include the appointment of an Associate Chief or Director of Watershed and Fisheries Restoration and staffing that position with a hydrologist or fisheries/aquatic ecologist. Similarly, trained Regional Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Directors should also be appointed to prevent this program from being isolated at headquarters. The National and Regional Directors should then determine additional on-the-ground needs such as appropriately trained staff to develop and oversee watershed restoration contracts, associated NEPA, etc. The new Climate Change roadmap might also provide some examples for how to incorporate watershed and fisheries restoration and protection more effectively into daily activities of the agency, including things like the annual scorecard. It is also possible that a watershed and fisheries restoration program could be an integral part of new climate change activities, staff and structures within the agency. Tasks for the new Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program could include the development of national and regional Aquatic Conservation Strategies (ACS), identification and implementation of a minimum road system and concomitant Legacy Roads and Trails work within the framework of the ACS. The staff in this program could be responsible for assessing and implementing efforts to ensure that national forest watersheds and fisheries are resilient and adaptable to climate change. Currently, the agency is completing a watershed condition class survey and will be working to upgrade watersheds from lower to higher conditions. Such efforts, and the multitude of terrestrial and aquatic benefits that would flow from them, should also fall under the purview of this new program. It would be beneficial if the Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program staff could identify ways to incorporate nonwatershed-based restoration activities - such as wildlife connectivity - into this program. A well-staffed and robust program would be tasked

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

with developing and implementing clear, science-based, ecoregion-specific restoration agendas for the agency that put resource restoration needs over economic returns (though such efforts will provide economic benefits) and ensure that projects labeled as benefiting watershed and fisheries restoration meet minimum thresholds related to watershed health and climate change resilience and adaptation. Comprehensive monitoring programs should also be developed to assess program effectiveness and adaptive management as needed. Successes and challenges should be reported online in a centralized and standardized manner.

4. Enhance jobs in rural communities: National Forest watershed and fisheries restoration will provide real jobs to people in rural communities. Forest Service estimates from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding that twelve direct jobs and twelve indirect and induced jobs are created from every \$1 million spent in restoration. Moreover, healthy watersheds increases land values, associated amenities, and outdoor recreation related jobs. Many workers have not only been displaced by the timber industry, but they are also feeling the pinch from the decline in housing starts. Investing in watershed and fisheries restoration can create a variety of direct jobs for local workers, while also increasing the opportunities for related jobs as described above. Investing in watershed and fisheries restoration will help create stable resource-related jobs and career opportunities for the 21st Century in rural communities. Retraining in both the science and art of road reclamation and other watershed restoration activities will be necessary and can provide the opportunity to ensure that watershed restoration practitioners are trained and certified in the best engineering and restoration practices in the field. Restoration work must be done effectively and efficiently on the ground to guarantee that the results are beneficial for watersheds. Companion funding could also be provided to develop a systematic, comparative area monitoring program through the agency's research branch or through universities to ensure that new technologies are being tested and monitored for effectiveness. A timely infusion of funding could help kick start new careers in watershed restoration while simultaneously bolstering the growing restoration economy. We recommend that the Forest Service calculates the number and types of jobs created in the first three years of Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation funding. This will require tracking individual FS contracts that used LRT funds, researching the vendors who were awarded the contracts and then determining the number of workers who completed the projects. The Forest Service should use these data to evaluate how to enhance the flow of restoration jobs to rural communities, including as example 1) determining the workforce capacity in communities adjacent to national forest lands, 2) determining obstacles to local hiring, and 3) development of restoration work cooperatives to pool funds for heavy equipment. A high priority should be place on hiring watershed and fisheries restoration employees who have received appropriate training and/or restoration certifications. Forest Service should also identify contracting mechanisms, and trends in vendor hiring to determine ways to ensure skilled/specialized restorationists get hired. Conclusion: Secretary Vilsack's 21st century vision for the Forest Service can best be met by redesigning the structure, leadership and direction of the agency to ensure it emphasizes watershed and fisheries restoration. One first step toward meeting the new vision is to increase the funding for the Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative and associated rightsizing process to ensure that the agency's transportation system is ecologically and fiscally sustainable. Creating a Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Program will increase rural job security, insure clean water supplies,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

promote aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem health, and support a broad diversity of ecosystem services, especially in the context of climate change. This work requires a new way of thinking and working and there is no better time than now to implement the changes needed to reach Secretary Vilsack's far-sighted vision for the future of the agency.

This is an excellent proposal. I hope you also will seek to include our beautiful grasslands on the Northern Great Plains and elsewhere. Very few of these native prairie landscapes are permanently protected from development.

Learn to get along with using much less gas and oil.

What do we have here? A college class submitting individual essays on the meaning of "wilderness"? At any rate, you've done an especially nice job with your essay. You've illustrated the subtle distinction that seems to be at the heart of many debates that have occurred in this forum. We no longer have any place on Earth that is completely free of human incursions; but we still should protect large areas where Nature is wild and relatively free of our influences and where the full range ecological processes that existed before our arrival can operate.

The current proposal by the USDA's Wildlife Services (formerly "Animal Damage Control") to poison and gas wolves in the Rockies is another example. Interior's Fish & Wildlife Service tries to restore endangered species, and Agriculture's Wildlife Services tries to wipe them out. Much of this mess can be attributed to the excessive political influence held by the ranching industry.

It's in the public's interest to conserve biodiversity. Did you not want grey whales and bald eagles to survive? The ESA is a visionary piece of legislation. Its shortfall is in the poor way that implementation has been handled.

Yes, conservation is indeed missing from the national debate. We are at least one whole generation into raising young people who have very little connection to nature. We've decided it's our God-given, American right to become anti-intellectuals and to feel proud of our stubborn ignorance. We seem to value no-nothingness in our politicians (think: Palin). We're fooled one election cycle after another by an obstructionist political party that distracts a majority of us with rhetoric about social issues while promoting military adventures and pursuing a pro-business, anti-middle class agenda. These days, it's very hard to get much done in the public-policy arena, especially on back-burner issues like conservation. For our own sanity, it makes sense for conservationists to work mostly through private, non-profit organizations. There are loads of great conservations organizations out there.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Restore the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. The Ozark National Scenic Riverways, the largest National Park area in Missouri, was America's first National Park established to protect a wild river system. The spring-fed Current and Jacks Fork Rivers that make up the Ozark Riverways are home to some of Missouri's most stunning natural beauty and provide critical habitat for dozens of globally significant species of wildlife. The park's network of rivers, springs, caves, and bluffs also provide a unique setting for visitors from near and far to reconnect with the outdoors and experience the rich cultural heritage of the Ozarks region. The park is vital to the tourism economy of southern Missouri. Every year, nearly two million visitors from Missouri and beyond come to canoe, swim and fish on the Current and Jacks Fork, and to hike and camp in the surrounding woods. Yet in recent years the Riverways have suffered increasing abuse. The park's resource values have become seriously degraded. Overcrowding and overdevelopment are threatening the native habitats of the rivers and making the recreational experience increasingly unwelcoming to families. Motorized vehicles dominate most of the landscape. The America's Great Outdoors Initiative provides a great opportunity for conservationists and communities in Missouri and beyond to collaborate with the federal government to restore the Ozark National Scenic Riverways to the high standards of excellence of the National Park Service. The Department of the Interior and the National Park Service should:

1. Make protecting the Ozark National Scenic Riverways and managing it to National Park Service standards a high priority in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.
2. Ensure that existing laws and policies governing the Riverways are fully enforced, so that visitors can enjoy the same level of family-friendly outdoors experience they do at America's other great parks. Particularly important is reducing the number of motorized access roads, both authorized and unauthorized, that lead to the rivers; establishing smart regulations about the number and size of commercial horse rides operating near and in the rivers; enforcing existing watercraft horsepower limits; and determining the overall carrying capacity of the Riverways.
3. Develop a robust and forward-looking Revised General Management Plan to guide the management of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways in the years to come.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Some of the equestrian posts remind me of England's defunct aristocracy. "[B]y the High Middle Ages, the necessity of hunting was transformed into a stylized pastime of the aristocracy. More than a pastime, it was an important arena for social interaction . . . and a privilege and measurement of nobility." (Source: Wikipedia.) "For royals and their imitators, forests were from the middle ages onward a 'supreme status symbol and a source of gifts money could not buy.' " (Lohmann 1999.) "Hunting . . . was restricted . . . in 1670 to those with manors or incomes of at least 100 pounds a year from landed property. 'It is not fit that clowns should have these sports,' _____ I reminded Parliament in the early 17th century." (Ibid.) Reread the posts above and you'll see not just echoes of these sentiments, but the same lordly mentality in full flower. It's useless to squabble with the equestrians over their insistence that the PCT remain their private preserve and I won't attempt to persuade them to share this trail. I would instead address Forest Service and other agency staffs: a tiny group can't legitimately hold hostage a major public trail that millions of taxpayers maintain, any more than the aristocracy could legitimately keep the nonnobility out of the forests in 1400. No law endorses, let alone compels, continuing to ratify the the reactionary sentiments expressed on this page. Safety concerns are, by contrast, a legitimate issue, at least in theory. Good trail management, however, has worked all over the U.S. to lower trail conflicts to an acceptable level. If all else fails, one simply allows horses and bicycles on alternate days and hikers on all days. (It's worth noting that on trails in the east bay of the San Francisco Bay Area, police statistics show equestrians injuring themselves at an astonishing rate; none of the accidents involve bicycles. This suggests insufficiently skilled riders and indifferently trained horses, deficiencies I suspect give rise to much of the kvetching here.) There is no longer much dispute, even from professional wilderness advocates as far as I've seen recently, that the Wilderness Act of 1964 did not ban human-powered transport. In fact Congress was worried about Soviet achievements and wanted Americans to use public lands to improve their fitness, self-reliance, and ruggedness. The prohibition on "mechanical transport" was a catchall for motorized uses other than the enumerated ones and anything left over that was mechanical but carried people or cargo around, like ore carts, wagons, winches, and the like. Do a bit of research on the Internet and you'll find the evidence of this. Since Mr. Hasenauer brought up the historical background and people here dispute his view, let me quote the following attributions (I have not been able to verify their authenticity as of this date, but I have no reason to doubt them): Lyndon Johnson, 1965: "The forgotten outdoorsmen of today are those who like to walk, hike, ride, horseback, or bicycle. For them, we must have trails as well as highways. Nor should motor vehicles be permitted to tyrannize the more leisurely human traffic." Frank Church, 1976: "As the floor manager of the 1964 Wilderness Act, I recall quite clearly what we were trying to accomplish by setting up the National Wilderness Preservation System. It was never the intent of Congress that wilderness be managed in so 'pure' a fashion as to needlessly restrict customary public use and enjoyment. Quite the contrary, Congress fully intended that wilderness should be managed to allow its use by a wide spectrum of Americans. "I believe . . . that the agencies are applying provisions of the Wilderness Act too strictly and thus misconstruing the intent of Congress as to how these areas should be managed. "Such policies are misguided. If Congress had intended that wilderness be administered in so stringent a manner we would never have written the law as we did. We wouldn't have excluded condemnation as t he means for forcibly acquiring developed ranches within the wilderness

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

areas. We wouldn't have provided for the continuation of nonconforming uses where they were established—including the use of motor boats in the part of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and the use of airfields in the primitive areas here in Idaho. As these examples clearly demonstrate, it was not the intent of Congress that wilderness be administered in so pure a fashion as to needlessly restrict its customary public use and enjoyment. Quite the contrary, Congress fully intended that wilderness be managed to allow its use by a wide spectrum of Americans."

Another pertinent fact _____ ignores is that (more often than not) FLREA access fees charged to REAL taxpayers don't go to support REAL public lands infrastructure or the REAL management agencies responsible for those public lands. Instead they go to private companies contracted to collect those fees. Thus the fees often directly benefit private recreation-based companies rather than public lands. With such a self-serving view of public lands, it is no wonder fee supporters like _____ and his corporate-sponsored organization is willing to completely misstate and misrepresent the truth about America's public lands and the vast numbers of citizens who actually both use and treasure them. Such as _____'s statement justifying charging fees by claiming only "a relatively small portion of the total US population" uses public lands and facilities and therefore should "pay more." That twisted view of public ownership ignores that all Americans own these lands equally and all Americans pay taxes equally to support those lands. That is the very concept of public lands and why they are "public." The lie that only "a relatively small portion of the total US population" accesses and uses their National Forests, Parks, Wildlife Refuges, etc., is absurd. No one who has actually hiked a local forest trail, visited a National Park, or makes a living from public lands tourism would seriously make or defend that claim. It's ludicrous. In my state alone, public lands account for more than a third of Colorado's land area, and visitation to those public lands supports our number one industry: Tourism. That is no "small" portion, but rather the largest portion of our economy. Those are the real facts, Mr. President. Millions upon millions of Americans annually visit their public lands. Our taxes sustain public lands, and in return visitors to those lands sustain both local economies and state-wide economies. Forcing citizens and taxpayers to pay additional fees to access our own lands (whether a forest trail, picnic table, scenic drive, or parking area) merely causes those visitors to go elsewhere, somewhere they don't have to pay an additional access fee for. Mr. President, my idea is to restore REAL Congressional funding to our public lands and land management agencies, and eliminate FLREA. Fees are an insult to all American taxpayers, and only speaks to the corrupt mismanagement of our national forests, and parks, and economy. Sincerely, _____

Wilderness designation and stewardship. Our greed and stupidity, love of OHV and the gasoline engine, cruelty and wastefulness have reduced the wild world to a sliver of its former self. Stewardship is often talked about, but not practiced much (especially west of the Mississippi...) The gunning down of wild wolves in the West is beyond appalling. Maybe some day, when we are going extinct we'll regret our stupidity.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support historic preservation as part of this initiative. Historic preservation has gotten the short end of the stick in terms of federal support. History is an integral part of the outdoors experience. Historic buildings, particularly those of ordinary people, need to be preserved to teach our children that the world did not begin with Wii.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama: Please consider that if we want to continue to "conserve outdoor spaces," we must first restore public funding to our public lands and end the fees _____ advocates and supports. As someone who has worked with various governmental agencies and stakeholders for more than 30 years to better manage and preserve our public lands (National Forests, Wilderness areas, Parks, and trails), I can think of nothing more important and invigorating to our society in these tough economic times. Funding our public lands and eliminating fees for access (which economically discriminate in favor of those who can afford them) will both conserve those lands and stimulate tourism-based economies around the country. In direct response to _____, who states: "It costs real money to maintain our nation's recreation infrastructure and, unfortunately perhaps, use of this infrastructure is actually used and enjoyed by a relatively small portion of the total US population. It is fair that those who derive the benefits pay a bit more toward the costs. The fees under FLREA are very reasonable, and in almost all cases there are alternatives -- including free access for those who volunteer." One needs to ask what real money is being talked about here? What about the REAL people and ALL REAL taxpayers who own these lands equally? Some facts to clear the air: Real people are not paying a "bit more." Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act fees are being used as a MAJOR SOURCE OF REVENUE AND PROFIT for private companies while at the same time FLREA is reducing and replacing the adequate congressional appropriations real government agencies need and should be receiving on the taxpayer's behalf. That is the REAL effect of fees and the deliberate strategy of corporate fee supporters like _____. So, rather than the "reasonable" scenario _____ paints (but cannot support), FLREA, like it's predecessor, Fee Demo, is a Frankenstein Monster in sheep's clothing that is destroying the both traditional equal access to, and historic purpose of, our citizen-owned national public lands. Just who is Derrick Crandall? As a major, supporter and idea man behind charging fees for citizens to access their own public lands, _____ represents NO INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS OR CITIZEN ORGANIZATIONS. He represents no one who actually pays the majority of those taxes or fees, but rather represents a conglomerate of private corporate special interests and trade associations (ARC) who, in fact, benefit from charging fees. They include Walt Disney Corp., PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Capital Hotel Management LLC, etc, etc. etc. And none of these companies represent nor manage our public lands. Thus they should NOT be determining or influencing our public lands policies. Taxpayers should, because we pay the REAL bills. Another pertinent fact Mr. Crandall ignores is that (more often than not) FLREA access fees charged to REAL taxpayers don't go to support REAL public lands infrastructure or the REAL management agencies responsible for those public lands. Instead they go to private companies contracted to collect those fees. Thus the fees often directly benefit private recreation-based companies rather than public lands. So, Mr. Crandall is lying. With such a self-serving view of public lands, it is no wonder fee supporters like Mr. Crandall and his corporate-sponsored organization is willing to completely misstate and misrepresent the truth about America's public lands and the vast numbers of citizens who actually both use and treasure them. Such as Mr. Crandall's statement justifying charging fees by claiming only "a relatively small portion of the total US population" uses public lands and facilities and therefore should "pay more." That twisted view of public ownership ignores that all Americans own these lands equally and all Americans pay taxes equally to support those lands. That is the very concept of public lands and why they are "public." The lie that only "a relatively

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

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Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Somehow about half my comment wasn't posted. So forgive the double post. BTW, WEBMASTER: you should allow posters to edit or delete their comments. Dear President Obama: Please consider that if we want to continue to "conserve outdoor spaces," we must first restore public funding to our public lands and end the fees Mr. Crandall advocates and supports. As someone who has worked with various government agencies and stakeholders for more than 30 years to better manage and preserve our public lands, I can think of nothing more important and reinvigorating to our society in these tough economic times. Funding our public lands and eliminating fees for access (which economically discriminate in favor of those who can afford them) will both conserve those lands and stimulate tourism-based economies around the country. In direct response to _____, who states: "It costs real money to maintain our nation's recreation infrastructure and, unfortunately perhaps, use of this infrastructure is actually used and enjoyed by a relatively small portion of the total US population. It is fair that those who derive the benefits pay a bit more toward the costs. The fees under FLREA are very reasonable, and in almost all cases there are alternatives -- including free access for those who volunteer." One needs to ask what real money is being talked about here? What about the REAL people and ALL REAL taxpayers who own these lands equally? Some facts to clear the air: Real people are not paying a "bit more." Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act fees are being used as a MAJOR SOURCE OF REVENUE AND PROFIT for private companies while at the same time FLREA is reducing and replacing the adequate congressional appropriations real government agencies need and should be receiving on the taxpayer's behalf. That is the REAL effect of fees and the deliberate strategy of corporate fee supporters like _____. So, rather than the "reasonable" scenario _____ paints (but cannot support), FLREA, like it's predecessor, Fee Demo, is a Frankenstein Monster in sheep's clothing that is destroying both traditional equal access to, and the historic purpose of, our citizen-owned national public lands. Just who is Derrick Crandall? As a major supporter and idea man behind charging fees for citizens to access their own public lands, _____ represents NO INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS OR CITIZEN ORGANIZATIONS. He represents no one who actually pays the majority of those taxes or fees, but rather represents a conglomerate of private corporate special interests and trade associations (ARC) who, in fact, benefit from charging fees. They include Walt Disney Corp., PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Capital Hotel Management LLC, etc, etc. etc. And none of these companies represent nor manage our public lands. Thus they should NOT be determining or influencing our public lands policies. Taxpayers should, because we pay the REAL bills. Another pertinent fact Mr. Crandall ignores is that (more often than not) FLREA access fees charged to REAL taxpayers don't go to support REAL public lands infrastructure or the REAL management agencies responsible for those public lands. Instead they go to private companies contracted to collect those fees. Thus the fees often directly benefit private recreation-based companies rather than public lands. So, Mr. Crandall is lying. With such a self-serving view of public lands, it is no wonder fee supporters like Mr. Crandall and his corporate-sponsored organization is willing to completely misstate and misrepresent the truth about America's public lands and the vast numbers of citizens who actually both use and treasure them. Such as Mr. Crandall's statement justifying charging fees by claiming only "a relatively small portion of the total US population" uses public lands and facilities and therefore should "pay more." That twisted view of public ownership ignores that all Americans own these land s equally and all Americans pay taxes

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

equally to support those lands. That is the very concept of public lands and why they are "public." The lie that only "a relatively small portion of the total US population" accesses and uses their National Forests, Parks, Wildlife Refuges, etc., is absurd. No one who has actually hiked a local forest trail, visited a National Park, or makes a living from public lands tourism would seriously make or defend that claim. It's ludicrous. In my state alone, public lands account for more than a third of Colorado's land area, and visitation to those public lands supports our number one industry: Tourism. That is no "small" portion, but rather the largest portion of our economy. Those are the real facts, Mr. President. Millions upon millions of Americans annually visit their public lands. Our taxes sustain public lands, and in return visitors to those lands sustain both local economies and state-wide economies. Forcing citizens and taxpayers to pay additional fees to access our own lands (whether a forest trail, picnic table, scenic drive, or parking area) merely causes those visitors to go elsewhere, somewhere they don't have to pay an additional access fee for. Mr. President, my idea is to restore REAL Congressional funding to our public lands and land management agencies, and eliminate FLREA. Fees are an insult to all American taxpayers, and only speaks to the corrupt mismanagement of our national forests, and parks, and economy. Sincerely, Thomas Phillips

(O.K., I guess there are character limits and it would be nice if people were told that before writing and posting. So the rest reads): ...Thus the fees often directly benefit private recreation-based companies rather than public lands. So, _____ is lying. With such a self-serving view of public lands, it is no wonder fee supporters like _____ and his corporate-sponsored organization is willing to completely misstate and misrepresent the truth about America's public lands and the vast numbers of citizens who actually both use and treasure them. Such as _____'s statement justifying charging fees by claiming only "a relatively small portion of the total US population" uses public lands and facilities and therefore should "pay more." That twisted view of public ownership ignores that all Americans own these lands equally and all Americans pay taxes equally to support those lands. That is the very concept of public lands and why they are "public." The lie that only "a relatively small portion of the total US population" accesses and uses their National Forests, Parks, Wildlife Refuges, etc., is absurd. No one who has actually hiked a local forest trail, visited a National Park, or makes a living from public lands tourism would seriously make or defend that claim. It's ludicrous. In my state alone, public lands account for more than a third of Colorado's land area, and visitation to those public lands supports our number one industry: Tourism. That is no "small" portion, but rather the largest portion of our economy. Those are the real facts, Mr. President. Millions upon millions of Americans annually visit their public lands. Our taxes sustain public lands, and in return visitors to those lands sustain both local economies and state-wide economies. Forcing citizens and taxpayers to pay additional fees to access our own lands (whether a forest trail, picnic table, scenic drive, or parking area) merely causes those visitors to go elsewhere, somewhere they don't have to pay an additional access fee for. Mr. President, my idea is to restore REAL Congressional funding to our public lands and land management agencies, and eliminate FLREA. Fees are an insult to all American taxpayers, and only speaks to the corrupt mismanagement of our national forests, and parks, and economy. Sincerely, _____

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

OHVs. OHV recreation including that using snowmobiles does not belong on federal land or land which is maintained in a natural or near-natural state anywhere. The pastime is harmful to wildlife and destructive of vegetation and soil. It pollutes waterways and the air. Its noise, exhaust fumes and fast moving vehicles are incompatible with many other activities which have far less adverse impacts on the environment, e.g., hiking, bird watching, and picnicking. Many off-roaders are not law-abiding and many managers of the activity are more interested in promoting it than enforcing the laws and regulations which govern it. The only places where the activity should be allowed are in sound-proof buildings which have purifiers for any air exhausted outside. I am sure that many off-roaders would consider it fun to ride in city parks or in the halls and on the large staircases of many museums. Providing amusement for the off-roaders would not, I hope, be a justification for allowing it in these locations.

we can all benefit by having garden spots set aside in our cities. Think of all the senergy we would save if we didn't ship all our food from California every day. And we could at last have a sense of "community"!

Mountaintop removal should be outlawed.. Not only is it destroying plant ecologies which have survived past ice ages; it's making people sick! I have a friend in W. Va who's been chronically sick from living a block away from the Monongahela River. That flows into the Ohio, which flows into the Mississippi, which flows into the Gulf. Which is sick enough already.

OHV access to our public lands. OHV recreational access to our public lands helps promote and educate on the beauty of the great outdoors. This in turn promotes conservation and good stewardship of our public land. Much more so than those who try to restrict access. Allowing family and friends to ride dirt bikes together on our public lands and you improve the long term conservation movement. Restrict access and you remove this opportunity to grow good stewards of the land and encourage abuse.

Uh, cheatgrass expansion usually comes when dry rangelands burn more frequently than they historically have, rather than in places that are overdue for burning. There are lots of reasons why cheatgrass got to those areas in the first place. I would agree that most of us try to get rid of cheatgrass - the problem is it's almost impossible to do so. What makes this plant even scarier is that it seems to be adapting better to cold temps than it used to. When you combine this with the warming west...it doesn't look good. I'd love to see substantial federal investment in integrated cheatgrass control, as well as more emphasis on how to enhance native range plants/grasses that compete against the cheat.

Increase funds for federal conservation programs. Support funding levels of conservation programs for Federal land management agencies to enable them purchase from willing sellers State school trust lands (or easements) with high conservation values for conservation purposes. These programs include the Interior's and Forest Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund, NOAA's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, USDA-Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program and the Defense Department's Readiness and Environment and Protection Initiative (REPI).

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Prioritize land exchanges for state inholdings. Improve Federal and State land management by prioritizing Federal-State land exchanges or other compensation for State inholdings in existing Federal conservation areas. State school trust lands have a fiduciary duty to earn income for their beneficiaries that can make their land uses incompatible with conservation purposes.

Use state indemnity selections as an alternative to land exchanges. Improve the Federal-State partnership for newly proposed Federal conservation areas by integrating land exchanges and access for State public land inholdings prior to the time that these proposals are initially announced. These measures can help expedite resolution of incompatible land uses and strengthen landscape-scale partnerships.

The endangered species act has been abused and perverted to lock out public access to non wilderness lands. It needs to be abolished or rewritten with the public's interest in mind.

what is the point of having National Forests, funded by the government (the people) if not all people can use and enjoy them

Global warming is a hoax. Leave decisions about wilderness and designated lands up to residents of the counties and states where those lands are located. It's everyone's responsibility to take care of the the land. Education is key, not designated land.

I recently visited Yosemite National Park and was both awed by it's beauty and suprised by the numbers of people visiting. I think it is vital to our nation to protect our few wilderness areas, maintain limits on the number of visitors, and budget enough money that these areas can be maintained. Europe may have it's castles, USA has it's wilderness. We must keep wilderness areas as pristene as possible and not allow business and personal or corporate fiscal gain to impinge on what has always been Americas treasure. It is the federal goverments responsibility to maintain our natural treasures while continuing to make it affordable for all to visit.

I just want to add the points that environmental groups have already skillfully articulated: - Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. - Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. - The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. - Relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened. - Standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter. - Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. After the oil spill disaster in the gulf, let's learn the lessons and prevent a similar sort disaster in Bristol Bay.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide incentives to cities to build, maintain green spaces. Not only do we need to protect our wilderness areas, we also need to create local, community-based green spaces. I propose that the Fed Govt encourage this by offering financial incentives to cities, municipalities, to build, maintain community green space. I see the benefits to be multifaceted. 1. Parks, P-patches, get people outside more if they exist and are accessible. 2. Not everyone can travel to a national park. Obesity in children is the highest in our poorer populations. This is a group that we should be target with Americas Great Outdoors. [{ Link } 3. P-patches teach young and old about growing our own food. 4. Provide programs at these local green spaces for young and old to participate in. Keep it multi-generation focused.

Add Outdoor activity to education curriculum. In this country, we do not incorporate outdoor experiences into our elementary and/or high school curriculum. I propose that the US government require all elementary schools to include an outdoor experience into their school year. This outdoor experience is defined as: 1. One week in length of full immersion. 2. Must incorporate an activity that utilizes the local natural environment, e.g., near a big lake then teach boating or swimming; near a mountain, then take kids skiing, etc. 3. Should begin in elementary schools; this helps build a life long interest in the sport, outdoor experience, etc.

A friend of mine who grew up in a small village in France told me that in elementary school the kids are taken up into the mountains to ski for two weeks each year. This is a part of the school curriculum, as much as, learning math and English. My first reaction is that we (the US) could never do this sort of thing. But why not? I have read that aerobic exercise makes kids smarter. Read this article in the NYT blog: { Link } Perhaps exercise can help raise our kids national test scores.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I noticed that the Original Poster in this discussion thread mentioned a "nationwide pass" concept for volunteers. This stimulated my interest. There was a vaguely similar notion brought up in the "Respect volunteers" discussion thread. I would like to reiterate what I said in the other thread, because it seems to be even more relevant here: I am a recreational trails volunteer on the 513,000-acre Allegheny National Forest, Pennsylvania's only national forest. For many years, my fellow volunteers and I have done extensive work on the A.N.F., building and maintaining trails and bridges, as well as keeping watch over the condition of said trails. During the 2008 Recreation Facilities Analysis (R.F.A.) on the A.N.F., U.S.D.A. Forest Service personnel proposed decommissioning many developed recreation sites on the A.N.F. Planning reports also revealed proposals to rely more heavily on volunteer work to maintain recreation facilities. I attended R.F.A. events held by the agency. During an R.F.A. workshop on 28 June 2008 at the Bradford Ranger Station, I asked about this proposal to rely more heavily on volunteers. Ranger Scardina told me the proposal was indeed being considered and this was the public's chance to give input and ask questions. I asked Ranger Scardina what the Forest Service's Volunteer Management Policy (V.M.P.), the policy (or policies) that governed how agency personnel recruit, retain, and recognize volunteers, was and if I could see the agency's V.M.P. documentation. Indeed, I made it very clear to Ranger Scardina that V.M.P.'s would require a fourth "R", for "recording", to account for a properly kept record of volunteer donations of time, equipment and material to benefit public recreation facilities. If a volunteer offers to use his chainsaw to clear storm debris out of a trail, and the agency requires a chainsaw-operating trails volunteer to take chainsaw safety and other training in order to work on trail maintenance, and the agency also requires that volunteers keep the agency personnel informed of trail work bees, then it would logically follow that said agency personnel would also be responsible for keeping a record of these donations to the agency as prescribed by the agency V.M.P. Correct? (Also of note: the Forest Service requires volunteers and volunteer-organizations to keep a current, signed volunteer agreement on file with the agency.) Whatever incentives (be they perks, a free "pass", or any other form of benefit) would (or would not) be offered to volunteers for their donations to the public good, one would think the proper procedures would be spelled out in the agency's V.M.P. So, one would think that with the Forest Service's doors open for their "open house" workshop in June of '08, and with the invitation for the public to ask questions about such an obvious issue as volunteer management, that the agency administrators would be right there with the obvious answer to an obvious question. At the very least, one would expect that it would not be hard to get the answer in a timely fashion. It's been over two years. To this day, my V.M.P. question remains unanswered. Nobody ever acknowledged my question. The point I took home: the Forest Service personnel don't want to answer the question. If they do have a V.M.P., they aren't sharing it with the volunteers. If anyone in Washington is watching this discussion, and you want feedback from the volunteers on public lands, here it is: It's time for all United States public land management agencies involved with public recreation facilities and volunteer-donations to review their V.M.P.'s, if they have any. Volunteers who donate so much to our nation's public lands are entitled to know that their donations are being applied properly, and that agency administrators are required to handle volunteer management responsibly. Without accountability and agency transparency, responsible volunteer management will not happen. Without responsible volunteer management, there is no logical reason to expect that any agency

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

will be serious about recruiting, retaining and recognizing volunteers, let alone recording their good deeds. In addition, I would like to point out that the public needs greater assurance that these land management agencies are "playing by the rules" when it comes to proposing the application of fee-levying powers on our public lands. Case in point: the Kelly Pines Recreation Area in the Allegheny National Forest. In September of 2009, the Marienville Ranger Station sent out a scoping letter (under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969) announcing a new project: the Kelly Pines Recreation Area would be converted to a U.S. Fee Area. Here is the N.E.P.A. page: { Link } As soon as I received this scoping letter, I started making inquiries. Word of this scoping letter reached Washington in just hours. I less than two weeks, the Kelly Pines project was cancelled. The reason? It was improper of the the Forest Service to propose the conversion to a Fee Area using the N.E.P.A. scoping process. Fee Area proposals are supposed to be announced and decided through the F.L.R.E.A. process. Clearly, the Kelly Pines project was not being handled through the proper channels. How can we, as citizens, taxpayers and public lands users, be assured that this F.L.R.E.A. is a sound policy when the aborted Kelly Pines project underscores how easy it would be for a conversion of an existing Forest Service recreation area from free to a U.S. Fee Area through improper channels? As a private citizen, I exercised my free speech rights to blow the whistle on this obviously improper initiative. But how would you like to be in my shoes and still be involved in a relationship with those same Forest Service administrators afterwards? Would you feel more, or less, comfortable if you did not have access to an agency's V.M.P.?

Stop the FS before they steal again!. The FS is illegally charging money to park and hike in Sedona, Arizona. They were recently found guilty of this in court. So my "challenge", my "obstacle", in recreating in the outdoors is an out of control, rogue agency which continues to extort money from me and everyone else. _____, you've got to help us. Stop the FS before they steal again!

The Mountain Bikers want access to our Pacific Crest Trail in order to gain further access to our National Trails. The protections from bicycles were put in place for a reason. Foot traffic and Hoof traffic just do not mix with a power vehicle of any kind. These trails were meant to be used in the tradition of yesteryear. It is one of the few ways left to experience what our forefathers did. Mine walked from the East to the West. The best experience I have had was riding my horse "down the trail" knowing that my ancestors had also. If we allow the Mountain Bikers access to these trails I believe that we will lose a great deal of the serenity of our National Systems.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Called by some "the stealth conservation land system" due to its near invisibility and lack of notoriety—from its lack of status within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—America's National Wildlife Refuge System is our only federal conservation land system devoted primarily to wildlife, plants and their habitats. Its status remains an unfortunate artifact of history in that it grew refuge by refuge, often in small parcels, over the past 107 years. Any such land conservation system, created today and containing as it does 150 million acres with astounding reach and diversity, would automatically be established as a separate, stand-alone federal agency. Its sister agencies—the National Park Service and National Forest Service—grew rapidly in their earliest years and thus were granted agency status. The National Wildlife Refuge System contains an unequaled diversity of fish, wildlife, plants and their respective habitats and these wonders are generally made readily available to all Americans wanting to see and learn about our living natural resources in their native environments. The Refuge System is one of the best chances we have for sustaining our full array of wildlife during and beyond threats such as Global Climate Change, but to do that awesomely challenging job, it needs to be at the peak of its capabilities rather than chronically hampered as it is by shortages in staff and other vital resources, while beset by such environmental catastrophes as the Gulf Oil Spill. It is time for us to realize that now is the best time to elevate the Refuge System to full agency rank, and help it grow to its full potential. America in the twenty-first century deserves it and needs it.

Perhaps you should address your comments to the BLM--or an idea related to horses and burros. The concept of making the National Wildlife Refuge System a separate agency seems a strange place to be making arguments in favor of improving operations under the Wild Horse and Burro Act (the NWRS is not even subject to that law). Our wildlife habitats across America are under stress from many causes--development, highways, extending agriculture, global warming, disastrous wildfires to mention a few--and our refuge system is striving to combat such losses and degradation. They are hampered by lack of support and resources as they have been chronically. They need to get public attention to their needs and to the enormous potential for keeping America's wildlife, plants, and fish--and their habitats--healthy and available to a caring public.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Landscape preservation policy priorities . On behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), we write to provide the following comments and recommendations for the development of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO). NRDC, a national environmental membership organization with more than 1.3 million members and online activists, has a long history of efforts to protect and conserve sensitive lands and natural resources of this country. We respectfully propose the following landscape preservation policy priorities be incorporated in fundamentally shaping the AGO initiative: Preserving Iconic Landscapes. NRDC recommends that AGO identify wild places across the nation facing an imminent threat from development or exploitation. These places include unprotected lands with wilderness character, pristine coastlines, ancient forests threatened by deforestation, and unspoiled wildlife habitats. These special places currently provide sanctuary for endangered wildlife, curb global warming, preserve biodiversity, and enrich the lives of countless Americans. Protecting the Last Wild Forests. Intact forests provide a multitude of benefits including the preservation of wildlife and habitats, the source and protection of unpolluted drinking water, and opportunities for refuge and recreation. In addition, preserved forest (and other) lands are better able to absorb carbon dioxide and withstand changing climate conditions caused by global warming. Setting Aside Land for the National Park and National Wildlife Refuge Systems. National Parks preserve our natural landscape and our history. In addition, they support and can, revitalize communities, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, and celebrate local heritage. We must continue to protect these scenic places while also seeking measures to expand the inventory of these lands. Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Land & Wild Program Natural Resources Defense Council

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A Review of Successful and Promising Nonfederal Conservation Approaches: Rural communities are leading the charge to address the myriad challenges that face their communities and the conservation challenges of the Nation. There are literally hundreds of examples of projects, programs, and organizations involved in this new era of restoration and stewardship. We know that in the communities where we live and work, our efforts and innovative solutions are beginning to have an effect. Rather than list each group, we have chosen to highlight what we believe to be the most significant characteristics shared by these nonfederal approaches. Although there is no set formula for success, there are a number of general commonalities. Beneficial aspects and components of successful non-federal groups and programs include:

- Collaborative process: A commitment to the use of collaborative processes that are open, transparent, and inclusive to define, implement, and monitor conservation and sustainability goals and activities on the landscape. Collaboration and partnership among unusual allies, such as the involvement of landowners, forest workers, businesses, conservation organizations, civic groups, tribal entities and governments, and federal and state agencies leads to solutions that are durable and address the public interest. Collaborative efforts have helped to break gridlock in federal lands management, and have resulted in the development and implementation of projects that employ local people and restore our forests and watersheds. Collaboration is the foundation for economic prosperity in the West, yet it lacks financial and programmatic support from federal agencies and most federal programs.
- Power sharing: Shared decision-making power is vital to a healthy and democratic system of management and stewardship. Decision-making processes that recognize social, economic, and political inequity and strive to balance and improve these disparities bring communities together, rather than pit them against themselves and each other.
- Triple bottom line commitment: Use of integrated approaches that address ecological conservation and restoration, local natural resource-based economic development, and healthy communities and strong social fabric.
- Business and market strategies: A business and markets orientation - driven by local expertise - that finds a role for federal conservation investments as a complement to broader business models or economic development plans that combine public and private capital and "sweat equity" for lowest cost, highest value outcomes and long-term, sustainable revenue streams.
- An "all-lands" approach: Developing solutions that work across landscapes, from public land forests, to higher elevation private forests, to the ranges and valley bottomlands managed (whether on public or private land) by ranchers and farmers. Effective management and policy recognizes and addresses the social, economic, and ecological connections between private and public lands that share ecological process and span the forest, range, farm, and aquatic systems that characterize the West.

Target Institutions for Transformational Change The role of non-federal entities in conservation and stewardship in the American West cannot be overstated. There are many types of entities that are filling important intermediary roles that neither government nor the private sector can fulfill on their own. The movement of community-based conservation and stewardship that is redefining the West is being built largely by the will and capacity of community, or place-based organizations, and by regional organizations. These intermediary institutions complement one another and ensure that our conservation strategies can go deep into the communities and landscapes we care about, but also spread, aggregate, and regionalize the practices and approaches that emerge from local efforts.

1. Community, or place-based organizations: In the past 15 years, we have seen the

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

success of locally-based groups that occupy the space between diverse stakeholders, civic groups, businesses, private landowners, rural citizens, and government agencies. We refer to these groups as community-based organizations (CBOs). They have been essential to the successful implementation of both private land conservation efforts by landowners and the collaborative management of federal lands, and have also excelled at harmonizing conservation objectives with local economic needs. CBOs play social, ecological, and technical/financial roles, including:

- providing critical support to collaborative structures and institutions that assemble diverse interests and viewpoints, and facilitate toward common ground;
- serving as a buffer and conduit between landowners and federal and state agencies (as well as other outside resources) - in many areas there is significant mistrust of government agencies and CBOs can serve as a trusted go between;
- serving to "re-aggregate" the landscape by coordinating and aligning multiple landowners (including government agencies) to achieve landscape scale impacts, particularly in fragmented landscapes;
- providing skilled resources and staffing to help local landowners, businesses, and contractors understand and work with state and federal conservation programs, and successfully meet the requirements (proposals, bids, contracts, etc.) necessary to capture and utilize funding;
- adding value to federal program delivery by integrating federal programs into a broader economic and environmental strategies supported by local communities; and,
- reaching ecologically and economically significant scales and impacts by intergrating public and private lands at a whole watershed scale that effectively bridges the "silos" imposed by agency missions.

2. Regional "scaling" organizations: To support and leverage the work of CBOs and rural small businesses, we must also promote the regional organizations and networks that convene multiple local efforts, help to disseminate lessons learned, and accelerate innovation diffusion. These networks are integral to scaling-up place-based efforts. Regional organizations can be based in urban or rural areas and work across multiple sectors, communities, counties or states. Regional organizations play many roles at different times in the process of implementing community-based conservation and economic development strategies. Regional organizations provide improved access to technical expertise, tools, and philanthropic communities. They build and bring political clout to promote solutions, and connect rural non-profits and entrepreneurs to wider networks, markets, and opportunities. Roles include:

- helping to catalyze and build local organizations in places lacking this capacity, as well as strengthening existing groups;
- providing bridge staffing, facilitation, and technical support in communities that are rebuilding institutional and social capacity;
- serving as liaison between local efforts and federal officials by providing the venues and forums to initiate and build relationships when they are absent and/or frayed;
- reaching out to distant stakeholder groups and interests that have traditionally been at odds with local efforts and assisting with reframing and building common ground;
- documenting and communicating trends and issues that affect multiple communities to improve policies and procedures, including providing vital data collection, mapping, and analysis;
- organizing multiple communities to work together to promote shared vision and solutions; and
- promoting peer-to-peer learning and adoption of best practices.

3. Small rural businesses in natural resource management: Natural resource management functions, renewable energy development, conservation-oriented forestry or agriculture and other businesses can provide high quality, living wage employment protecting, restoring, and stewarding the environment. They include jobs that restore and maintain

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

ecosystem functions and services, such as clean air, clean water, and forest and rangeland health and biodiversity, as well as those that reduce energy, material, and water consumption, and move us toward a low carbon economy. The promotion of rural green businesses can help local economies recover by expanding value-added businesses and industries, and creating living-wage jobs that have positive multiplier effects in rural communities (economic activities that maintain and enhance essential local businesses, such as hardware stores, sawmills, feed stores, and by extension, schools and hospitals). For-profit enterprises play the vital role of providing:

- service and stewardship work on public and private lands;
- entrepreneurial skills, training and employment opportunities;
- capital assets needed for conservation work;
- equipment necessary to perform land management objectives;
- processing and manufacturing facilities to create wood and agricultural products to provide building materials, food, and energy;
- ability to take demonstration projects to scale and profitability; and,
- market-driven revenue streams that reduce long-term dependence on public funds.

VII. Federal Programs That Complement Community-Based Conservation & Economic Development: RVCC Proposals for the America's Great Outdoors Initiative

The case for federal investment: Restoring and stewarding our nation's natural resources offers significant workforce and small business development opportunities worthy of federal investment. Investment in rural development from philanthropic organizations can never be enough. Federal policy and programs have the potential to build on the success of community-based efforts, bringing them to a scale that will begin to address the magnitude of our economic and ecologic challenges. The country's long term resource, food, and energy security is dependent on this investment.

RVCC criteria for effective federal programs:

- Recognize the interdependence between ecological, economic, and social sustainability. The health of our rural communities and landscapes are interdependent - federal policies must not sacrifice one to advance the other.
- Support and invest in collaborative processes and partnerships with diverse interests.
- Invest in building the capacity of rural citizens, businesses, local government, and community-based and regional organizations to provide employment, sustainable natural resources, ecosystem services, and quality and land-based experiences.
- Promote the creation and retention of long-term family wage jobs tied to public and private land management through contract procurement and grant selection and award criteria. (Not all job creation is equal; scarce government investment should focus on high quality jobs and businesses that can offer sustained local employment and provide the best social and ecological value.)
- Promote and accommodate best practices, allowing for adaptive management and flexibility as long as effective accountability and multi-party monitoring of management actions are in place.
- Ensure the transparency and accessibility of programs and contracts to operators, land owners and managers, contractors, community-based organizations, and small rural businesses.
- Provide clear and achievable financial matching criteria.
- Include performance measures and promote and fund monitoring and evaluation.
- Are as flexible as possible (outcomes vs. outputs driven), and are relatively simple to apply for and administer.

Four federal programs that illustrate elements of the above criteria:

1. The USDA Forest Service Economic Action Program (EAP) (not funded since 2002) helped rural communities and businesses dependent on natural resources become sustainable and self-sufficient. It provided technical and financial assistance to communities throughout the rural West to retain and build the capacity of small, rural businesses to implement restoration and stewardship activities and utilize material that is removed as a

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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result of sustainable land management activities. The Economic Action Program is the only Forest Service program authorized to provide this type of business assistance. 2. Community Forest Restoration Program-New Mexico (USDA Forest Service-State and Private Forestry). In 2001, with the passage of the Community Forest Restoration Act of 2000 (Title VI, Public Law 106-393) the U.S. Forest Service created the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) in New Mexico to provide up to \$5 million annually towards cost-share grants to stakeholders for experimental forest restoration projects on public land designed through a collaborative process. These projects may be entirely on one, or any combination of, Federal, Tribal, State, County or municipal forest lands, and must include a diverse and balanced group of stakeholders in their design and implementation. Each project must also address specific restoration objectives, including: wildfire threat reduction, reestablishment of historic fire regimes, reforestation, preservation of old and large trees, and increased utilization of small diameter trees. 3. Community Forest Landscape Restoration Program (USDA Forest Service-National Forest System). Congress, under Title IV of Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (PDF, 40 KB), established the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The purpose of the CFLR Program is to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. This legislation requires a broad coalition of interests to assess the landscape together, identify priorities, and sketch out a collaborative plan of action. CFLRP promotes benefits to local rural economies and forest health and should be a model for other programs. The CFLRP is not a grant making program, but rather creates the CFLR Fund, which must be appropriated annually and supports implementation activities associated with a collaboratively developed landscape scale strategy that aims to: • encourage ecological, economic, and social sustainability; • leverage local resources with national and private resources; • facilitate the reduction of wildfire management costs, including reestablishing natural fire regimes and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire; • demonstrate the degree to which various ecological restoration techniques achieve ecological and watershed health objectives; and • encourage utilization of forest restoration by-products to offset treatment costs, benefit local rural economies, and improve forest health. National Forests compete to be selected as one of 10 projects per year, with no more than two from each Forest Service region per year, and each Region must contribute 50% of the cost of carrying out and monitoring ecological restoration treatments on National Forest System (NFS) land. The CFLRP is authorized to be funded at \$40 million annually. 4. The USDA NRCS Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) in the 2008 Farm Bill is an innovative program that encourages landowners to work together to implement and maintain conservation practices that affect multiple landowners at a landscape scale. Instead of piecemeal delivery of programs ranch by ranch or program by program, this initiative supports projects that involve partnership among groups of landowners to address conservation priorities, regulatory requirements, and innovative cross-boundary resource management. This program invites community-based organizations to partner with NRCS for the delivery of specific Farm Bill conservation programs to landowners in ways that meet and respond to local needs, opportunities, and customs. While federal programs like CCPI recognize the value that community-based organizations provide, they fail to provide financial assistance to these partner organizations for their contributions in engaging and mobilizing local populations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Recommendations for Existing Federal Programs and Proposed Strategies and Activities to Achieve the Goals of the Initiative GOAL 1. Support and Invest in the Ecologic, Social, and Economic Resiliency of Rural Communities and Working Landscapes, both Public and Private, in the West (Department: Agriculture, Interior. Agency: Forest Service, Rural Development, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management) Actions for existing programs: A. Increase interagency collaboration. The high percentage of public lands in the West creates a unique rural landscape where even private lands are situated in a public lands context. Examples include rural communities surrounded by public land, a checkerboard of private and public land, or private land adjacent to a large swath of public forest or rangeland. In these public lands communities with natural resource-based economies, the land management agencies are often an economic driver. Increased dialogue between the Forest Service, BLM, FWS and Rural Development would leverage scarce government dollars and promote rural communities' efforts to engage in conservation and rural development. Additionally, land owners and stewards often work at the intersection of multiple land management agencies. For example, a rancher might work with the NRCS on private land, graze on both USFS and BLM public land allotments, and intersect with the USFWS and even NMFS for endangered species conservation measures. Increased interagency collaboration has the potential to expand the effectiveness of programs and regulations by integrating agency mandates, practices, and standards promoting the management of whole landscapes for conservation. In addition to potential cost reductions, increased cooperation also reduces transaction costs for communities intersecting with public agencies, and increases trust and understanding between local populations and the federal government. Actions for new strategies: A. Create and fund a Community Capacity and Collaborative Support Grant Program at \$50 million annually to enhance conservation and rural economic resiliency. Investment is needed to retain and build the capacity of community based organizations, collaborative groups, and small rural businesses to participate in landscape level forest and watershed restoration and stewardship activities, utilize the by-products of land management activities for traditional and emerging markets in payments for ecosystem services, and develop mitigation and adaptation strategies for climate change. Investment is essential to economic recovery in rural communities adjacent to public lands. The program will provide funding through competitively awarded grants to directly support and/or provide technical assistance for:

- organizational and staff support, including facilitation;
- travel related to collaborative group activities;
- workshops and training related to current science, management practices, facilitation, contracting, and other topics that will assist groups in building their capacity to meet their project goals;
- natural resource related business support services, including marketing and utilization of products and services resulting from land stewardship, grant writing, bonding access, federal bidding procedures and other technical advice;
- landscape level planning and modeling and watershed assessment;
- design of silvicultural and restoration prescriptions and treatments to enhance forest and watershed resilience, adaptation, and restoration;
- design and coordination of monitoring of ecological, economic, and social impacts of projects and management actions;
- dissemination of best practices and tools to assist collaborative groups and community based organizations in project development, implementation, and monitoring; and
- outreach and engagement of youth and traditionally under-represented populations.

Outcomes:

- Ensure community based

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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organizations (CBOs) and collaborative groups have the financial and technical resources to convene, plan, implement, and monitor landscape scale restoration projects. • Strengthen the relationships and partnerships between the land management agencies, collaborative groups, and community-based organizations. • Create peer-to-peer learning networks among CBOs and collaborative groups working on projects across the region and in adjacent regions that will accelerate learning and adoption of best practices. • Provide training and technical assistance related to collaboration, multi-party monitoring, project design, and stewardship contracting for government agency employees, non-profit, and business partners. • Ensure best practices are employed and shared consistently across the region among nonprofits, federal employees, and the business community. • Support and enhance small rural businesses providing quality jobs in land management and restoration. GOAL 2. Support Landscape Scale Restoration and Community Revitalization for Public Lands Communities (Department: Agriculture. Agency: Forest Service) Actions for existing programs: A. Fully fund the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) authorized under the Forest Landscape Restoration Act at \$40 million in FY2012. This legislation requires a broad coalition of interests to assess the landscape together, identify priorities, and sketch out a collaborative plan of action. CFLRP should receive full funding for the next ten years and should be used as a template for other programs to invest in restoration and land stewardship across the West. Outcomes: • Appropriations for this legislation in FY12 would continue to fund priority landscapes and allow the creation of new priority landscapes, ensuring adequate funding to support comprehensive forest restoration and rural community benefit. B. Support and expand use of stewardship contracting as a tool for implementing collaborative forest restoration and stewardship. Stewardship contracting has been one successful and critical tool for fostering restoration of our nation's forests and watersheds while creating community benefit. The expansion of stewardship contracting should be should be aggressively pursued. Outcomes: • Increased administrative efficiency, collaboration, revenue for other restoration needs, and community benefit. C. Support and fully fund the Forest Service Integrated Resource Restoration Line Item in FY2011 President's budget. Consolidating funding for restoration and stewardship into one line item will enable land managers to effectively budget for integrated outcomes related to land management goals. The IRR line item proposed in the FY2011 President's budget fixes an outdated structure that stovepipes activities that are better integrated to give land managers more effective budget tools to achieve landscape scale restoration and stewardship objectives on the ground. We support all three components of the IRR line item, with the addition of performance measures and other related guidance. Actions for new strategies: A. The federal government must accommodate, support, and adequately fund collaborative efforts on the landscape. Collaborative community-based efforts present a high area of opportunity to make progress on the gridlock that has surrounded public land management in the West. Land management agencies must support and participate in these efforts. By participating, the land management agencies are not abdicating their authority, but are rather partnering with stakeholders to develop management solutions that have diverse support. Funding for CBOs is integral to support the collaborative structures and institutions that assemble diverse interests and viewpoints, and facilitate them towards common ground. GOAL 3. Promote the Resources and Incentives Needed to Support Private Landowners and Land Managers to Remain Viable and Restore the Land (Department:

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Agriculture. Agency: Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service) Actions for existing programs: A. Fully fund the Farm Bill Conservation Programs at the mandated levels for FY 2011, \$4.3 billion. The NRCS conservation programs authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill are critical to enhancing ecosystem health on private lands across the nation. These programs provide technical assistance and financial incentives for conservation of private forest and ranchlands. These include programs such as the Forest Stewardship Program (State and Private Forestry), Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (Natural Resources Conservation Service). Outcomes: • Private forest and rangeland owners have the ability to achieve long-term, sustainable forest and range management. • Forests continue to be productive, and farm and ranchlands maintain stewardship activities. • Private lands are effectively able to contribute to maintaining public benefits like clean air and water, wildlife and fish habitat, and wildfire risk reduction, and are protected in an economically viable manner. B. Fund the new Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program at \$10 million annually. This program, established in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, provides an important tool for maintaining working landscapes, managing the pressure to develop green spaces so vital to the character and integrity of many communities, and management of changing land ownership. The program provides matching funds to help county or local governments, nongovernmental organizations, or Native American tribes acquire forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses, and are economically, culturally, and environmentally important to local communities. Funds will also be set aside for technical assistance. This assistance will help each grant recipient develop and implement a required forest management plan, crafted with a high level of community input. Outcomes: • Drive conservation activity into areas where federal conservation grants have not traditionally been directed, particularly oriented around rural communities. • Conserve thousands of forested acres and increase carbon sequestration and storage values that would otherwise disappear as a result of development. • Retain and revitalize rural livelihoods through conservation and maintain important positive rural character and culture that is fundamental to America. C. Fully fund and increase the flexible utilization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), while increasing expenditures under Forest Legacy and USFS Land Acquisition. This program is critical to stem development pressure and helps conserve working landscapes, curb future costs to the public, and secure the land base for rural economic activities. Congress should give direction to federal and state agencies to increase utilization of LWCF funding for the purchase of conservation easements on private lands. Outcomes: • Assists states in protecting working forests that ensure water quality, provide habitat, produce forest products, and create opportunities for recreation and other public benefits. • Use of conservation easements on private lands will help prevent conversion and turnover of multi-generational private forest and ranch lands. GOAL 4: Promote Clean Energy Development through Community-scaled Biomass Utilization and Climate Change Adaptation in Rural Communities (Department: Agriculture and Interior. Agency: Forest Service and Department of Energy) Integrated community-scaled biomass utilization strategies can offset the costs of forest restoration and hazardous fuel reduction activities while contributing to rural economies, energy independence, and carbon emission reductions. The following programs represent a comprehensive approach to encouraging efficient, community scaled biomass utilization

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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strategies across the nation. It is critical that Congress fund all of these programs as each fulfills a different need for support, planning, and implementation of broad biomass utilization and climate change planning strategies. Actions for existing programs: A. Fully Fund the Community Wood Energy Program at \$5 million. The Community Wood Energy Program (CWEP) was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill at \$5 million. The program will provide up to \$50,000 grants to qualifying state or local government entities to prepare “community wood energy plans.” Once a plan has been approved, the qualified applicant may request up to 50 percent matching grants toward the capital cost of installing biomass energy systems. B. Increase funding for the Woody Biomass Utilization Grants program under the Hazardous Fuels line item to \$10 million. The Woody Biomass Utilization Grant Program, funded under the USFS Wildland Fire, Hazardous Fuels Line Item supports the utilization of forest restoration byproducts from National Forest system lands. Outcomes: • The competitive grant program funds projects that demonstrate an increased use of woody biomass from forest restoration and hazardous fuels projects on National Forest System lands where there little or no capacity to use this low value material. • This grant program reduces forest management costs by increasing the value of biomass and other forest products generated from forest restoration activities, generates renewable energy from woody biomass, builds industry infrastructure around national forestlands where limited or no industry infrastructure exists, and expands working relationships between local forest products businesses and Forest Service offices. C. Fully fund the Climate Change Adaptation Initiative in the Department of the Interior at \$17.5 million. The Department of the Interior’s Climate Change Adaptation Initiative is a proactive approach to adapting to and mitigating for climate change impacts to our nation’s public lands. The approach is collaborative and based on integrating science with the broad experiences of partners across regional landscapes. This program will be vital to understanding potential climate change impacts on public lands and reaching social agreement on management actions necessary to address impacts and implement mitigation measures. D. Require the USDA Forest Service and NRCS to join the DOI Climate Change Adaptation Initiative efforts to increase interagency coordination on landscape scale approaches to climate change adaptation. Congress should advise USDA to join the DOI Climate Change Adaptation Initiative to increase interagency collaboration and coordination on climate change strategies. Actions for new strategies: A. Establish a Revolving Loan Fund to support retro-fits of institutional facilities that use petroleum-based fuels to generate thermal energy. B. Ensure every region has a USFS woody biomass utilization specialist. Currently, not every region has them, and in some regions the position is less than 1 FTE. C. Expand the USFS Fuels for Schools and Beyond Program. The Fuels for Schools and Beyond Program, administered by the US Forest Service in Region 1, is a significant resource for communities in the region to explore conversion of boilers at elementary and secondary schools to woody biomass from petroleum-based fuels. D. Establish a new competitive research and development program within the Department of Energy or the USDA Forest Service to encourage the development and implementation of appropriately-scaled dispersed energy generation technologies. GOAL 5: Provide Opportunities for Youth to Engage in Rural Communities and Resource Management, Building their Skills and Paving the Way for Future Employment as Land Stewards (Department: Agriculture, Interior. Agency: Forest Service, BLM) Actions for existing programs: A. Increase funding and strengthen existing programs to retain and encourage the next generation to remain and invest in their

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

family land-based businesses. Increased funding and outreach for participation in programs such as the Beginning Rancher Program (Farm Bill program) helps promote long-term conservation and intergenerational transfer of open space and working lands. Actions for new strategies: A. In addition to the US Forest Service Kids in the Woods program, create programs that support the engagement of young adults in the outdoors through job training and employment. Youth oriented work programs successfully train and employ America's young adults and serve as a critical bridge to long term, stable employment. Agencies can contract with these programs to achieve public land management goals. Employing young adults from rural communities builds community leaders, keeps youth and dollars working locally, and builds natural resource management capacity in public lands communities. Outcomes: • Meaningful and quality career opportunities for young adults. Summer youth programs have their place, but they often lack any capacity to transition into long term employment or careers. • Demand for forest-based work often exceeds available contracting opportunities. Ironically, thousands of acres of projects sit on the shelf due to administrative, financial, and legal barriers. Investment in programs that provide real opportunity for youth can help meet our natural resource management needs. • Youth would gain skills and interest in working in public land management. B. Create a program or re-tool an existing program (AmeriCorps, state Civilian Corps) to direct funding to land management agencies' district offices in rural areas to employ recent college graduates for 1 to 2 years. Recent college graduates are struggling to find jobs in the economic recession and often the land management agencies are understaffed and underfunded. Public land management is diverse work, providing opportunities to grow technical skills (i.e. facilitation, stakeholder outreach, archeological surveys, geology, botany, engineering, etc.), as well as labor-intensive skills (i.e. thinning and fuels reduction, riparian restoration, trail building and maintenance, facility construction, etc.). Outcomes: • Expose recent graduates to rural communities and career opportunities in land management. • Make progress on the backlog of work on public lands. C. Federal agencies should inventory existing youth programs across agency jurisdictions to 1) review programs for redundancy and, 2) create an appendix or report on all existing programs to help streamline program delivery. Funding for youth-related programs exists within numerous federal agencies – Agriculture, Labor, Transportation, and Interior. Thus, identifying and accessing these various programs to support long term youth training and employment programs is a challenge. Outcomes: All information about existing youth programs would be compiled in a single source to allow for greater accessibility. D. Restructure matching requirements and timelines to give organizations adequate time to secure the required financial support to make projects a reality. Match requirements for many federal programs place a significant burden on organizations that provide youth-oriented training, education, and work programs. These organizations are required to invest significant time and resources in identifying and securing private funds to meet match requirements.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Executive Summary To create a lasting legacy from a focus on America's Great Outdoors, the Administration must consider how to strengthen a movement that comes from the grassroots of America's rural communities, embraces problem-solving over partisanship through collaboration with diverse interests, and yields economies that are centered around the conservation and restoration of thriving populations of wildlife, functional ecosystems, and valuable ecosystem services. Many past conservation initiatives have focused on small islands of protectionism while the vast fabric of the western social, economic and ecological landscape are sidelined (and deteriorate). Through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, the Administration has the opportunity to address what one of this nation's greatest devotees of natural places - Wallace Stegner - asked for decades ago: to build a society that would match our scenery. The models, tools, experience and leadership are in place to achieve this today - the opportunity is for the federal government to invest in them to secure a lasting American Great Outdoors. The following four elements are central to achieving this vision: 1. Rural Leadership: The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC) is comprised of western rural and local, regional, and national organizations that have joined together to promote balanced conservation-based approaches to the ecological and economic problems facing the West. We are a network of organizations, among many that are emerging in the West, that support and directly steward the public and private lands that are the centerpiece of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We believe that rural communities have a central role to play in ensuring an all-lands approach is successful for the rural and urban Americans who depend on these landscapes. 2. The Working Landscape: While select additions to our nation's wildernesses, parks, and monument systems may be warranted, the real opportunity ahead is focused on the working landscape. The vast majority of western landscapes must transition from the old economies of extraction to new economies of stewardship. As we have seen in dozens of exemplary communities and watersheds, when endowed with the appropriate resources, communities can create land management regimes that protect and enhance valuable wildlife and ecological systems, while creating a more resilient base for the economy. 3. Collaborative Resource Management: Not only are America's working landscapes the places that can produce multiple values (wildlife, ecosystem services, food, fiber, fuel, and healthy, outdoor experiences), they are also the places where it is possible to dismantle debilitating political polarization. Collaboration among diverse interests (including state and federal agencies, tribes, businesses, conservation and recreational groups, etc.) is the essential ingredient to create sustainable, adaptive management regimes on the working landscape. Thus, collaboration is the central component that must be strengthened to truly achieve the Administration's desired landscape scale outcomes. 4. Capacity-Building: To strengthen collaborative resource management, the federal government must work with state entities, philanthropy, and private investors to expand the capacity of key institutions. Community-based organizations, regional intermediary organizations, and local business entrepreneurs can all yield enormous ecological and economic advances across the working landscape IF pivotal investments are made to increase their capacity. II. Introduction The undersigned participants in the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition appreciate this Administration's willingness and effort to reach out to citizens to solicit guidance for its America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We believe that the natural resources, recreation opportunities, communities, and cultural values of the rural West are valuable to the Nation as a whole for the

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

goods and services, knowledge, and skills they provide. Our shared vision is one in which working, interconnected public and private landscapes provide multiple value streams to rural communities themselves, and society at-large, and are part of the solution to our greatest 21st century challenges (including sustainable provision of natural resources, climate change, loss of ecological capital, uniting citizens across political divides, etc.). Communities involved in the stewardship of public and private lands play a vital role in protecting robust ecological functionality and biodiversity, producing food, fiber, fuel and other raw materials, providing aesthetic value and recreation opportunities, and supporting the cultural and economic underpinning of rural America. The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC) is comprised of western rural and local, regional, and national organizations that have joined together to promote balanced, conservation-based approaches to the ecological and economic problems facing the West. We are a network of organizations that support and directly steward the public and private lands that are the centerpiece of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We believe that we have a role to play in ensuring that an all-lands approach is successful both for our communities, and also for the millions of urban Americans who use these resources for food, fiber, and vital cultural and recreational renewal. The key to protecting biodiversity and ecological resilience is to invest in rural communities and landscapes across our nation. The RVCC includes many place-based collaborative conservation initiatives that are charting a new course for rural communities, one which can supply urban areas with local sustainable goods, provide land stewardship services, and promote sustainable recreation and education opportunities that strengthen the connection between American society and the land. This transition is not just about rural communities providing goods and services to urban centers. Rural communities are also positioned to transform their own economies, create local markets, and become healthier, more economically resilient, and maintain the critical tie to the land that is central to culture (including tribal peoples, ranchers, commercial fishermen, etc.). America's Great Outdoors Initiative must recognize the need and value of a stewardship economy to strengthen rural communities. The rural West is positioned to play a vital role in solving some of America's greatest challenges: • managing and restoring public lands, managing wildfire, and practicing stewardship; • protecting working landscapes, connecting ecological systems across the landscape, and promoting responsible private lands stewardship; • developing a new economy with rural green jobs, infrastructure, and markets; • creating sustainable rural development strategies; • securing energy independence by promoting renewable energy investment; • mitigating and adapting to climate change; • developing and participating in socially and economically equitable ecosystem services markets; • providing job and volunteer opportunities for youth to engage in their communities as land stewards; and • providing food, fiber and other integral ecosystem services. III. Signatories The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition is made up of diverse participants; the undersigned look forward to working with you on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Adams Resource Stewards Washington DC Gerry Gray, Acting Executive Director, American Forests Wisconsin Professor Thomas W. Mitchell, Associate Professor of Law, University of Wisconsin Law School IV. Opportunity and Vision for a Successful America's Great Outdoors Initiative The resource management paradigm in the West is transforming. Over the last 15 years we have seen strides in collaboration, the advent of community-based organizations that strike a balance between conservation and sustainable

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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utilization, and the development of new rural enterprises, contracting mechanisms, and markets that support both healthy ecosystems and local economies. After decades of polarization that harmed ecosystems, rural economies and the fabric of local communities, leaders from rural communities across the western United States are showing that rural people have the energy and creativity to develop locally crafted solutions that provide resilient, long-term jobs based on good stewardship of the natural environment. While specific additions to our nation's wilderness, parks, and protected area systems may be warranted, the vast majority of western landscapes need help transitioning successfully from the old economies of extraction to new economies of stewardship. The real opportunity at hand in 2010 is to develop a comprehensive system that will yield sustainable resource economies across the landscape, restore and conserve the ecological resources of working landscapes, and heal the social polarization that has too often resulted from resource management disputes. What is needed is a determination to change the broad social, economic and ecological system operating on the land. Only a focus on the working landscape can align diverse strands of the American society to work together for common interest, at a scale that is ecologically and economically meaningful. We see potential for the most success and the greatest opportunity to galvanize diverse Americans and leverage our natural assets by supporting collaborative community-based efforts that represent the best of small rural entrepreneurs and land managers, skilled non-profit organizations, and the federal government all working together to transform our rural economy and landscape. As the Administration considers an array of options to reconnect citizens to America's Great Outdoors, we urge you to support and invest in the ecological, social, and economic resiliency of rural communities and working landscapes in the West. Far from an obligation, it is the only real opportunity to create systemic improvement for our resources, our economy, and our people. What are working landscapes? Working landscapes are vast areas outside of designated parks and wilderness that have high biological values. They are private and public lands that provide food, fiber, clean water, and wildlife habitat. They are lands that support the lives and livelihoods of rural farms, rural ranches and rural forest communities. They are lands on which millions of Americans rediscover the great outdoors: camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, and climbing. Working landscapes are not parks, and they are not sacrifice zones. They represent the next great challenge in conservation across the West, which is: how do we both use land and also take care of it in perpetuity? The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (www.sustainablenorthwest.org/rvcc) is a movement of diverse entities answering this question today. The RVCC develops and promotes policy solutions through collaborative, place-based work that recognizes the inextricable link between the health of the land and the health of the people.

V. Challenges and Barriers to Vibrant Rural Communities and Working Landscapes: In the West, the federal government owns over 54 percent of the land (ranging from approximately 29 percent of the land in Montana to approximately 85 percent of Nevada's land base). Rural communities with natural resource based economies, especially those in public landscapes, have endured boom and bust cycles for decades, following the country's alternating impulses to exploit or protect its natural resources. These communities are a part of the solution to environmental challenges. However, they continue to experience instability, including high rates of poverty, unemployment, and overall economic decline, and consequently, the infrastructure to participate in a green economy is seriously diminished. Social and economic challenges are

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

mirrored and often exacerbated by pervasive ecological challenges, including: catastrophic wild land fire, diminished and degraded water supplies, overstocked and diseased forests, the spread of invasive and noxious species, habitat fragmentation and conversion, and species decline, among others. While there is significant opportunity for rural communities to achieve economic, social, and ecologic resiliency, there are many barriers that must be overcome:

- An aging population managing the land - in most communities, it is unclear if there is a next generation willing or able to take up the mantle of continued land stewardship. This leads to an erosion of the skills and knowledge needed to effectively steward and manage working landscapes
- The decline of processing facilities and loss of traditional markets and infrastructure has significantly changed the financial realities associated with owning and managing land - whether forested or agricultural - and the ability to find family wage jobs in public lands management.
- Resource conflicts and misunderstandings, including litigation involving water quality and quantity, fish, plant and wildlife protection, game and non-game habitat management, invasive species, and the regulations often polarize communities, and limit opportunities.
- The limitations to potential capital creation created by the fact that many rural communities and governments have a significant publicly-owned land base that restricts potential revenue streams.
- The federal land management agencies often structure contracts to maximize administrative efficiencies and minimize cost by creating a small number of large contracts to be performed by large crews over short periods of time, and by awarding contracts to the lowest bidder. This structure inhibits the creation of local family wage jobs and a regular program of work on public lands.
- Significant market and tax pressures to convert or fragment family-owned working lands leading to the loss of valuable wildlife habitat and ecosystem services including open space.
- Land fragmentation and conversion is a threat through significant divestment of assets by large corporate forest land owners.
- The often isolated nature of rural communities makes it difficult for rural small businesses and landowners to access business assistance, skill training opportunities, and information about federal incentive programs for private lands conservation and/or contracts to work on public lands.
- The high up-front capital costs needed to invest in renewable energy infrastructure leaves many rural businesses and governments at the margins of being able to contribute to America's energy needs by sustainably harnessing local human and natural capital.
- Divestment in the land management agencies and continual understaffing limits the ability to work with and provide tools and capacity to rural communities.
- Inconsistent or lacking investment in the institutions (both public and private) that provide for civic engagement, long-term planning, and support rural leadership and entrepreneurship.

VI. A Review of Successful and Promising Nonfederal Conservation Approaches: Rural communities are leading the charge to address the myriad challenges that face their communities and the conservation challenges of the Nation. There are literally hundreds of examples of projects, programs, and organizations involved in this new era of restoration and stewardship. We know that in the communities where we live and work, our efforts and innovative solutions are beginning to have an effect. Rather than list each group, we have chosen to highlight what we believe to be the most significant characteristics shared by these nonfederal approaches. Although there is no set formula for success, there are a number of general commonalities. Beneficial aspects and components of successful non-federal groups and programs include:

- Collaborative process: A commitment to the use of collaborative processes that are open, transparent, and inclusive to define, implement,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

and monitor conservation and sustainability goals and activities on the landscape. Collaboration and partnership among unusual allies, such as the involvement of landowners, forest workers, businesses, conservation organizations, civic groups, tribal entities and governments, and federal and state agencies leads to solutions that are durable and address the public interest. Collaborative efforts have helped to break gridlock in federal lands management, and have resulted in the development and implementation of projects that employ local people and restore our forests and watersheds. Collaboration is the foundation for economic prosperity in the West, yet it lacks financial and programmatic support from federal agencies and most federal programs.

- Power sharing: Shared decision-making power is vital to a healthy and democratic system of management and stewardship. Decision-making processes that recognize social, economic, and political inequity and strive to balance and improve these disparities bring communities together, rather than pit them against themselves and each other.
- Triple bottom line commitment: Use of integrated approaches that address ecological conservation and restoration, local natural resource-based economic development, and healthy communities and strong social fabric.
- Business and market strategies: A business and markets orientation - driven by local expertise - that finds a role for federal conservation investments as a complement to broader business models or economic development plans that combine public and private capital and “sweat equity” for lowest cost, highest value outcomes and long-term, sustainable revenue streams.
- An “all-lands” approach: Developing solutions that work across landscapes, from public land forests, to higher elevation private forests, to the ranges and valley bottomlands managed (whether on public or private land) by ranchers and farmers. Effective management and policy recognizes and addresses the social, economic, and ecological connections between private and public lands that share ecological process and span the forest, range, farm, and aquatic systems that characterize the West.

Target Institutions for Transformational Change

The role of non-federal entities in conservation and stewardship in the American West cannot be overstated. There are many types of entities that are filling important intermediary roles that neither government nor the private sector can fulfill on their own. The movement of community-based conservation and stewardship that is redefining the West is being built largely by the will and capacity of community, or place-based organizations, and by regional organizations. These intermediary institutions complement one another and ensure that our conservation strategies can go deep into the communities and landscapes we care about, but also spread, aggregate, and regionalize the practices and approaches that emerge from local efforts.

1. Community, or place-based organizations: In the past 15 years, we have seen the success of locally-based groups that occupy the space between diverse stakeholders, civic groups, businesses, private landowners, rural citizens, and government agencies. We refer to these groups as community-based organizations (CBOs). They have been essential to the successful implementation of both private land conservation efforts by landowners and the collaborative management of federal lands, and have also excelled at harmonizing conservation objectives with local economic needs. CBOs play social, ecological, and technical/financial roles, including:
 - providing critical support to collaborative structures and institutions that assemble diverse interests and viewpoints, and facilitate toward common ground;
 - serving as a buffer and conduit between landowners and federal and state agencies (as well as other outside resources) - in many areas there is significant mistrust of government agencies and CBOs can serve as a trusted go between;
 - serving to “re-

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

aggregate” the landscape by coordinating and aligning multiple landowners (including government agencies) to achieve landscape scale impacts, particularly in fragmented landscapes;

- providing skilled resources and staffing to help local landowners, businesses, and contractors understand and work with state and federal conservation programs, and successfully meet the requirements (proposals, bids, contracts, etc.) necessary to capture and utilize funding;
- adding value to federal program delivery by integrating federal programs into a broader economic and environmental strategies supported by local communities; and,
- reaching ecologically and economically significant scales and impacts by intergrating public and private lands at a whole watershed scale that effectively bridges the “silos” imposed by agency missions.

2. Regional “scaling” organizations: To support and leverage the work of CBOs and rural small businesses, we must also promote the regional organizations and networks that convene multiple local efforts, help to disseminate lessons learned, and accelerate innovation diffusion. These networks are integral to scaling-up place-based efforts. Regional organizations can be based in urban or rural areas and work across multiple sectors, communities, counties or states. Regional organizations play many roles at different times in the process of implementing community-based conservation and economic development strategies. Regional organizations provide improved access to technical expertise, tools, and philanthropic communities. They build and bring political clout to promote solutions, and connect rural non-profits and entrepreneurs to wider networks, markets, and opportunities. Roles include:

- helping to catalyze and build local organizations in places lacking this capacity, as well as strengthening existing groups;
- providing bridge staffing, facilitation, and technical support in communities that are rebuilding institutional and social capacity;
- serving as liaison between local efforts and federal officials by providing the venues and forums to initiate and build relationships when they are absent and/or frayed;
- reaching out to distant stakeholder groups and interests that have traditionally been at odds with local efforts and assisting with reframing and building common ground;
- documenting and communicating trends and issues that affect multiple communities to improve policies and procedures, including providing vital data collection, mapping, and analysis;
- organizing multiple communities to work together to promote shared vision and solutions; and
- promoting peer-to-peer learning and adoption of best practices.

3. Small rural businesses in natural resource management: Natural resource management functions, renewable energy development, conservation-oriented forestry or agriculture and other businesses can provide high quality, living wage employment protecting, restoring, and stewarding the environment. They include jobs that restore and maintain ecosystem functions and services, such as clean air, clean water, and forest and rangeland health and biodiversity, as well as those that reduce energy, material, and water consumption, and move us toward a low carbon economy. The promotion of rural green businesses can help local economies recover by expanding value-added businesses and industries, and creating living-wage jobs that have positive multiplier effects in rural communities (economic activities that maintain and enhance essential local businesses, such as hardware stores, sawmills, feed stores, and by extension, schools and hospitals). For-profit enterprises play the vital role of providing:

- service and stewardship work on public and private lands;
- entrepreneurial skills, training and employment opportunities;
- capital assets needed for conservation work;
- equipment necessary to perform land management objectives;
- processing and manufacturing facilities to create wood and agricultural products to provide building

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

materials, food, and energy; • ability to take demonstration projects to scale and profitability; and, • market-driven revenue streams that reduce long-term dependence on public funds. VII. Federal Programs That Complement Community-Based Conservation & Economic Development: RVCC Proposals for the America's Great Outdoors Initiative The case for federal investment: Restoring and stewarding our nation's natural resources offers significant workforce and small business development opportunities worthy of federal investment . Investment in rural development from philanthropic organizations can never be enough. Federal policy and programs have the potential to build on the success of community-based efforts, bringing them to a scale that will begin to address the magnitude of our economic and ecologic challenges. The country's long term resource, food, and energy security is dependent on this investment. RVCC criteria for effective federal programs: • Recognize the interdependence between ecological, economic, and social sustainability. The health of our rural communities and landscapes are interdependent - federal policies must not sacrifice one to advance the other. • Support and invest in collaborative processes and partnerships with diverse interests. • Invest in building the capacity of rural citizens, businesses, local government, and community-based and regional organizations to provide employment, sustainable natural resources, ecosystem services, and quality and land-based experiences. • Promote the creation and retention of long-term family wage jobs tied to public and private land management through contract procurement and grant selection and award criteria. (Not all job creation is equal; scarce government investment should focus on high quality jobs and businesses that can offer sustained local employment and provide the best social and ecological value.) • Promote and accommodate best practices, allowing for adaptive management and flexibility as long as effective accountability and multi-party monitoring of management actions are in place. • Ensure the transparency and accessibility of programs and contracts to operators, land owners and managers, contractors, community-based organizations, and small rural businesses. • Provide clear and achievable financial matching criteria. • Include performance measures and promote and fund monitoring and evaluation. • Are as flexible as possible (outcomes vs. outputs driven), and are relatively simple to apply for and administer. Four federal programs that illustrate elements of the above criteria: 1. The USDA Forest Service Economic Action Program (EAP) (not funded since 2002) helped rural communities and businesses dependent on natural resources become sustainable and self-sufficient. It provided technical and financial assistance to communities throughout the rural West to retain and build the capacity of small, rural businesses to implement restoration and stewardship activities and utilize material that is removed as a result of sustainable land management activities. The Economic Action Program is the only Forest Service program authorized to provide this type of business assistance. 2. Community Forest Restoration Program-New Mexico (USDA Forest Service-State and Private Forestry). In 2001, with the passage of the Community Forest Restoration Act of 2000 (Title VI, Public Law 106-393) the U.S. Forest Service created the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) in New Mexico to provide up to \$5 million annually towards cost-share grants to stakeholders for experimental forest restoration projects on public land designed through a collaborative process. These projects may be entirely on one, or any combination of, Federal, Tribal, State, County or municipal forest lands, and must include a diverse and balanced group of stakeholders in their design and implementation. Each project must also address specific restoration objectives,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

including: wildfire threat reduction, reestablishment of historic fire regimes, reforestation, preservation of old and large trees, and increased utilization of small diameter trees. 3. Community Forest Landscape Restoration Program (USDA Forest Service-National Forest System). Congress, under Title IV of Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (PDF, 40 KB), established the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The purpose of the CFLR Program is to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. This legislation requires a broad coalition of interests to assess the landscape together, identify priorities, and sketch out a collaborative plan of action. CFLRP promotes benefits to local rural economies and forest health and should be a model for other programs. The CFLRP is not a grant making program, but rather creates the CFLR Fund, which must be appropriated annually and supports implementation activities associated with a collaboratively developed landscape scale strategy that aims to: • encourage ecological, economic, and social sust

Dear President Obama, We need your help in delivering the Everglades message to every 4th grade student in the State of Florida and their families. We have the tools...we just need your endorsement!! Let Charlie Pierce capture their hearts through the heartwarming (true) story. Connect them to nature and let the young people be the driving force behind Everglades restoration. Our Everglades is a one of a kind ecosystem and it is America's treasure. How can Federal Government help? Funding of AGO projects like this one that can reach every student in the state of Florida will help connect everyone in our state with Everglades. The Everglades provides drinking water to over 6 million people in Florida. Students will carry the message home. To deliver the message, we need to provide teacher support and help to "train the trainer". Funding for programs in every school district (similar to the pilot program being implemented in Palm Beach County Schools) would support books, traveling exhibits, and buses to our nearest Wildlife Refuge for field trips.

To ensure that private working forests continue to be a vital part of America's Great Outdoors, the WFC calls upon the Obama Administration and Congress to adopt goals and innovations in three broad areas:

- * Strengthen existing and emerging markets for working forests
- * Structure tax policy to support working forests
- * Invest in working forests conservation

Maintaining and increasing the public benefits of working forests ultimately requires that forest ownership be financially rewarding. To do this, we recommend changes in government policies to make it easier for landowners to continue to maintain their forests as forests in the face of growing competing economic pressures. Tax policies, conservation programs that offer funding and assistance to landowners in managing their lands and strong markets for forest goods and services, can help create an environment that makes it easier for landowners to afford the investments necessary to keep forests as forests.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The converging information provided by these listening sessions, the acknowledgment in Secretary Vilsack's August 2009 "all lands" approach that the challenges facing private forest owners need to be addressed and the most recent USDA report, Private Forests, Public Benefits, lead us to recommend the following solutions.

Government policies should make it easier for landowners to continue to maintain their forests as forests. We believe the adoption of these recommendations will help keep working forests working and continuing to provide important public benefits:

Become a strong advocate, with the Secretary of Agriculture as lead, for the use of renewable agricultural and forestry-based products in the construction, upgrading and maintenance of buildings.

Through education and new marketing initiatives and policies, promote sustainably-produced wood as a preferred material in green buildings. This will be achieved by:

Directing federal agencies and encouraging state agencies to recognize - in procurement policies - wood as a preferred material in green buildings

Creating federal policies to encourage the use of sustainably-produced wood products in the construction, upgrading and maintenance of federal buildings.

Supporting the Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Design Standards for new federal buildings and upgrading of existing facilities and calling for increased use of wood products.

Including sustainably-produced wood and paper products in the USDA Bio Preferred Label program.

Using existing USDA facilities to showcase the use of wood and offer interpretive services to other government officials and those engaged in building design and construction

Asking Congress to create tax incentives to encourage use of sustainably-produced wood products in home construction, upgrading and maintenance.

Asking Congress to recognize the benefits of wood products in legislation to improve home energy efficiency.

We recommend that the federal government -- and the Secretary of Agriculture specifically -- direct USDA's Office of Environmental Markets to analyze the supply/demand drivers of environmental markets and encourage use of the results by policymakers to determine the best approaches to stimulate the growth of environmental services markets. This effort will build on and learn from other working ecosystem market models including those underway through the Department of Defense's efforts to work with private landowners to conserve habitat around important national security infrastructure.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If Congress does not act, the estate tax will dramatically increase in 2011, applying a 55% tax to all estates valued at over \$1 million. In most cases, even a small forested tract is valued at well over \$1 million. This tax will impact many more family forest owners in 2011, leading to more forest loss - just at the time when we will begin to see an unprecedented intergenerational transfer of property because of aging demographics.

Improving the estate tax to encourage the conservation of working forests by eliminating the tax or increasing the tax exemption level for private forests.

Tax policy can also create strong incentives for keeping forests as forests and the federal tax deduction for conservation easements is a good example of such a policy.

Congress must take action to make this deduction permanent, increase the tax deduction, and ensure that the benefit is available to the full spectrum of forest owners. We urge the Administration to champion this legislation as a means to conserve America's Great Outdoors.

Even in this extremely challenging budget environment, investment in the nation's forests is essential to conserving and sustaining America's Great Outdoors. To assist private forest owners with their efforts to conserve and sustain their land, the Administration and Congress must provide:

- * Technical assistance to help land owners integrate the most sustainable management practices into their land management to ensure supplies of clean water and air, wildlife habitat, recreation sites and timber production.

- * Assistance in combating pests and pathogens which are decimating forests both directly on their land and on adjacent public lands as well.

- * Funds to help permanently preserve some of the most environmentally important land through conservation easements or outright public purchase.

- * Solid, credible information about our forest resources to ensure sound decisions are made and threats are identified.

- * The ability to better account for the environmental benefits of working forests when determining land value in conservation programs.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

With this in mind, our goal is to move towards increased investment in working forest conservation through the following programs:

- * \$45 million for the Forest Stewardship Program
- * \$66 million for the cooperative Forest Health Program
- * \$76 million for the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program
- * \$100 million for Forest Legacy as proposed by the President through the Land And Water Conservation Fund

Additionally, we support the long-term goal of providing full and permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Forest Legacy Program and funding for USDA conservation programs at the levels mandated in the 2008 Farm Bill. We also encourage measures by USDA to better identify and quantify the environmental benefits of working forests when determining the value of land enrolled in conservation programs.

Recognize motorized recreation as a valued contributor to America's Great Outdoors

Promote motorized recreation as a means to get youth outdoors

Acknowledge the valuable role that motorized recreation can play in improving the physical and mental well-being of motorized recreationists, including youth riders.

Recognize the importance of motorized recreation to many rural economies

Recognize motorized recreation's contribution to all forms of recreation by supporting continuation and expansion of the Recreational Trails Program

Please save our natural lands!

PROTECT OUR SHARED OUTDOOR SPACES!!!

Please help create jobs to build this economy.

PASS ENHANCED CONSERVATION EASEMENT LEGISLATION!

This includes air and water in all forms.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please do not block our access you have beautiful preserves.

Notice the LA & Vegas smog in the background picture ? It seldom goes away.

This letter is important to me. I would like all this to be part of what I leave behind.

I love nature please do everything you can to protect our beautiful lands. Thank You God Bless

WE MUST INVEST IN AND SAVE OURSELVES - WE ARE NATURE, WE NEED NATURE, WE CAN'T SURVIVE WITHOUT IT.

We need to save these special gifts now before it is too late. Our environment is part of our fabric of life.

I love nature and I want to tell you to please do everything you can to protect our beautiful lands. Thank You God Bless

Save our lands by promoting and adding incentives to return to our small towns rather than develop the mountains around them.

Dear Washington, Please consider the protection of our clean water and air because that is an irreplaceable asset to human kind.

Please drastically increase conservation funding. We greatly need more protected places to enjoy and preserve for future generations.

Please stop development on undisturbed lands, use BROWNFIELDS. CONTROL POPULATION GROWTH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! thank you,

Please address the current and future watershed controversies so that all can work together to protect our fragile environments in the future.

In addition, I would like to stress the importance of wildlife corridors and roadless areas to both myself personally, our nation, and nature in general.

By destroying, not preserving, these lands you are jeopardizing not only our future, but that of all the children of this great country including your own.

I would like stronger measures to prevent further introduction of invasive plants and other living creatures that is currently destroying our native forest and waters.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

once it's gone, it's gone forever. the human species has almost destroyed our beautiful planet. before it's too late, take action now to save what's left.

In addition, I asking you to focus on new ways to better save our threatened species and their habitats, including connecting existing protected areas and fighting climate change. Jeremy Hance

As a father, you realize how important the outdoors are to your children after seeing places you once thought special now just a strip mall or failing office space and think "How sad."

Please expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and protect potential expansion areas from harm by the BLM! I love this beautiful new Monument here in southern Oregon. It is a treasure .

Please expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and protect potential expansion areas from harm by the BLM. This magnificent area is under threat from ill-advised and high opposed logging sales.

Please stop clear cutting of our forests. Once the hardwoods are harvested it takes years for trees and underbrush to grow back, even when replanted. Meanwhile creeks, rivers, natural springs are violated.

All around me, I see new businesses and homes springing up where once corn, soybeans and other crops grew. The loss of habitat saddens me and I wish we could reverse this trend and use what we already have.

We also must remember that when we lose land, animals,habitat,water ways,marshlands. These valuable resourses are gone forever and cannot be brought back to the way it was (JUST GONE FOREVER). Thanks.

One of the main reasons that I voted for you was because I thought you would be committed to conserving the environment. Please support the initiatives that protect our land and water for the animals and ourselves.

Although there are places i will not be able to visit personally, knowing that they are there soothes my soul. And the parks and forests that I have visited have provided me with experiences that I wish evaryone could have.

The time is now to act. Please don't let us down. As an old Indian proverb says, we do not inherit the earth, but rather we borrow it from our grandchildren. Do not listen to the voices of greed, but do the right thing. Thank you.

We continue to destroy without looking back. If something isnt done soon... NOW, it will disapear forever. Gone is gone... there is no getting it back. There is so much waste, but we continue to ignore the issues... Please help us.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are destroying so much and we will never get it back. We all have to stop thinking about ourselves and start thinking about what we are leaving for future generations. What will they think of us if we don't save all that we have now?

We want future generations to show that these are not game, or dumping grounds, but Nature. God's wish is to keep the Earth safe. Have you seen Wall-E? Did you see the state of the Earth? If something doesn't happen, that will be Earth.

I am doing the best I can on a personal level. I volunteer with the Solano County Land Trust, I support the Nature Conservancy and other environmental organizations, and I plant native plants in my garden. But I can't do it alone.

Control suburban sprawl. Oppose rampant highway expansion, such as the CalTrans plans for a 8-to-16 lane expansion of Interstate 5 in coastal north San Diego County. Support converting at least one lane to rail or other rapid transit.

forests should have irrigation trenches to maintain constant sufficient moisture to avoid the dryness that asks for disaster. reservoirs for this and every use of fresh water must be vastly multiplied. to allow rain etc to flow to sea is perverse.

I am doing my part to help save our planet, from walking more, picking up litter, and planting trees, so I expect my government to do the same and more. Please help by doing all that you can and by educating others to do all that they can. Thank you

In general, I am vehemently against leasing or selling out public lands to corporations or others for the purpose of plundering the resources (logging, water, etc.). Please address this national crisis now. It is important for us and our future.

I appreciate your proclamation of September as National Wilderness Month. We are trying like hell to balance the energy development and forestry logging initiatives of the Bush Administration that are negatively impacting Wyoming's great outdoors.

As a taxpayer (in a high bracket) and an extremely avid outdoors enthusiast, I want to voice my support for the use of tax dollars to conserve more of our phenomenal country and ensure that we continue to value part of that which makes our country great.

I also believe it is essential to set aside vast marine reserves for our marine species to be able to replenish their numbers naturally, and move out into fishing areas. This is a much more efficient and less expensive way to assure diversity in our blue waters for our future generations.

As a Wyoming native, who has recently been able to revisit some special areas from my childhood, I am heartbroken by some of the damage to these special places and fearful of what the future may bring. Please do everything possible to preserve these wonderful wild places for generations to come.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

?1. Conserving existing land and water is easy... Leave it alone & allow us to enjoy it's beauty!! 2. Destroying land and water resources is not real hard to do and done by those who don't care and are just \$greedy\$!!!! 3. Re-establishing de...secrated land is nearly impossible!!! Seems like a NO Brainer to me!

Perhaps one of hardest things to do is to protect our country's open spaces and our last undeveloped lands without preventing development of our great country. I trust that you, the United States' federal, state and local governments are able to protect America's great natural wonders for Americans, like myself, to enjoy. Thank You for your time.

I also strongly believe that protection of America's bodies of water are of the utmost importance right now. I hope and pray that you will work to enact and enforce stronger legislation to clean up and protect our dwindeling fresh water resources and hold polution emitting industries fully responsible for their actions. Thank You for your time,

It seems essential that we protect natural resources so that future generations have an opportunity to experience the natural world and learn the basics of where and how their food comes from. It troubles me that so many city dwellers have no awareness of weather conditions, the effects of droughts, floods, insect infestations, etc.

It seems to me that, as was done years ago, putting Americans to work expanding and upgrading and repairing our public lands, building new facilities, trails and services, would be the ideal solution to more than one problem in this day and age of economic struggle. Please consider such a program when looking at solutions for creating jobs and saving more of our treasured land .

I am two months away from turning 72 years of age. I have been an avid outdoorsman since I was able to accompany my father on a fishing trip or a hike. I have experienced wilderness, especially in Wyoming and Alaska, having crossed on foot the entire Wind River Range of the Rocky Mountains several times, and over the last 19 years, exploring Alaska. Stop the Pebble Mine!

We also ask you specifically to expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon and direct BLM to protect the proposed expansion areas so they will not be damaged by logging (such as the proposed Sampson Cove timber sale) or other developments in the meantime. My sister lives in southern Oregon near this area, and we have visited there several times over the years.

It is especially important to encourage the rational co-existence of man and nature, the co-existence of farming and wild life. The lessons of nature, man's position in nature, and the challenges that wild life sometimes pose, are lessons our grandkids should have the benefit of too. Aside from preserving wild areas, we need to find a way to save the shrinking glaciers suffering from global warming.

Help too also protect our coast lines and waterways. I was raised touring the country and its parks. I hope that my future grand children and children will be able to share the beauty and wonders of nature with their children. In Europe their treasures are in buildings and monuments. In America our wealth is in our unique and wonderful parks and places only God could have made. Please help preserve it for the future. Thank you!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Public schools should take students to parks where they can learn by seeing, experiencing. Change immigration laws in order to bring order out of chaos of separated families. Science classes from Kindergarten. Geology part of it. What makes weather another. Plants. POPULATION Control by allowing sex education, contraceptives, abortions, and edu that there is just enough planet, no more than enough for unwanted population growth.

I live in SW Oregon. Beautiful varied country with forests, serpentine meadows, and clear flowing rivers. The wildlife and native flora are threatened by logging, mining, and rampant development. Please support the expansion of the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument. Please also help to create the Siskiyou Wild Rivers National Monument in the Illinois Valley. Both areas are unique & deserve protection. uniuuniqueuanddeserve protection.

WE MUST help as much as possible by doing small things such as using a few re-usable recycled bottles for our drinks and taking shorter showers. This world is so beautiful, and I can't believe that so many people don't care about how much rainforest is destroyed and how fewer years the glaciers have. We, as people, are inhabitants dependent of this Earth and its resources. As we destroy the beauty and resources our planet has to offer, we destroy ourselves as well.

We need to repeal the exemption granted to the oils and gas industries in the 2005 Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Superfund Laws. These bills were pushed through congress by then VP Cheney, and signed into law by President Geo. W. Bush. Since then, the oil and gas industry have been destroying our water sheds, aquifers, aie quality, and have negatively impacted our way of life and infringed upon our property rights. This is a direct violation of our Constitutional Rights, and must be stopped.

Our lands, flora, and fauna are being trampled, overused, being killed and going extinct. One by one and relentlessly. There is no replacing them. When the oil is gone, when the gas is gone, when we've disturbed ecosystems with our vehicles, when the whales are gone, what's left? These places and species are never put back the way they were, no matter what corporations say or how much they are fined. Once it's gone it's gone. We are only as healthy as we keep our planet. Let's stop the rape.

It is obvious that as the population of our country as well as the planet grows this objective is becoming an ever-growing important issue. If you stop and think about it you will realize that it will become an ever increasing economic issue as well. Tourists from all over the world flock to our National Parks in large numbers each year just as Americans and many other world citizens flock to the historic cities of Europe that have protected their historic heritage for so long. We not only cannot afford to devalue our national outdoor assets but it is important to also increase them as we continue to grow and increase the need for their use.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I believe we have a responsibility to protect this nation's treasured places for future generations of Americans. That is why I would like to see the promise of full, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) fulfilled in order to achieve the Obama Administration's conservation vision for the 21st century. LWCF is a simple idea that remains as important today as it was 45 years ago when President John F. Kennedy enacted it into law. Please support full, dedicated funding of LWCF to protect clean drinking water, support jobs in local economies, and conserve our common heritage and natural areas for wildlife, recreation, and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

I believe we have a responsibility to protect this nation's treasured places for future generations of Americans. That is why I would like to see the promise of full, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) fulfilled in order to achieve the Obama Administration's conservation vision for the 21st century. LWCF is a simple idea that remains as important today as it was 45 years ago when President John F. Kennedy enacted it into law. Please support full, dedicated funding of LWCF to protect clean drinking water, support jobs in local economies, and conserve our common heritage and natural areas for wildlife, recreation, and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

I agree with all the above. But I hope Great Outdoors America will be dedicated to preserving quiet uses on trails, the time-honored, traditional, now threatened horse backriding and hiking that has been the favorite pastime of Americans for centuries. As you know these traditional, more contemplative trail uses have been increasingly displaced by faster, more aggressive motorized and mountain bike uses and deserve a special protection against these threats. Motorcycle users require up to 100 miles of trail per day, mountain bikes up to 50 miles a day, with the result that their high-mileage trail systems have created habitat fragmentation on an unprecedented scale that dwarfs the horse and hiking trail systems of previous generations. The BLM and Forest Service are commendably reigning in these uses and curbing the uncontrolled proliferation of these "spatially promiscuous" uses across vast western landscape. I hope this AGO initiative will hark back to the foundations of the American outdoor ethic and honor and do justice to hiking and horse trails. More, my back ground is in conservation biology and from a habitat fragmentation standpoint, trails of any kind can slice up effective habitat, reducing usable habitat for edge-sensitive species, and breaking up critical "interior" habitat and security areas needed by many species, or as reproductive or severe winter habitat. So my basic message is that: in the process of promoting outdoor recreation, the AGO initiative continue to set aside untrailed, "trail-less" areas, places that will permanently keep their wild undiscovered nature and their habitat value for their own intrinsic value independent of their utility to man. Thank you for the opportunity to Comment.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A Proposal to Protect and Restore the Kaibab Plateau By Designating a 925,000-acre North Kaibab National Monument Certain of the forest reserves should also be made preserves for the wild forest creatures. Theodore Roosevelt 1901 The Kaibab Plateau, the gigantic "mountain lying down" through which the Colorado River carves the Grand Canyon, rises over nine thousand feet above sea level. Stately, ancient conifer forests cover much of its three quarters of a million acres. The highest elevations consist of meadows and dense forests of spruce and fir. Ponderosa pine dominate much of the plateau, with lower elevations consisting of woodlands and semi-desert grassland. Clarence Dutton, a seasoned explorer and geologist, describe the mountain in 1880 as "the most enchanting region it has ever been our privilege to visit." Concerns over degradation of the northern Arizona Kaibab Plateau forest's values led to the establishment of a forest reserve surrounding Grand Canyon in 1893. In fact, between 1882 and 1886, Senator (later President) Benjamin Harrison introduced three Grand Canyon National Park bills that evidently included the North Kaibab (Morehouse 1996:39). By 1905, Congress and President Theodore Roosevelt recognized that forests like the Kaibab should be set aside "for the wild forest creatures" ...[to] afford perpetual protection to the native fauna and flora" (US. Congress 1905). In 1906, and in accordance with earlier Congressional authorization, Theodore Roosevelt established the Grand Canyon National Game Preserve for "the protection of game animals... recognized as a breeding place therefore..." That designation, while still on the books, has proven ineffective in preserving all native species and their habitat, especially large carnivores and the Plateau's old growth forests and grasslands. In 1908, Roosevelt, making good use of the recently passed Antiquities Act, proclaimed a Grand Canyon National Monument better protecting the Canyon proper but leaving out most of the forested Kaibab Plateau. As usual, the principal opponents, ranchers and loggers, blocked these conservation efforts. In 1965, the Secretary of the Interior recognized that the Kaibab squirrel, found only on the Kaibab Plateau, represents "a classical example of the process of evolution through geographic isolation." The Secretary also recognized the squirrel's dependency on the Plateau's forest resources, "one of the largest and best examples of a climax [old growth] community," and established the 200,000-acre Kaibab Squirrel National Natural Landmark. Unfortunately, protection of the landmark's values is only voluntary. Approximately half of the old growth forest has been logged and the future of both the Kaibab squirrel and its old growth habitat remain problematic. The proposed National Monument provides crucial wildlife habitat for the rare northern goshawk, "trophy" mule deer, mountain lions, and as mentioned above, the endemic Kaibab squirrel. It would also protect critical wildlife linkages between Grand Canyon National Park, and Grand Staircase-Escalante and Vermilion Cliffs national monuments. We strongly urge the Obama administration to protect this ecologically critical, spectacular and threatened landscape of America's Great Outdoors.

Because I live in the wonderful Adirondack Park, I'm aware that outdoor spaces are very important to our national's wealth, personal peace, and the future generations. Please work to protect America's outdoors. Thank you.

Budget cuts are already badly cutting into jobs that we need to care for our outdoors. Children need to receive quality science education in elementary school so that we can have a better future of outdoor conservationists and protectionists.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Once our history and cultural places are gone or changed we can't go back. Please protect them now.

No more oil drilling on BLM land, end it now, thanks.

Please do a you can to save our widerness areas.

Action speaks louder than words, save planet Utah!!

I love the wildlands of Utah...please protect them NOW!

I have visited these lands and they are world heritage. Please help protect them.

Utah deserves more wilderness protection. Recind the Bush administration's "No More Wilderness" policy.

Utah is a fantastic and unique place. Please undo the terrible poicices of the Bush administration!

Please protect this sensitive desert environment form destructive off road vehicle use and oil and gas drilling.

Please protect these areas from ORVs and oil companies. Do something positive for the environment.

Please put a stop to the policies the Bush administration has put in place. The policies are ghastly to say the least.

Please take action to protect what little untrammeled, untracked land that is left! We must preserve these delicate areas.

PS: Tar Sands project is also UNACCEPTABLE TO Us here in SE UTAH!! WHY AREN'T YOU MANDATING SOLAR/WIND POWER HERE? PLEASE HELP US!

Now is the time for you to follow-through on your promise and prevent further destruction of this amazingly beautiful region.

Utah's resources deserve careful land use management decisions to protect their wildland and wilderness values for future generations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Nothing is more important than protecting and restoring our precious few remaining wild places! Please do all you can to this end.

You declared September as National Wilderness Month -- not much time left. Leave Utah's magnificent treasures as your legacy to the future. Inch'allah :-)

The Bush policies regarding wilderness and, in general, other environmental matters, were awful. I had hoped your administration would make sensible changes.

Over development and depletion of wilderness are destroying this country for future generations. Please reverse the Bush administrations positions.

I lived in Utah most of my life. It's one of the most beautiful places on earth and deserving of our greatest care. Respectfully yours,

If you want to have a record of actually doing things to preserve the natural heritage of America please act to save these important areas for the future.

We have a wonderful opportunity before us at this time to preserve critically important wilderness lands. Please don't let this chance pass by through lack of needed action!

Do you stand for protecting America's wilderness, or not? Please advance legislation to protect additional American wilderness, and not selling it to oil, coal and gas interests

Yes, this is standard message but that doesn't mean we're not totally totally urging you to protect the fragile Utah lands. Just add two to the count who really care.

Why is it that after nearly two years of this administration the "No More Wilderness" policy of George Bush is still the guiding policy? We need a more sensible approach.

You could really protect wilderness in Utah by passing "America's Redrock Wilderness Act" We are slowly getting this passed, but it would go much faster if you endorsed this bill..

Mr Obama, if you truly want to preserve "the majesty of our nations wilderness" as you referred to it, then take immediate action to rescind the distasteful Bush Administration environmental policies now!

A few hours of "pleasure" - decades of damage. The health of nature means nothing to these airheads...OVER RULE them please! These few people shouldn't be allowed to ruin this magnificent country. Thank you,

These spectacular areas have great wilderness qualities and hold untold artifacts and remnants of ancient societies of the Four Corners area. Please ensure these lands can be protected from inappropriate use.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a former resident and dedicated supporter of these irreplaceable lands and their endangered inhabitants, I urge you to make good on your promise of wilderness protection, and safeguard these precious resources.

This land is very special. Even though I live in Michigan I have traveled there many times to enjoy its spectacular beauty. Please take the time to review the land your proposal would protect and help assure it is not destroyed.

You said you wanted to preserve canyonlands and other parks and wild open spaces for future generations to see and utilize. Please sunset the No More wilderness policy ASAP so there is some wild land left for future generations to enjoy.

These lands are unique and pristine and should be protected as wilderness. While I respect someone's preference for motorized recreation, riparian areas and the very important biotic soil crusts are ecological resources that must be protected. Thank you!

Just got back from a camping trip into Utah's red rock country. It had been too long - 3 years. What an uplifting experience! I wish everyone could see stars like that. I'm rejuvenated. Thanks for helping us protect such places. Go see those stars!

Having just returned from a trip to this area, we've seen the destruction already apparent in some areas. It is unthinkable to imagine what additional destruction would do to one of the few remaining national treasures that we DO have the ability to protect.

This is some of the most spectacular and interesting landscape, not only in the US but internationally. Please adopt strategies that protect the landscape and landforms, as well as the flora and fauna, leaving them unsullied for at least the next several hundred years.

Please support those of us who live in Utah. We are Democrats in the most-Republican state in the nation. One of our most significant issue is the environment, and we are particularly dedicated to Utah National Park, Monuments, wilderness, and wild lands.

Although I live in an urban area, I look forward all year to my annual pilgrimage to Utah, to backpack the stunning landscape and follow the streams. These unique areas deserve the highest degree of protection. Keep out the ORV and grazing animals. Celebrate the Wilderness!

My wife and son and daughter have spent many vacations with me in this wonderful psychically restorative part of our country. We all come back to work feeling renewed and optimistic about our future. Please preserve this treasure for all our citizens, present and future.

I have personally prepared portions of an EA and an EIS for lands in this part of Utah and I can attest to the magnificent beauty and breath-taking scenery deserving your protection. Please don't ignore this opportunity to preserve this country's natural resources for many generations to come.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Mr President, Please do take the time to help preserve what can not recovered unless you act on this most precious National Heritage. As a grandfather, I most dearly wish these special places will be here for all out grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Most respectfully

Please help preserve Utah's unique, amazingly beautiful, and delicate landscape! I travel from Brier, Washington, to camp, hike, and mountain bike there every spring. Roads and oil exploration activity, like in Western Colorado, would destroy many of the special qualities of this special wilderness.

I hike, canyoneer, bird watch and watercolor paint in this Redrock Country. It is more spectacular than any photo can capture. You can make a difference, like Teddy Roosevelt did at the turn of the last century. Eighty percent of the public wants more wilderness. You can protect Utah wild lands. Do it now.

The travel trailer group we belong to will be going to Dead Horse Point next week. I must admit to shock when we went there a few years back. We had originally gone there in 1959. The sight of oil wells was unwelcome. Some of our members commented on their trips to this area. We mustn't deface this area more.

As a visitor from Southern California, for three decades we have travelled through and marvelled in the experience of exploring the wild and sometimes off-the-beaten-track treasures of Southern Utah. PLEASE protect these irreplaceable lands and create a legacy for the Obama administration and the Democratic Party.

Dear Mr. President I know that you (we) are facing a difficult and often ugly election period ahead. But no amount of give will convert those wishing to strip you of affective control to govern in your first term, and prevent a second term. This minimum you can do is to support those who have supported you.

Although you are under considerable pressure to develop alternative oil and gas resources, I would encourage you to consider the many options available in Utah for wind and solar energy resources outside of these special wilderness areas that might more than compensate for any benefits in oil and gas drilling that might have been gained.

Please Mr. President, It is so important to save as much of our wilderness as possible. So much was damaged during the years of republican abuse that it will take all your leadership skills and dedication of the American people to save it. Much has already been lost through climate change and who knows how much more damage will be done.

We voted for this admistration because we believed that as president, you would make decisions that would preserve our Wilderness areas for future generations. Instead it seems as though you are listening to the loud "me now" voices whose only concern is access to all public lands in ways that will permanently alter them in a very negative way.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These lands are fragile. I trip through with an ORV can leave marks for generations. Please, preserve as much of this beautiful and fragile landscape as wilderness, so that my grandchildren and their grandchildren may see this natural wonder. Its character has already been altered by cattle. Please, this land needs protection for future generations.

I will never forget that Clinton designated the Escalante Grand Staircase National Monument and what Carter did for Alaska. This is an action and legacy which will stand forever, for all future generations, human and animal. This is exactly the hope and change from the Bush Administration which those of us who voted for you are hoping to see.

Dear President Obama and Secretary Ken Salazar: I support your policies and your hard work to strengthen our country for the long term future. I thank you for all you have done. I ask that you remember the remaining wild lands of this country, particularly southern Utah, which is a treasure for us and future generations that needs and deserves additional federal protection.

Such incredibly beautiful landscape deserves the best protection available. I hope you and your family can manage a vacation in the area someday so that you may see and know what a treasure is in your grasp to hold for the future. I hope my grandchildren and children will also have the opportunity to enjoy these beautiful lands as my 99 year old father and I did just before his death.

I encourage you to take a personal vacation to hike in the magnificent redrocks of southern Utah so you can appreciate what we hikers are screaming about. I am now 70 years old and on crutches so no longer can visit the quiet beauty of the redrock country. I have hiked in Nepal, Africa, Pakistan, Australia, Alaska, Colorado, Arkansas and Florida but no place comes close to Utah.

I live on the Navajo Nation, just south of some of the stunning lands being considered for wilderness act. I can tell you from experience that Southern Utah is home to some of the most achingly beautiful landscapes in the nation. There is nothing like them anywhere else in America, and our children and grandchildren deserve to enjoy them in their wild glory as we have done.

Mr. President, I know you value the American landscape. Let me share with you my great love for wild Utah and all of America's natural wilderness. I have had the irreplaceable pleasure of camping under the Utah stars in that wilderness. I want my grandchildren and theirs and theirs to have the same opportunity. We must act now to save these lands for their future. Do what you know is right, Mr. President. We will stand behind you.

For most of us the modern life is too hectic. It is hard to find quiet places. During cross country trips with my husband we have cherished whenever we found quiet places and undisturbed country. Please leave these places for our children and grand children. Their lives will be difficult and short of quiet, restful places to go to. With all the negative points in their lives lets maintain whatever we can to help their physical and mental health.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please end the Bush policy of no more wilderness and have Secretary Salazar work with the counties in Utah to develop plans to preserve wilderness, use all lands wisely, and Protect forever the beauty and ecology of the southwest. senator Bennett had begun work on a San Juan county land plan in the same vein as the Washington County lands plan. I hope this will continue even though Senator Bennett will not be representing Utah next year.

I have personally spent time in these areas and money in the surrounding towns while visiting them and can tell you firsthand that these are special, one-of-a-kind spots that need immediate protection and that the likelihood of my spending time and money in the towns near them is minimal without protection. Please don't all prey to the old theory that you cannot support economic growth and jobs while still protecting public lands, especially in this day and age. Thank you!

My family and I spend much time exploring the beauty of Utah's redrock country, we understand that we have to share this land with all the different entities but time and thought should go into each and every area's different uses to ensure that we preserve as much of this most beautiful land in this country and really in the world. We are also always excited to see and meet and talk to people who come from all over the world to see the canyon country of Utah.

Once wilderness is gone, it cannot be replaced. Every effort needs to be taken to preserve wilderness, what we have left. Especially, the wild wilderness lands of southern Utah. I do not know if you, personally, have experienced the magic, solitude, being with all feelings that are only had out in the "middle of nowhere". These experiences last a lifetime, and even if a person is not able to physically go into the wilderness, just knowing that these spaces exist is comforting.

I am writing you to express my strong concern for threats to natural areas in Southern Utah.

No one wants to say that access to the wilderness isn't for everyone in the United States, but we should all be able to acknowledge that the needs of nature can be equal to, or supersede, our right to enjoyment. My soul rests in redrock country, and it can do so just knowing that it is still there. My feet don't even need to touch the ground. Please protect places that can't speak for themselves. Accept the responsibility that all of us have to act as stewards to our environment.

These special places would easily have National Park status in other parts of the country - but they are currently being destroyed a little bit every day, and a little bit of America's heritage dies every day with them. This is unacceptable. These wild places restore, refresh, and reinvigorate the patriotism of all who are lucky enough to spend time in them. I love my country because of such places - we are so lucky, but sometimes we forget how fragile places like Arch Canyon are.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of the reasons that I, like many who share common concerns regarding the environment and quality of life issues, supported your candidacy was that Democratic administrations are generally more "environmentally benign" than Republican administrations, Nixon's positive actions notwithstanding. Please do not let us, your supporters, down on these issues. We look forward to continued support but, make no mistake, these issues are far too important to overlook when it comes time for the 2012 elections.

Barack, we have got to protect these lands. They are one of a kind in the world. I know you have a lot on your plate and perhaps you don't want to waste capital on something that may seem back burner. However, if you do preserve them, years from now people will put you in the same category as John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, and the like. Why don't you take your family there for vacation to get away. You must be able to use it by now. Then you will see how unique and how fragile these lands are.

My wife and I worked on your campaign -- an activity we'd not bothered with for more nearly three decades. We had -- and have -- high hopes for your administration, but you are running out of time. You really need to move the environment up higher, much higher, in your agenda. We understand your efforts toward conciliation and compromise, but if you won't tell the American people what they need to hear, and show them what they need to say, what other elected official will summon the courage?

Please act now to insure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places.

I spent over 20 years living in Flagstaff Arizona and several times each year I would do a river trip or hiking-backpacking trip in the Canyonlands regions of Utah. They are spectacular, they are unique, they are truly America wilderness..... PLEASE protect them from the ravages of people who only care about themselves in the moment. Off Road Vehicles are destroying the pristine and delicate life forms that live in these incredible canyons, arroyos and riparian zones. Please save them for the creatures and for all of us.

As someone who has travelled in not only these lands, but many designated wilderness areas and parks both in our own country and abroad, I can say that the redrock country of Utah is well deserving of more wilderness protection. It has a stunning beauty equal to or greater than any place that I have ever been. It is also critical habitat for declining wildlife populations. Please rescind the "No More Wilderness" policy that imposes an unreasonable restriction for balanced land management policies in Utah (or for anywhere in the US). Thank you.

As an artist of the western landscapes I have witnessed an escalation of scarring due to ORV use in my native Utah to which I return to hike, paint and enjoy what's left of the real wildness of western America. If we are to protect this patrimony I think it is particularly important to reassess the BLM and to some extent the National Forest multi use mandates to update them to confront the chronic degradation of a an area whose principle resource is to uplift and sustain our imaginations and offer quiet beauty in an overcrowded and noisy world.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Last week I witnessed ORV abuse at the San Rafael Swell as inexperienced riders ran off the trails and ripped up the river bank. And this last trip I noticed an open pit strip operation near the Little Grand Canyon that was not there a couple of years ago. Come and see these places, and you will want to protect them. There was a tragic and pitiful face featured on Time magazine a few months ago, the result of deliberate inhumane cruelty. Our collective neglect is allowing the same thing to happen to the face of "Mother Nature." Please, sir, take action.

Few realize the stunning nature of the Utah wilderness lands left. They are world-class in terms of beauty, solitude, and uniqueness. It is surprising how often one meets a solitary German or Frenchman hiking through. They know what we have and they will travel across the globe to experience that which Europe simply cannot offer many examples of anymore. We should know our own lands well, but we do not. If we preserve these wonderful Utah wilderness lands now, we will have time to discover them, and learn from them--as will our children, grandchildren, and the generations to come.

I have enjoyed a quiet hike into the canyons adjacent to Canyonlands National Park. I hope that trail is not inundated with ORV, they will not only ruin the quiet and solitude, they will destroy the beauty of the landscape and scare the wildlife away. I was shocked at the scars left along much of the area north of Moab left by the placing of pipelines. We must protect the BLM areas from the rush to find and extract every last mineral deposit. We need more wilderness and protected areas in the Canyonlands region of Utah. We need sound land use policies for all of Utha.

It is past time to rescind the last administration's destructive environmental policies, which viewed nature and natural systems as objects to be exploited for profit. Let us not make the same mistake again - we must protect what remains of our wilderness areas and not allow them to become just more degraded areas (which have, of course, made a few people very wealthy). Utah has many of these areas, which are now greatly threatened by oil and gas exploration and drilling. We must also prevent motorized vehicular use of these areas, as this severely damages vegetation and disturbs wildlife.

Several times a year, I vacation in the redrock canyon country of southern Utah. I am concerned that the wilderness aspect of this area is being lost to development and motorized recreation.

This month, Labor Day Weekend, marks my 20th anniversary of my first trip to Southeast Utah, a backpacking trip with my 20 year old daughter. This trip was a life changing event event for me. I now travel to Southeast Utah frequently every year and have also purchased a home in Moab, UT with my wife Margie. She will be retiring from the State of California next year and we will be spending much more time in Southeast Utah. In 20 years the landscape has changed dramatically with all the overuse and abuse from off road vehicles. Please help get this matter under control before more permanent damage is done.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please take steps to contain and limit the use of ORVs in our National Wilderness. The noise pollution alone makes them extremely obnoxious. In an era when people need to lose weight, urge people to walk and enjoy the beauty of the landscape. ORVs degrade the environment in many other ways already mentioned above. Allowing our precious lands to be degraded by gas and oil drilling is even more insidious. Every environmental caution should be taken before consideration is given to such operations. Fracturing for gas is destroying our water. Drilling for oil destroys the land and water. Please take care of our lands, our children's heritage.

Dust created by ORV traffic destroying fragile soil crust has created massive dust storms that travel to other states causing snow melt and other problems. We have new highway signs warning of dust storms. Grasslands have been replaced with drifting mounds of sand.

Edward Abbey must be writhing in his grave. Please do everything you can to reverse those last minute Bush sponsored changes which have such potential to ruin fragile ecosystems on the Colorado Plateau. Thank You

I live in Vermont, but travel to Utah every 12-18 months to hike and to explore the unique wild lands of that state. A significant area of Utah is clearly land of Wilderness Quality, with deeply carved canyons, archaeologically important sites, and forested mountains. This region is, however, threatened by policies from the Bush administration that threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country.

As a resident of Utah, and a frequent visitor to Utah's redrock country I ask you to please rescind the Bush administration's "No More Wilderness" policy. Leaving 80% of 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah open to oil and gas drilling and designating an astounding 20,000 miles of ORV routes is simply unacceptable. Those of us who value the beauty and solitude of redrock country vote, WE VOTED FOR YOU, and we expect you to stand up to the special interest ORV groups and protect this land. I mean really - in some portions of the plan EVERY single riparian area has an ORV trail. Have you ever personally seen the absolute catastrophic destruction that an ORV wreaks on stream banks? Its stomach turning and almost impossible to mitigate or repair.

The Bush administration's "No More Wilderness" policy and resulting land use management plans for 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah have left 80% of these lands open to oil and gas drilling and designated an astounding 20,000 miles of ORV routes. Dust is a major problem affecting climate and water in the Colorado snow pack. Reducing traffic in these areas will help to mitigate this problem. In some of the plans, every single riparian area has an ORV trail, leading to pollution, erosion, shrinking water availability and lost wildlife habitat. Climate change, the overriding influence on the health of BLM lands, got just three paragraphs of the same boilerplate language in each of the 1,000-page Environmental Impact Statements instead of any real analysis.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Of all states that I have visited, Utah by far deserves wilderness protection. It contains so much archeological and geological uniqueness!. It stands above every other state in need of immediate protection. The desert environment is just too fragile to endure President GW Bush's "No More Wilderness" policy. It is not too late for Pres. Obama to overturn this nightmare policy. Oil and gas exploration is just one part of Pres. Bush's legacy. Worse yet is the off-road vehicle degradation from motorbike, ATV, and Jeep enthusiasts. The fragile cryptobiotic desert soil takes 50+ years to recuperate after even one set of tracks is left behind. But it cannot heal if continued off-road riding is allowed. And if it doesn't heal, the winds blow sand into huge dust storms; and the environmental disaster worsens.

Dear President Obama and Secretary Ken Salazar, As a Westerner who cherishes America's wild spaces, as an educator who works to impart the values of wilderness to others, as a writer whose voice is too often drowned out by the strident voices of ORV recreationalists and pro-development lobbyists, I urge you, please, to take decisive action to undo some of the damage of the Bush administration in regards to our vanishing wilderness areas. You face many challenges to make our country a humane place to live and grow, and you are doing good work of all kinds that will have a lasting positive impact. Please expand your efforts to create a legacy that preserves some of the remaining wild spaces in our great country for our future generations. Respectfully yours,

Though I live in Illinois, I believe the red rock canyon country of Utah is among our nation's most precious possessions.

Since living in SE Utah during the mid-1980s I have fought to assure that a good portion of it is set aside as wilderness (9 million acres of BLM land in Utah).

I have a special fondness for the San Juan-Canyonlands area. My husband and I learned to rely on each other during a challenging hike in Cedar Mesa in 2003. In 2004, we got engaged on a moonlit night overlooking an ethereal crater. Thousands like me have stories to share about peaceful encounters, rugged physical challenges and blissful hours in the redrock country of Utah. My hope is that your administration will ensure that thousands, maybe millions, more will experience the quiet awesomeness of these public lands untouched by strip-mining, drilling and ORV desecraters.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would beg to add however, that these areas remain more accessible to the young, the elderly and handicapped. This would not allow off road vehicles but would allow access to roads for passenger vehicles. I cannot imagine not being able to take my grandson to a total wilderness designation not accessible anymore to either of us. Further, many of the ranchers in the area are maintaining waterholes that benefit wildlife. Total wilderness designation would restrict access by medical personell in a vast area that has few medical facilities anyway. Serious illness and injuries need to be airlifted to proper facilities. BLM ground belongs to all of us, not to the special interests. It would be tragic to allow further filthy "drilling" for oil and gas. The amounts available are not worth the terrible pollution. Oil shale should not even be considered due to the extreme toxicity of the processing and the destruction of the landscape. America needs to get away from oil, but not with oil shale.

Mr. President, and Secretary Salazar,. Though we live in Washington, My wife and I go to Utah every year to hike and camp in OUR American lands. Many of the sites we visit are on BLM land NOT protected from ORV and grafitti vandals. We are owners of these lands, and we want you to protect them as Wilderness! Please do so! I read over the DEIS documents on each of these plans and wrote letters of comment. But in the final EIS I saw that every one of my comments was dismissed. For example, I wrote that Trachyte Wash stream was incorrectly planned to NOT get Wild and Scenic river designation, and cited specific errors BLM had made in deciding to omit it.. But BLM's final EIS stated that my arguments were irrelevant, since they had already decided that W + S was to be denied!

Why is the egregious Bush Administration policy of not allowing wilderness quality lands be managed for preservation? We are two years into the Obama Administration, and yet this backroom deal that abrogated well considered earlier management protections on valuable Utah wild lands is still in place. WHERE IS THE CHANGE I VOTED FOR? It simply is not acceptable that those plans stand unchanged two years later as well. These were politically and ideologically driven decisions that were not based on science. Yet the Obama Administration has (rightly) proclaimed that science would rule decision making for this president. I want to see that put into action now, on these issues.

Utah's redrock canyon country is especially vulnerable, biologically and scenically, to ORV use. The desert leaves scars bare and visible, not hidden under vegetation. It's hard to describe the sense of desecration that ORV use leaves on the landscape, and the degree to which the noise and impact of the activities of a few offroad enthusiasts degrades the experience of all other users, if you have not experienced it personally. Utah's canyon country is an utterly unique landscape and resource, one that belongs to all Americans. I believe that we also have a duty to protect this singular environment for the rest of the world. Extensive ORV use such as the BLM is proposing will DESTROY this landscape for little-to-no benefit. I would hope that it shouldn't affect your decision, but I would also like to emphasize that this is the single political issue that I follow most closely, and politicians' response to it directly affects my opinions and voting decisions. Please prevent the destruction of the canyonlands, America's most iconic landscape. It is the right thing to do, and future generations will thank you for it.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

September is National Wilderness Month, and you did the traditional political thing, re-declaring it and asserting that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." Thanks. But policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country, and southern New Mexico's Organ Mountains-Broad Canyon-Portillo Mountains area. The Bush administration's "No More Wilderness" policy and resulting land use management plans for 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah have left 80% of these lands open to oil and gas drilling and designated a criminal 20,000 miles of ORV routes. In some of the plans, every single riparian area has an ORV trail, leading to pollution, erosion, shrinking water availability and lost wildlife habitat. Climate change, the overriding influence on the health of BLM lands, got just three paragraphs of the same boilerplate language in each of the 1,000-page Environmental Impact Statements instead of any real analysis. This is criminally irresponsible and I demand a change!

I know we are busy trying to fix things around the world. but let's take care of some things here too. We need to protect the land: our forests, BLM desert land and land that could be considered wilderness-worthy. Our lands that are under study for wilderness as well as those areas already designated wilderness, make the US so special from countries in Europe. In fact, in Utah, Europeans flock to our National Parks and wilderness areas, because they can't experience nature there, like you can here. But the quality of our lands is eroding and eroding quickly. Please reverse Bush's terrible land policies, especially when it comes to opening up pristine lands in the West to horrible destruction from ORV's, ATV's etc. The damage being done not only kills plant life and degrades our streams and rivers, but the destruction of the land itself will take centuries to repair, if it can be done at all. Please act to protect a very valuable resource, our wilderness. Thank you.

In celebration of that declaration, I took some time in September to go backpacking into one of America's most treasured forests, the Kings Canyon region in the great Sequoia wilderness in California. The spectacular beauty, complete with alpine mountains, meadows and waterfalls, abundance of natural wildlife including deer, bears and fish, and unspoiled views of nature in harmony are enough to reassure the soul and enlighten the spirit. I encourage you to go for yourself. However, there is still work to be done.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While I understand that Washington, DC is a long way from the Wild lands of Utah, and that you have a lot of critical issues on your plate, I want to assure you that a significant number of Americans consider it their personal responsibility to work to insure and protect our precious remaining wildlands, particularly in the West. For many years I have been one of those people and I will continue to support this work for my lifetime. I implore you to take a few of your valuable moments to familiarize yourself and staff with the issues that currently face us out here in the "Wild West". People come from all over the world to see and experience our unparalleled natural wonders, which contributes to the economic success of many of our communities. They have great economic value to the region. Even if this were not the case, we must respect their very existence and the forces that brought them into being. Stewardship, even without any economic compensation should be reason enough to guard them for future generations. I know people who either due to distance or disability will never see these extraordinary places. They say that knowing that such places exist in a protected state is satisfaction enough for them, even if they will never see them, knowledge of their existence feeds their soul. I have personally seen the ugly face of abuse and disrespect of these lands, take if from me, you would be horrified. I hope that you are moved re-evaluate The BLM's resource management plans and to promote the protection that these irreplaceable lands require and deserve.

The landscapes of Southern Utah are completely unique, and truly a national treasure. Indeed, these unique landscapes provide a positive image of the nation to the world--they signify the spirit of the very spirit of the American West. If you have never visited Southern Utah, I hope you will make some time and space in your schedule to go there because photographs, regardless of how stunning, cannot capture the unique spirit of the place. When you declared September as National Wilderness Month, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." I fully agree with this sentiment. However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which drastically threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I was so proud to hear your declaration of September as National Wilderness Month. I thoroughly agree with your statement that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." I have been quietly roaming the "Redrock" country of Utah for over 40 years and am still in awe of the dramatic landscape which cuts across the millions of geological layers. While walking across this incredible landscape, I have run into evidence (homes, farming and hunting areas, pottery shards) of the ancient Anasazi and Fremont Indians. Utah's Redrock remoteness and the arid weather has uniquely preserved these ancient artifacts for us to untangle the mysteries of people that lived here thousands of years ago. I have passed this "Redrock" appreciation to my children and now my grandchildren. If you have not taken your children to experience this wilderness, I invite you to come and see why so many of us are truly concerned in preserving this area for future generations. I'm so afraid that policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's Redrock country. It would be an honor to have you and your family come and see why this area is a primitive wilderness and should be protected. Please contact me if I can be of any assistance planning a trip here to a place you'll never forget and will never regret knowing you helped save it for you grandchildren to see.

Last week I visited Utah's redrock wilderness on a trip to Capitol Reef National Park. I was once again struck, as I on each trip, by the extraordinary discrepancy in environmental stewardship within and outside of the protected areas of the landscape. There are many areas of the Utah wilderness that are no-go areas for people seeking a peaceful and respectful experience of nature, given the noise, erosion and gaseous pollution which is caused by the appearance of 'off road' vehicles. In other parts of the world where the vast majority of people seek to experience the Earth in it's elemental state (Norway, Sweden, the UK, France, Italy, Switzerland), these anti-social toys are simply banned. It is simply cowardice on the part of the US government, struck as it is with the idea of individual 'freedom', that this ridiculously selfish pursuit is still allowed. But, what 'freedom' does this leave for the hiker, mountain biker, backpacker or ski tourer, who must remain in National Parks. Personally, any interaction with these people serves as a damning illustration of the selfish and lazy tendencies of the human race, and can turn a charming and pleasant day into one filled with anger and distress. Furthermore, the disturbance of the surface layer caused by offroad vehicles has been directly implicated in the increase in 'red dust' covering the San Juan snowpack, accelerating the spring thaw period, and reducing the capacity of the mountains to store water. This is an outrageous visual and economic impact of this selfish activity. Surely, a time must come when we stop thinking of ourselves as heroic pioneers of hostile lands, and start to think of ourselves as stewards of a delicate and precious resource? That time is surely upon us...

When it's gone it's gone for ever. Increased population pressure means increased need for the grand, unspoiled outdoors. I would hope the Obama Administration will be known for its brilliant record on conservation of our natural legacy, and for adding to the nation's store of preserved natural grandeur.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Department of the Interior should mandate that every national park should be shut down at least one year out of every eight on order to have both the wild life and vegetation recover, this would also remove most of the man made pollution. Park rotation would also save millions of taxpayer dollars and bring taxpayer dollars into whatever park region that was open.

I expect some firm protective regulations on our wetlands, especially the Everglades. Protect the wild mangroves and native wildlife of South Florida. National Parks like the Everglades are much more than breath-taking inspirational places to escape the city life, they are essential for our continued existence, providing life by cleaning our air, supplying fresh water, and being home to many native and wonderful creatures.

Like you I'm from Illinois - and I didn't know the true wonders of our country until I moved away at 24. I'm now 30 and I've been in Oregon in Graduate School for a few years. In my time in Eugene, Oregon I've found some of the most amazing wilderness, wildlife, and areas for quiet, mindful recreation. These wilderness areas need to be preserved, for us, for our children, and for the non-human denizens. Our national policies impact the Northwest heavily, and as we turn our sources of revenue from destructive forest and ranching practices, to healthy recreation, tourism, and non-destructive extractive processes, so must the legislature follow suit. We need you to be leading the campaign for a healthy natural world - please do so! With highest regards,

Some of my best family memories are from spending time outdoors, visiting the national parks, and exploring city parks and wildlife areas. I am starting to make the same memories with my children, and hope that they can do the same with their children. Please protect the Great Outdoors!

The most important moments in any persons life are the moments spent outdoors. Everyone can remember a feeling of complete awe upon their first views of a mountain, or a grassland, or a rainforest, or a desert. These moments connect us with the land. We must protect every American's right to share in these moments.

. We need to reforest where mining, logging and urban sprawl have claimed 90 % of our original forests. We need to remove dams on rivers where they serve as a detriment to a healthy ecosystem. We need to use renewable energy to power our cities and autos and hemp instead of plastic (ban aluminum and plastic), take fluoride out of our drinking water which is only a by product of aluminum manufacturing and not a dental aid, not try to kill everything by genetically modification or eradication by poisons, bring back family farms, grow hemp which has no illegal drug available and could revolutionize our manufacturing and farming industries. Thank you for your consideration and attention.

I feel that a balance between enjoyment of nature and destruction of nature must be met. I will not accept a single endangered species in America. I want the limited yet existent rights of the wild species of the world to be respected and not abridged in any way. The best way to enjoy nature is to have some. I demand a lot. If nature continues to be infringed upon, I will opt to not re-elect any of those who sat complacently by and watched its destruction.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. Please do not sell public land for logging, ranching, or oil or any other profit scheme.

Take this opportunity to leave a legacy and please remove the four lower Snake River dams. This action would restore 140 miles of whitewater, 70 named rapids, and thousands of additional lands to the public. If you want to get folks outdoors in the Northwest, this is your best opportunity! Please do what you know is right and remove those dams! Sincerely,

Fishing for salmon and steelhead is a age-old family activity at risk for lack fish. Please do everything that you can to change course and put Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead recovery back on track. Follow the best science and do the right thing! Bring people together to craft a recovery plan that removes the four lower Snake River dams and reconnects salmon with their homewaters in Idaho, Washington and Oregon!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

especially the Mogollon Plateau national forests described below: Conservationists have proposed a 480,000-acre Mogollon Wildlife Conservation Area is proposed to protect the extensive old growth forest and montane riparian areas of Arizona's southern Coconino and western Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests into a linked conservation system. The Mogollon Plateau forests (Coconino, Kaibab and Apache-Sitgreaves national forests) remain America's largest contiguous expanse of ponderosa pine. These forests contain important habitat for endangered species, including the Little Colorado spinedace, Mexican spotted owl, Mexican wolf, Chiricahua and northern leopard frogs and other important native wildlife such as mountain lion, black bear, elk, mule deer, American pronghorn, Gunnison prairie dog and goshawk. The forests also provide critical linkages for wildlife populations of the Blue Range and Gila wilderness complex of eastern Arizona and western New Mexico across the Mogollon and Coconino plateaus to the Grand Canyon and Arizona's Central Mountains. Since pre-settlement times, Arizona and New Mexico have experienced a 90% loss of riparian ecosystems (Arizona State Parks 1988). Arizona's riparian forests are considered one of America's most endangered ecosystems. The entire forested Mogollon Plateau watershed (i.e. East Clear Creek, West Clear Creek, West Oak Creek, Wet Beaver Creek, Willow Creek and Walnut, Sycamore, and Chevelon canyons) provides relatively intact, biologically significant core and wildlife movement corridors through a landscape otherwise generally fragmented by roads and logging impacts. The southern Coconino and Apache-Sitgreaves national forests' riparian regions including the Black, San Francisco, Verde and upper Little Colorado rivers and their tributaries offer some of the finest and most diverse, as well as threatened natural and cultural resources in the United States. This area remains an incredibly rich, biologically diverse forest and grassland refugia for imperiled and biologically important species described above. Anderson Mesa of the Coconino National Forest provides a relatively intact, biologically significant core and wildlife movement corridor through a landscape generally fragmented by roads and logging impacts. The Mogollon Plateau watershed contains remnant old growth mixed conifer and ponderosa forest. These values are significant, given that more than 200 years are required to develop old growth structure in southwestern ponderosa pine forests. Ecologists have determined that old growth ponderosa pine forests constitute one of America's most endangered ecosystems. They report that old-growth ponderosa pine has suffered an estimated 85-98% area loss due to destruction, conversion to other uses, and significant degradation in structure, function, and composition. Logging is one of the principal causes of this decline.

I consider myself an informed citizen and I care deeply about the preservation of wilderness. I have long been aware of the problems with the U.S. Forest Service, regarding lands that should be designated wilderness, and I have hoped that the current administration would move to correct this. But I am shocked that the BLM directive to cease all wilderness assessments has not been lifted. It is my sincere hope that this administration will move forward and right these grave wrongs done to our nation's wild, natural places.

and please please help the polar bears!!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please! Let's not waste these resources and harm our children's future.

. And, don't close our fishing waters to the recreational fishermen.

. Please fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Act. Thank you.

. And for all of our sakes, help end our dependence on fossil fuels!

To our leaders in Washington, please expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces .

Many of us don't have a lot of money and need state and federal parks to stay open for our vacation...

I want my kids to have a place to camp that doesn't involve corporate sponsoring or a giant mouse..

. I would like to see the parks and redwood trees preserved. Thank you

. Let's be smart and figure out a way to get this done - there's no substitute for getting outside!

The next generation deserves to enjoy America's great outdoors. Let's preserve our great spaces and historic places

. The importance of wild places cannot be overstated. Please act to protect and expand them. Thank you!

Please ignore business interest groups-- make your priority something greater than the almighty (and horribly weak) dollar.

Also: Please stop the corporate greed that is ruining our society. Consumerism will be the ultimate reason this country fails.

Our most important natural resource must be protected at all costs, because without it, we certainly won't be far behind.

I would also like to expand that discussion to urban parks and public spaces that are vital to the future of our cities! Thanks.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello good people. I also urge leaders in Washington to expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces The future is coming!

. I am an an animal lover and therefore would like to see as many animals as possible saved.

I urge leaders in Washington to expand and protect unprotected wilderness and roadless areas that that are currently vulnerable.

. It's time to save nature & wildlife for us and the future generations instead of allowing destruction for corporate greed.

. America's beauty is something all Americans can be proud of. Please protect our outdoor spaces. Thanks for your time!

. I especially urge you to consider the creation of the Cascadia Siskiyou National Monument. It is such a beautiful, and unique place.

I want the next generation to enjoy Canada's great outdoors too. I urge leaders in Ottawa to expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces CHEERS, eh?

. Help to build safer places for the wildlife, so the children can learn to be humanitarians and learn how to protect what's precious

We want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Please help me urge leaders in Washington to expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces

by working with established environmental organizations like Land Trusts and legitimate advocacy groups to provide funding for local farmland and open space protection.

. I want our leaders and appointed secretaries to be a voice for the wild horses, bears, and wolves.....all animals and plants that are being destroyed .

I believe conservation should preclude corporations and others from leasing, and pillaging our forests, rivers and other natural resources on public lands.

. They deserve to know what the word 'nature' truly means. Help make this world not only existent but better for the future. Isn't that why we are here?

I agree with Colbert and urge leaders in Washington to expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces Biodiversity is key and America has much- if you can preserve our spaces.

If we restrict access to nature by not working to maintain and expand our wilderness, we face greater consequences than the loss of parks and recreation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. Most of all, I'd like Washington to conserve our small family farms and our vulnerable forests. This is a legacy I'd like my grandchildren to be able to inherit.

Expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces Expand the Clean Water Act to protect our waters, and hire more park employees for trail creation and maintenance. For the children!

including increasing investments in the sustainable management and expansion of our National Forests, parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, rivers and monuments .

. We must protect as much of our natural spaces as possible so Americans will be able to enjoy these places forever. Please help protect our beautiful public lands.

. Please expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and protect potential expansion areas on adjacent BLM lands from management incompatible with future designation.”

. Please don't let nature be destroyed. Hiking is an American past time and we cannot do that if there is nowhere to hike please hear out message and leave nature the way it is

. With global warming changing our planet at an incredibly rapid rate it is more important than ever to preserve our wildlands so that our fellow species can adapt and survive.

. “Please expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and protect potential expansion areas from harm by BLM.” Thank you for your efforts on behalf of Beautiful America!

. Without my connection to Mother Earth I would die. What we do to the land we do to ourselves. It is time to stand up and stop the madness. Please, please, please protect our land.

. Tomorrow I'm going hiking in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. The trails are better now that most of the cow manure is gone, but we need more protection. Please expand our National Monument! Thank you

I urge leaders in Washington to stop adding to our federal lands. We can't afford all the acres we have now and spending money to acquire more only adds to the back-logged maintenance that we can't afford now. Stop the insanity!

. To quote Henry David Thoreau--"A man (substitute NATION) is rich in proportion to the number of things which he (IT) can afford to let alone." We must exert maximum effort if we are not to become an impoverished nation.

. We must be able to fully support a Land and Water Conservation Fund so that we can continue to have and co-exist with nature. If we don't do this for our great lands, rivers, parks, etc... our kind will soon perish.....

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Have you not seen Ken Burn's "Our National Parks"? Our national park system, our national forests and wildlife preserves are one of the things that make our country great. Don't mess it up by cutting funding. These places belong to ALL OF US. not just you.

. The Cascade Siskiyou National Monument is one of the most bio-diverse regions in North America. Expanding this monument will protect this area for future generations. I urge you to include the expansion of the monument as soon as possible.

. Please expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and protect potential expansion areas from harm by BLM. We need to protect Monument expansion areas from unfortunate BLM shenanigans like their proposed and protested Sampson Cove commercial timber sale. Please get your Web-link message in by this

If we don't protect them now, then when? There is no time like the present , otherwise, we could lose these irreplaceable treasures forever. Thank you!

. Our leaders in Washington and our states talk about putting people back to work, what better place to create working opportunities than our great outdoors? We should create jobs that restore our forests, wetlands, beaches, polluted rivers and streams. We should build power plants that do not pollute the air as well.

. In particular, I'd like to see this administration propose full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and urge Congress to pass legislation that permanently authorizes full funding for LWCF independent of the appropriations process. I also am supportive of wilderness protection, especially here in New Mexico. Thanks!

. And I want my grandchildren to enjoy real food, not manufactured, genetically modified, intellectual property. Please say no to genetic engineering, or at least label it so we don't have to eat it. This is, after all, supposed to be a free country, and to be really free, we require knowledge, as you know. Thank you.

. Please expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and protect potential expansion areas from the BLM. Also, please protect the entire Siskiyou Crest. The abuse of public wildlands must end! Give jurisdiction over all BLM O&C lands to the USDA/Forest Service. The BLM is inept. Now, I have to go hunting. General rifle season begins Saturday.

That is why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, rangelands and forests and the beautiful islands

With ever more pressure exerted on our natural areas due to population growth and energy development, including parks, wildlife refuges, and wilderness. The time to act is now. Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, making it a permanent and dedicated source of conservation dollars to protect our natural places, parks and recreation areas, working lands and cultural heritage.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. It is so important to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the primary funding source for protecting our national, state and local parks. We also should invest in large-scale landscapes and watersheds to protect wildlife corridors and endangered species. America needs to provide incentives for conservation easements on working lands that support both people and nature. And please keep our nation's lands and waters healthy and strong enough to survive the impacts of climate change.

. America's great outdoors is what makes our country unique. We do not have cathedrals that are hundreds of year old, or the Parthenon, or the great Wall of China. We do have beautiful natural vistas that must be preserved not only for the next generation but for generations to follow. It is the responsibility of elected officials to protect America....America the Beautiful....from sea to shining sea...from the mountains to the praries! Do your do diligence for the country that God blesses.

. I want to see existing and new areas open and accessable to everyone not just those who can hike miles into the wilderness. This means educational (visitor centers) and recreational facilities. It may include adding some roads or allowing some motorized recreation because it's more important that we get everyone to appreciate the outdoors not just those who already enjoy this experience. The added benifit to this thinking is jobs and economic development. This thought comes from an avid hiker and environmentalist!

. It always comes down to funding - Congress approved \$100MM to purchase land in the NJ/NY/PA/CT highlands to protect drinking water sources, but has appropriated only a fraction of that. Land prices are down - fund this program now and get more bang for the taxpayer's buck, for once. Across the US, great pieces of land have been saved, and we need to protect and maintain them. We need to continue saving farms and open space. The New Jersey Conservation Foundation has a dedicated, professional staff that could do so much more if the funding was available! We need Federal help! Thank you!

. Please fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the primary funding source for protecting our national, state and local parks. We need Invest in large-scale landscapes and watersheds to protect wildlife corridors and endangered species.to invest in large-scale landscapes and watersheds to protect wildlife corridors and endangered species. Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the primary funding source for protecting our national, state and local parks. * Invest in large-scale landscapes and watersheds to protect wildlife corridors and endangered species. * Provide incentives for conservation easements on working lands that support both people and nature. We need to protect our nation's lands and waters from the impacts of climate change. We should provide strong incentives for conservation easements on working lands that will support both people and nature. Last but not least, we need to invest in large-scale landscapes and watersheds to protect wildlife corridors and endangered species.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. And please provide laws that prevent rural developers from buying up private farm property and then filling in wet lands so they can BUILD - BUILD - BUILD and build some more buildings that aren't needed. Many homes and large apartment and business complexes in the out-lying areas of large cities (Minnesota Twin Cities area especially) are now empty -- YES EMPTY -- due to too many buildings and noone to occupy the space anyway. We shouldn't be encroaching on lands for unnecessary building. Another thing is that I am sick and tired of these park areas we are fortunate to have in our beautiful country, being so commercialized that the common ordinary working person or retired, like myself, can't even afford to go to them, much less get into them because of the cost. When we mark off on our taxes and have lotteries whereby a percentage of that revenue is to be used for protecting our environment, then it should be used for that and not absconded for general government purposes, and, used for the general health and good of the low income person to explore and enjoy. Many times, our national treasurers are open only to the well-healed people. That's regrettable as well as all tourist traps are regrettable for the prices charged for a soft drink and simple food. That really disgusts me. We take advantage of those places and events that should be available for everyone. Thank you for taking action. Sincerely,

. Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the primary funding source for protecting our national, state and local parks. Invest in large-scale landscapes and watersheds to protect wildlife corridors and endangered species. Provide incentives for conservation easements on working lands that support both people and nature. Keep our nation's lands and waters healthy and strong enough to survive the impacts of climate change. PLEASE SUPPORT AND MAKE THE FRAC ACT EFFECTIVE BY STOPPING AND REGULATING NATURAL GAS AND OIL COMPANIES FROM INJECTING TOXIC CHEMICALS INTO OUR SOIL AND WATER CONTAMINATING OUR ENVIRONMENT AND PUTTING OUR HEALTH IN HIGHLY DANGER!!!! HELP HUMANITY AND NATURE TO STOP THIS IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE!!! The FRAC Act (Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness to Chemical Act) is a House bill intended to repeal the Halliburton Loophole and to require the natural gas industry to disclose the chemicals they use. Hydraulic fracturing or fracking is a means of natural gas extraction employed in deep natural gas well drilling. Once a well is drilled, millions of gallons of water, sand and proprietary chemicals are injected, under high pressure, into a well. The pressure fractures the shale and props open fissures that enable natural gas to flow more freely out of the well. The Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act (H.R. 2766), (S. 1215)—was introduced to both houses of the the United States Congress on June 9, 2009, and aims to repeal the exemption for hydraulic fracturing in the Safe Drinking Water Act. It would require the energy industry to disclose the chemicals it mixes with the water and sand it pumps underground in the hydraulic fracturing process (also known as fracking), information that has largely been protected as trade secrets. Controversy surrounds the practice of hydraulic fracturing as a threat to drinking water supplies.[1] The gas industry opposes the legislation.[2] The House bill was introduced by representatives Diana DeGette, D-Colo., Maurice Hinchey D-N.Y., and Jared Polis, D-Colo. The Senate version was introduced by senators Bob Casey, D-Pa., and Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need wilderness to conserve for the future.

We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so future generations may also enjoy them.

Personally, if I were President I would quadruple the size of all wilderness areas, which I would consider essential to preserving biodiversity.

Now more than ever, we need presidential leadership to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them.

We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them, and as a partial buffer against the effects of humans on the rest of our environment.

Mr. President, taking this action and overturning the Bush Administration's stance which lacked reasonable oversight of our precious natural resources. I am begging you to take action and show leadership, and if you have the ability to do it by executive order, do it post haste.

We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness lands so that we may continue to enjoy them and so that future generations may also enjoy them. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done immediately. Thank you.

As a frequent user of our publicly held lands, I encourage as much protection as can be had for our lands. I often use these spaces for hiking, camping, and wildlife observation. I see there are many uses and abuses going on and it appears that funding is way below the need. Please help protect for OUR lands for future generations and for this one's sanity.

As you know, ecosystems are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness lands so that future generations may also enjoy them and, of course, because they have value in themselves. And, again, it is within the President's jurisdiction to do so immediately.

We are asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and we urge that this be done. Again, we want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. Robin and

It is refreshing to have an administration that is trying to save some of our most treasured natural habitat areas that are embodied in American's Great Outdoors Initiative. I encourage the President to make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from this Initiative. Obama has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am deeply concerned about the use of our public lands. Overrun by cattle the ecosystems of our public lands are being destroyed. As the premier nation in forest destruction we need to develop a program that conserves the environment rather than exploit it. That would mean far less cattle on our public lands. Further we are losing wildlife species at an alarming rate. Biodiversity is a pivotal requirement for a healthy ecosystem. Make no mistake, what is good for the environment is good for humans.

It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority, make protecting them at least as important as economic recovery. I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of the policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect our natural ecosystems. Their health, in turn, is the best support for a healthy economy.

Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development and climate change, and now I ask that the President please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated as wilderness while the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments.

I just invested five days to travel to Washington D.C. to speak with elected representatives about their feelings for wilderness in Alaska and in Utah. I was mostly encouraged by their response. While Congress declaring unspoiled areas wilderness remains a vital step they must take to honor these irreplaceable public lands, the Executive Branch must now do all it can to safeguard the wild places as our national treasure. Locals will vote to exploit these regions for profit. Greed and selfishness always defy inspiration and reverence and wonder. Please respect what has earned protection.

I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy. One way I often use to help me in viewing the world we live on is that the many billions of years of natural evolution have given us the world we often think is ours to use for profit. It is a world we have moved to dominate, possibly to our perill within just a few centuries. Without a great abundance of natural environmental areas left to be as un-tampered with as possible, we can only prevent ourselves from having a reference point of where we evolved from and, perhaps, can return to. We must never delude ourselves into thinking we understand natural systems fully enough to risk destroying them.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided and misguided development and climate change. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them forever as wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a wrong-headed directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done immediately. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities, and is an imperative.

It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of our nation's treasured outdoor places a national priority. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations of Americans may also enjoy them. I am asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. And worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous Bush administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Expanding the United States's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Thank you for your attention in this important matter.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's Great Outdoors Comments – I applaud the Obama Administration and its attempt to engage the American people in a national discussion about conservation as part of its America's Great Outdoors Initiative. This is an important first step toward conservation leadership and it is inspiring to see the President make the conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development, and climate change, just to name a few. I would like to take the opportunity to highlight some priorities/key conservation strategies for making this initiative a success. I appreciate the opportunity to provide the Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative comments about the challenges and opportunities of managing our public lands – specifically our national forests of the Southern Appalachian region – as we take steps to reinvest in our natural capital and enhance the health of forest watersheds and all they provide Americans (clean water, clean air, recreation, renewal, quality of life). We all should take very seriously our stewardship responsibilities – ensuring that the next generation is able to enjoy America's great outdoors too. With this noble objective in mind, I urge leaders in Washington to expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces including National Forests, parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, rivers and monuments. Honoring Places, People and Partnerships America's Great Outdoors is about protecting natural places – from city parks to big wilderness areas – as part of our natural heritage. It is also about better connecting people – especially young people – to nature. And it is about connecting people to each other, acknowledging that the best conservation outcomes occur when people work together to protect, connect and restore private lands, working lands and our wildest lands. Public Lands: The Cornerstone of a New Conservation Vision Our public lands belong to all Americans and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. We encourage the Obama administration to implement the following priorities:

- Address Conservation at a Large Scale: The Obama administration should conserve large landscapes that include our most pristine wildlands, working forest and ranch lands, private lands and the connections across these large areas. Large natural areas, such as our public lands/national forests provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.
- Protect our wilderness: Wildlands represent some of our healthiest and most intact lands. The Obama administration should use all tools available to protect our public lands including recommending new wilderness and national parks, designating national monuments, and expanding National Wildlife Refuges.
- Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat: Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. The Obama administration should prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands, making restoration a national priority. By restoring the national forests of this nation, we can spur economic growth by providing needed jobs, and improve recreation opportunities.
- Connect people with Nature: The Obama Administration should create new national programs that help connect people – especially our youth – with nature. Today, youth, especially people of color, are underrepresented on our public lands and it is important that new policies and programs are developed to encourage more youth participation, including nature education or r

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a San Gabriel Valley resident, I urge the to recommend the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area in your final report.

The San Gabriel Mountains are an important place for millions of San Gabriel Valley and Los Angeles residents and that we would like to see them designated a National Recreation Area. I have been visiting there since I moved to Los Angeles in 1970, and hate to see their recent neglect.

I'm including the suggested text below which I agree with. I will just add that this area is an island of sanity adjacent to a huge population center. It is sorely needed and anything that would preserve and encourage it's use would be well worth the effort. Thank you,

My wife and I are active mountain bikers and hikers, and our favorite trails are in the San Gabriel Mountains and the San Bernardino Mountains. If making the San Gabriel Mountains a NRA will mean more resources for trail maintenance on the trails we ride and hike, then I am all in favor of that. It would be nice if the same is done for the San Bernardino Mountains.

We need this to save land in the Los Angeles area. Think of the Native American cultural areas that will be protected. Imagine It will not change the Santa Monica Mtns Natl Recreation Area, it will add to it. Hiking, biking, horse back riding around the rim of the valley will be accessible. What a wonderful gift to our children and grandchildren...and to ourselves!

I am a regular user of hiking trails, rivers and waterfalls in the San Gabriel Mountains. This unique urban mountain range requires additional funding for conservation, education, cleanup and patrols. In order to protect this limited resouce and bring attention funding and protection I urge you to form San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area.

I am the author of three hiking guidebooks for Southern California, including many hikes in the San Gabriel Mountains. I have a deep personal affection for these mountains, where my family and I have spent a great deal of time. I would very much like to see increased access to the mountains for sustainable recreation by the 20 million Californians within day trip distance of the range.

I regularly hike in the San Gabriel mountains/Angeles National Forest and I believe that their protection is vital to the Los Angeles area and to the many people who now use or will in the future use the forest. A San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area would be extremely helpful in protecting this great resource, by bringing in the assistance of the National Park Service as well as more resources and rangers for the area.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our family has hiked in these mountains for more than 30 years, yet we find diminished care. Supposedly My husband, Farley, & I wrote a popular photo-essay, Call of the Mountains, the Beauty and Legacy of Southern California's San Jacinto, San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountains. When we give related programs, most people know the San Gabriels, which are closer to LA. Most frequently we hear how others love this mountain range, but at the same time see so much lack of care. A San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area could address this crisis. The America Great Outdoors Initiative could acknowledge the problems and recommend the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area - which would bring in the assistance of the National Park Service as well as more resources and rangers for the area. As a longtime S.Calif resident, I urge the to recommend the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area in your final report. Respectfully,

In the face of growing recreational needs in the urban area of Southern California, the ability of the Angeles National Forest to support visitors is actually declining with only about one dollar per visitor on law enforcement, educational materials, interpretive services, and visitor center management spent annually. Putting an end to youth obesity, a particular interest of Michele and a life-time career focus of mine as a dance and Physical Education teacher, and an end to the diabetes crisis of our youth can be directly attributed to access to our mountains and rivers for local recreation. A San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area could tackle this crisis. The America Great Outdoors Initiative that you launched this summer is a wonderful program. It will change many lives by acknowledging the problems of the region and recommending the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area which would bring in the assistance of the National Park Service as well as more resources and rangers for the area and much needed support for outdoor recreation in our local mountains.

As growing recreational needs increase, particularly in areas that lack local parks, the Forest Service's ability to support visitors is actually declining. Our region's youth obesity and diabetes crisis is growing. This is bringing an urgency to connect our people and communities with the outdoors...to bring them back to nature, in our mountains and rivers. At the same time our children are not doing well in school, and we have far too many dropouts, where they sometimes fall into lives of crime.. Students, as well as adults, can learn, and enjoy it, when they have access to nature and open space. Class trips to our near-by mountains and rivers, weekend outings of families and church groups not only give our communities a place to recreate, it gives them a place to learn, to respect our natural surroundings, outside the classroom. A San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area could play a major role in helping solve this crisis. The America Great Outdoors Initiative could be a real game changer by acknowledging the problems of the region and recommending the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area, would bring in the assistance of the National Park Service as well as much needed resources and rangers for the area.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We would like to thank your department representatives for joining us on July 7th in the San Gabriel Valley to hear the perspective of local residents on the challenges and opportunities of connecting urban communities to their public lands. The San Gabriel Mountains Forever Campaign--a diverse partnership of conservation, faith, health, community and social service groups--appreciates this opportunity to submit comments for inclusion in the final America Great Outdoors report. The San Gabriel Mountains Forever Campaign asks that the AGO's report support the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area to improve recreational opportunities for the diverse populace of the San Gabriel Valley. This designation would help alleviate the chronic lack of visitor services and facilities along the San Gabriel River, which is heavily used by residents of the San Gabriel Valley and urban Los Angeles County. The San Gabriel Mountains and watershed offer a unique opportunity to showcase a regional scale model for connecting our forests and rivers with urban communities. The San Gabriel Mountains -- with its abundant natural habitat, wilderness, and scenic rivers-- hosts many recreational activities such as hiking, camping and water play. The Angeles National Forest, which houses a majority of the mountain range, is one of the most heavily visited recreational forests in the United States and accounts for 70 percent of the open space in Los Angeles County. The Station Fire, the largest in the history of the Angeles National Forest, has exacerbated this shortage of recreational opportunities and funds for public services. Outside of the forest our region's youth obesity and diabetes crisis is growing, bringing new urgency to connecting our people and communities back to our mountains and rivers. A San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area could tackle this crisis and meet many of the goals of the Whitehouse Task Force Childhood Obesity Report to President Obama. The America Great Outdoors Initiative could be a game changer by acknowledging the problems of the region and recommending the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area. We offer the following recommendations to be included in your final report. We have also attached them in a Word document. A San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area The San Gabriel Mountains Forever Campaign ask that the final America Great Outdoors report acknowledge the San Gabriel Mountains as a place of national importance that could serve as a model for connecting large, urban and park-poor communities to their nearby public lands. We ask that the final report recommend the creation of a robust San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area to accomplish this. The National Recreation Area model we recommend would have the National Park Service take the lead role in creating a formal partnership that would manage the San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area. The partnership would include key stakeholders such as the Forest Service. This management model would allow for bold new approaches to chronically underfunded concentrated use areas such as those along the San Gabriel River. This approach could be transformative, leading to new interpretive services and public education programs where the National Park Service excels. We would also advocate that the National Recreation Area include all of the territory historically considered to be part of the San Gabriel Mountains which is the national forest land between the I-14 on the west to the I-15 on the east. The SGMNRA would also include the San Gabriel Valley communities south of the Angeles National Forest including Azusa, El Monte and many others. This would facilitate planning for and funding of innovate programs to connect often park poor communities with the recreational resources of the San Gabriel Mountains, which we believe could get more kids outdoors an

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please make the conservation of land a centerpiece of your initiative. I cannot imagine a better legacy for yourself and for our country.

IMy wife and I have placed a conservation easement on our land in NC. Please use all of your power to help preserve more land for all of our citizens

I live on a river in New Jersey and value the opportunities this gives me to see nature as is. Please continue to encourage support by preserving these natural lands and resources

We will appreciate your making the conservation of private farms, ranches and forests a centerpiece of your initiative. We need to keep our farm land productive in order to feed our families fresh food. Thank you for your efforts on our behalf.

Please take a look at the suggestions to improve the national night sky - a great outdoors that should be available to everyone - urban, suburban and rural families. Improving our sky could save energy and make our country more efficient at the same time it improves our national great outdoors. Please feel free to contact me for more information on the 'Big Star Night' initiative. Thank you for your attention to these vital, quality of life issues. Sincerely,

While our population is increasing inexorably, the amount of precious open space is decreasing inexorably as sprawl continues on. For the sake of our kids and successive generations we need to have a vigorous effort to preserve open space now. We wish to thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors and recognizing the work of America's 1,600 land trusts to productive use and protect important wildlife habitat. Please make the conservation of land a centerpiece of your initiative.

Please help us protect our vanishing wild lands and open spaces. We need to protect them from the ATVs, OHVs, dirt bikes, snow mobiles which any fat moron and can operate, which fill endless miles with their roar, and which leave permanent trenches behind their tires. Help us resist the mounting recreational industry dollars that support the riders of these vehicles; help us resist their abusive behavior at town meetings. Finally, thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors and in productive use and protect important wildlife habitat.

Please make the conservation of private farms, ranches, forests, rivers and bays a centerpiece of your initiative. America's land and water resources have suffered extensively over the past 30 years from rampant and destructive development and natural resource exploitation, and the destruction continues despite the economic downturn. While jobs and the welfare of our citizens is a paramount concern for all of us, it should not come at the expense of our land and water, without which we will be poorer in health and spirit. We need our natural lands as much as we need air to breathe and water to drink. Please help make conservation a lasting legacy of this great nation. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am President of the White Mountain Conservation League in eastern Arizona with over 250 members. We are fully involved in working with the Forest Service on new Forest Plans and Travel Management Plans for the two million acres of National Forest in our area. It is a battle, with many opposed to any plan that does not include an excess of extraction industries in the forest, and thousands of miles of unnecessary roads that fragment the forest and displace wildlife. Our mission is to preserve our natural resources for future generations, while some only see immediate degradation for profit or selfish uses. Please work with the Forest Service to ensure that these lands are not destroyed or damaged beyond repair. Thank You,

Please! We must - we must keep agricultural lands in productive use and protect important wildlife habitat. This land is your land, this land is my land From California, to the New York Island From the redwood forest, to the gulf stream waters This land was made for you and me As I was walking a ribbon of highway I saw above me an endless skyway I saw below me a golden valley This land was made for you and me Chorus I've roamed and rambled and I've followed my footsteps To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts And all around me a voice was sounding This land was made for you and me Chorus The sun comes shining as I was strolling The wheat fields waving and the dust clouds rolling The fog was lifting a voice come chanting This land was made for you and me Chorus As I was walkin' - I saw a sign there And that sign said - no tress passin' But on the other side it didn't say nothin! Now that side was made for you and me! Chorus In the squares of the city - In the shadow of the steeple Near the relief office - I see my people And some are grumblin' and some are wonderin' If this land's still made for you and me.

Tax incentives, farm bill easement programs, LWCF and Forest Legacy have helped land trusts conserve millions of acres. Please make the conservation of private farms, ranches and forests a centerpiece of your initiative.

Please make the conservation of private farms, ranches and forests a vital thrust of your initiative.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That is why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

Please expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and protect potential expansion areas from harm by BLM.

Expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and protect surrounding lands from BLM actions that would preclude this.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To ensure that future generations will always benefit and enjoy our public lands, please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors:

Address Conservation at a Large Scale: Please conserve large landscapes that include our most pristine wildlands, working forest and ranch lands, private lands and the connections across these large areas. Large natural areas provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.

Protect our wilderness: Wildlands represent some of our healthiest and most intact lands. Please use all tools available to protect our public lands including recommending new wilderness and national parks, designating national monuments, and expanding National Wildlife Refuges.

Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat: Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. Please prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands, making restoration a national priority. By restoring our forests we can spur economic growth by providing needed jobs, and improve recreation opportunities.

Connect people with Nature: Please create new national programs that help connect people especially our youth with nature. Today, youth, especially people of color, are underrepresented on our public lands and it is important that new policies and programs are developed to encourage more youth participation, including nature education or recreation programs and a revived civilian conservation corps. No matter where they live, all children deserve the opportunity to learn about and experience the wildlands that belong to all Americans.

Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities: Recreation is a great way for people to experience nature and help develop a strong conservation ethic. Please ensure access is increased for all Americans.

Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund: Please support fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas, protect lands around lakes, rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails, or provide key wildlife linkage areas.

We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them.

I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness.

Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities.

I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

I believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative.

For America's Great Outdoors to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority.

The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed.

Relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened.

Standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter.

Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent

Please stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay.

I urge you to include a recommendation for the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area in your final America Great Outdoors Report.

A San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area could tackle this crisis. The America Great Outdoors Initiative could be a game changer by acknowledging the problems of the region and recommending the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area which would bring in the assistance of the National Park Service as well as more resources and rangers for the area.

As a southern California resident, I urge the America Great Outdoors Team to recommend the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area in your final report.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am 83 years old and many of those 83 summers were spent in our National Parks. In fact my children and grandchildren, with a friend, hiked in Lassen National Park last weekend. We have climbed Lassen Peak several times and skied down the ski trails that used to be there. My son and grandson will visit Yellowstone National Park this week as my grandson returns home from his tours in Afghanistan. Please don't let this wonderful experience diminish in anyway and do everything possible to save these places for my greatgrandchildren. Please heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans two them in the next century. Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

Future generations will judge you by the decisions you make today. The American people deserve better. You must learn to be a better steward of this country and this planet, if you want History to judge you favorably.

Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be invested and the profit used for the parks as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Recind all leases for our public lands the Bush Administration handed so freely to Big Oil and mining companies. No drilling in the Arctic ever. Save the polar bears and the many other wildlife there and the native Alaskans who depend on this area for their very lives. Big Oil will destroy all of this by their very existence there. Stop the killing of wolves by Cattlemen after taxpayers spent so much to keep them from extinction only to have them again to be slaughtered by this same group.

An important part of this effort is to tell Secretary Salazar that he needs to do more to protect Americas wildlife. He seems to be continuing the Bush policies and ignoring the best advice of wildlife experts. His stand on perpetuating the hunting of wolves in Yellowstone and elsewhere is brutal and destructive and his overall action (or lack of) protecting America's endangered species is dismal. Whereas he should be acting as a steward of wildlife he seems bent on removing protections that are already in place.

I am writing tho ask that your administration take the following steps to preserve our National Parks:

As a youngster I dreamed of visiting the National Parks - As an adult that dream came true. Thank God they were still there waiting for me and mine. Your adminsitration needs to make certain they continue to not only be there but to be protected and enhanced as this world of ours gets smaller and warmer.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our recent trip to Glacier National Park. I could ski and/or snow shoe in July at the top of the Road to the Sun. We visit Arcadia later this summer and look forward to Yellowstone either this winter or next summer. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans two them in the next century. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms. The Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country.

And finally, KEEP CASINOS OUT OF GETTYSBURG, AND ALL OF OUR NATIONAL PARKS.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama; Please protect and preserve our National Parks as they are, natural and beautiful. Please do not allow casinos near or in our national parks. Casinos bring trash and crime. ALSO, PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW GUNS IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS. IT MAKES NO SENSE TO ALLOW GUNS IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS. PLEASE KEEP OUR NATIONAL PARKS CLEAN AND FREE OF DEVELOPMENT. Conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. PROTECT BISON, ELK, BUFFALO, WILD HORSES, ALL WILDLIFE FROM ROUND UP OR HUNTING. DO NOT ALLOW GUNS IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS. IT MAKES NO SENSE TO HAVE GUNS IN OUR NATIONAL PARK GEMS. Our parks are visited by people from all over the world. Keep them beautiful and undeveloped. Have lots of camping and summer programs for children to teach them wonder and respect for nature.

I also feel very strongly that the USDA, acting under the auspices of the Atlantic Flyway Council, should no longer be permitted to slaughter our native wildfowl as they are currently doing in so many of our parks. This is untenable.

I have been an avid tent-camper since the Spring of 1976, when my sons, (3 and 6 years old at the time), first agreed to accompany my wife and I on our first camping trip with borrowed equipment. Ten years later, they were taking us camping. Our family car was always a small, compact station wagon and they could pack in all the camping gear we would need on their own. So, often on a Friday, when we arrived home from work, they would announce where they wanted to go camping that weekend and have the maps ready to show us the way. Most of our destinations were state and national parks. We attend church in inner-city Oakland, California and now that our sons have grown up and left town, I take our Sunday school group camping one each summer. I also teach physical geography at local community colleges and work into the course assignment a field trip each semester. Both class and Sunday school students marvel at the impact that the outdoors have on them. Many have never been out on a hiking trail before their first field trip or church camp-out. The inner city children I have exposed to outdoor experiences have been impressed, even inspired by the exposure. I remember children trying to hide their fear of being out of the city for the first time, (terrified by images from horror movies) and voicing regret to leave when it was time to go back home. One teenage boy once said to me: "It is so quiet here I almost don't want to speak and disturb the silence!" Our parks are such a powerful healing balm for children in the inner city, who have been exposed to too much violence and too inhuman an atmosphere that is their daily experience, that I feel we need to have more programs designed to expose them to the parks in their vicinity. My church is working with local neighborhood groups to provide summer activities for the children. But, alas, the need is far greater than what we can afford to do. It seems so much easier to find prisons and youth detention homes to catch them, when they join the programs that are so much more available to them. Please help us! The parks are so much less expensive than the prisons! Maybe your administration would consider some of the following steps:

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's National Parks are America's national treasures. One important thing the Park System should do is to raise entrance and other fees. Currently, these are dirt cheap. Many fees and charges could be doubled or tripled and still be most reasonable for the vast majority of visitors. Increased fees would provide much needed money for maintenance and more Park Rangers. When I visited Yellow Stone 15 years ago, the only place I saw a Park Ranger was at the Ranger Stations. I was very disappointed, to say the least.

Our national parks are one of country's greatest assets but they are fragile and need to be protected. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people.

Some of my happiest memories are of camping in the national parks. The quiet of the night, the brilliance of the stars, the beauty of great trees, especially here in California! I hope that you will heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century.

I believe it is our sacred duty to protect the wilderness and environment for future generations. Our National Parks are precious treasures that should be protected and expanded. They are special places where children can learn about nature and foster a love for the great outdoors

National Parks are a legacy and our generation will be criticized by future generations if we allow the care and implementation of National Parks to languish.

Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it lacks money. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diverse nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas. Americans want their children and grandchildren to enjoy and understand the importance of protecting National Park Service parks and programs. National parks and programs are good investments in our future that build strong communities

My big concern now is what is happening all through Pennsylvania with the drilling for natural gas. Our entire state could be considered one big park with its many state parks, but the gas drilling is taking over. WE NEED TO CLOSE THE LOOPHOLE ON SAFE WATER WHICH WAS GRANTED THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF CHEANYWHO HAS CONNECTIONS WITH THE COMPANIES-- HALIBURTON TO BE SPECIFIC

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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I believe --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission. This group of well respected individuals spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. . not merely using them. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under-resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is already working in communities across the country. In particular I think of the buffalo & Yellowstone - where buffalo that wander outside the Park boundaries are slaughtered by stupid ignorant people who maintain that buffalo carry brucellosis - despite the fact that there has never been a verified case of brucellosis in buffalo! This is a huge insult to every IndigenUs Turtle Islander (what you p.c. people call "Native Americans"). More parks will spread the impact of more visitors so that no one park is destroyed by the crush of visitors.

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments and they belong to ALL OF US.

This year I have seen the beauty of rural Arkansas and Wisconsin on trips to hike and mountain bike in national forests. In two weeks, I will be taking my children to enjoy the magnificence of Glacier National Park. On the way, we plan to stop at the Badlands, Devil's Tower, Jewel Cave and Mt. Rushmore. This trip may have a profound impact upon the development of my children. I hope that it will inspire in them pride in their country and a desire to preserve the splendor of our nation's parks and monuments. As a teacher, I discuss the economic necessity to decrease dependency on oil and practice sustainable living. Our parks are a constant reminder of why we should do this.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Two years ago my son got an opportunity to work a seasonal job at Yellowstone National Park during his college summer break. It was a life-changing experience. He fell in love with nature and all that comes with it. He returned to Yellowstone the following year after he graduated from college. This year he is working at Grand Teton National Park. Every spare minute he has, he hikes. It has become his passion. Right before my son started college he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. He struggled with it for most of his college years. That first year at Yellowstone he found something that made him happier than I had seen him in a very long time. It did still take him some time to figure some things out for himself, but this year when I accompanied him on a 10-day journey (with stops at other national parks, of course) to Grand Teton National Park he told me that he had decided that he wants to work for the park service. The national parks have become so important to him, he wants to be part of preserving them. Considering that he has a degree in English and his previous goal was to be a writer, one can see what an impact this spur-of-the-moment decision of working at a park for the summer has had. But hiking the parks has done so much more than simply change his career goals; it has taught him survival skills, it has given him his self-confidence back, and most importantly it has made him feel like a man; something he had never quite felt since he was barely twenty when he was diagnosed, which had always made him feel handicapped. He still writes, of course, but now he fills his journals with his hiking and spotting wildlife experiences in the parks. His passion has rubbed off on me. I recently joined the NPCA, and we both have our NP passports, which we hope to completely fill with cancellations (ink stamps) from all the parks before long. As you can see, national parks play a tremendous role in not only connecting people, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people, it also nurtures their hearts and souls. They also provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. Therefore I suggest for your administration to take the following steps:

Stop "pimping put" our park lands to ranchers and mining operations, which degrade the lands set aside for all Americans AND our native wildlife. The latter practices practices have contributed greatly to the disappearing of some of our native birds and animals, like the wolf and California condor.

These are sentiments which are being repeated to you from many other concerned citizens. We hope that you will personally join in the effort to save our National Parks, along with other significant parts of our nation patrimony now under seige. With warmest best wishes,

How about upkeep of the National Parks. As far as Rock Creek Park, Washington, MD (MNCPPC) perhaps making sure there are enough Park Police available would be a beginner. People drive through the park shooting off guns. Beach Drive traffic laws need to be enforced for there are trucks, 18wheelers etc using Beach which deteriorates the park. The excess use of autos is destroying the park according to my arborist since my property backs up to Rock Creek Park. There needs to be wildlife signs and Beach Drive needs to be closed at certain hours and closed on the weekends. There is no need for autos to be on Beach, it is now being used as a state road. There are vines and invasives in the park which need removal/control and when trees are destroyed due to weather, they should be replaced.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a child, every summer vacation to one of our great National Parks are the most wonderful memories with my family. The lifetime experiences of 'America the Beautiful' carry with me to this day...please keep our parks intact.

For me, our national parks have always been a place where the spirit may be renewed, as I stand in awe of the great mountains of the west or enter into the quiet of the forests of east and west, and pause as a wapiti or salamander crosses my path. But even if I never was able to go back, it would be essential for me as a citizen of this nation and the world to know these places remained protected from the relentless onslaught of development that has so damaged our planet and driven so many species and ecosystems into extinction..

And just a few more thoughts: Fully fund the National Parks, celebrating our great outdoors Fully fund the NASA and the Space Program, we are a nation of explorers. 10% tax for everyone
Thanks,

At the present moment in Montana, there are several areas deserving special attention. I mention in particular elements of the Pryor Mountain complex, a unique and valuable area we have been despoiling for several decades. Here in Montana there are two species--the wolf and the grizzly bear--especially in need of wildlife corridors to help encourage genetic diversity within each species

Please preserve our national parks!

National Parks are the very essence of America and more people should have access to them. Programs to bring people from cities to parks would open them up to connection with nature and improve lives, especially for children.

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please also teach children the importance of protecting national parks and wildlife and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

My biggest concern is that if the NPS do not get sufficient funding to maintain the parks, they will turn to private money. That will be the end of the NPS.

The happiest moments in my long life were spent in national parks. I can't imagine life without the great outdoors. Please support our national parks to the fullest. If you have ever been to one, then you know how I and millions of other people feel about these wonderful, peaceful sanctuaries.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks and our great state of Colorado. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, rich or poor, disabled or able, sick or healthy to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people in multiple ways. Anyone can visit a national park which is part of what makes them so vital, so wonderful, so precious. It's in the bones of humans to need their great outdoors to recuperate from the hectic mechanics of the concrete worlds we inhabit most of our lives. National parks symbolize the essence of freedom and what America truly stands for. How we all love our parks!!! National parks provide some of America's most outstanding outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. There's hardly a soul in my state who has not visited at least one of our national parks in the course of their lives. In fact most of us visit our parks often. I strongly request that your administration take the following steps: This is an outstanding way to bring people together during difficult times. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. It is crucial that this money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. We are all hurt by this tragedy. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. We have the grandest of grand theaters available to our people in the form of national parks. A stage from which both our heritage and our future can be visited LIVE any day of the week. I brought my kids to visit our national parks every opportunity we had and they have all benefited immensely from this introduction to the natural world and our environment. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. The Department of Education should work with the Park Service to motivate and inspire kids with hands-on learning experiences. I have seen such programs literally turn lives around. I would especially beseech you to protect these areas from corporate or personal greed so no one can build a house or factory within the borders of places that should belong to the people of this nation and not individuals. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We desperately need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. So many creatures have dearly paid for our selfish ends; particularly through the poor planning of fences. Wildlife corridors endure for GENERATIONS over eons. These critters are born with the instinct to use trails provided by their ancestors so it is impossible for them to find other routes without constantly risking their fragile lives. It is our duty to help the most vulnerable in our populations whether animal or human. But it doesn't require an economic downturn for people to visit parks. In Colorado as a whole the population increasingly uses our national parks on a regular basis. Many people are just now discovering the

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

fantastic gift we have received through the foresight of a few to protect these amazing areas for all of us ~ for each and every American ~ FOREVER. We need you to continue this work; as this is an endeavor of the heart. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. I have many friends from around the world who have come to America specifically to visit at least one of our great parks. How proud I feel that for once they weren't berating us for our wars and poor economic choices! Our parks are a great source of national pride for all of us. That's why I'm asking you to please remember the VITAL importance of protecting our national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are one of the greatest investments in our nation's future. Thank you for your attention and

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I firmly support the initiative of America's Great Outdoors and believe that the first step to promoting conservation is by PROTECTING and DEVELOPING our NATIONAL PARKS. If the ultimate goal is to connect our society and especially our children to the natural world we must implement this concept into all aspects of our life. WE MUST SET THE EXAMPLE OF A MORE EARTH CONSCIOUS SOCIETY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION TO BUILD UPON. ULTIMATELY NATIONAL PARKS ARE GOOD INVESTMENTS IN OUR FUTURE. The administration can be more responsible and promote conservation by SUPPORTING AND FUNDING ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS AND CAUSES. Here are a few ways to do so: --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. . --UTILIZE NATIONAL PARKS TO INSPIRE AND EDUCATE THE NEXT GENERATION. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. EDUCATION SHOULD WORK WITH THE PARK SERVICE in order to inspire and excite kids with hand-on learning experience Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. THE PARK SERVICE'S RIVERS AND TRAILS CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. YOU ALREADY HAVE A GREAT PROGRAM, BUT ITS UNDER RESOUCRED. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that EVERY FEDERAL DOLLAR INVESTED IN NATIONAL PARKS GENERATES AT LEAST FOUR DOLLARS OF ECONOMIC VALUE TO THE PUBLIC. every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. WE MUST change our lifestyle to WORK WITH AND FOR THE ENVIRONMENT OR else we continue to STEAL FROM OUR OWN FUTURE. Ms.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

HOW CAN ANYONE GET EXCITED GOING TO THE OUT DOORS. WHEN BP PLANS TO PUT IN A PIPELINE AND DESTROY THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF OUR STATE OF NEVADA. NOT COUNTING THAT BLM IS REMOVING OUR HERITAGE FROM THE PLANS. WHAT WILL WE BE ABLE TO SEE, NO MUSTANGS, NO WOLVES, OR ANY OTHER ANIMAL BLM OR HUMAN HAS REMOVED AND DESTROYED. A PERSON SAID, IF THE HORSES ARE STARVING AND HAVE TO BE REMOVED. WHY AREN'T ANY OTHER ANIMALS DIEING? THE PRESIDENT DOESN'T REALLY CARE OR HE WOULD OF ANSWER MY 4 ENVELOPES FROM THE KIDS AND PEOPLE FROM PAHRUMP, NEVADA. WE HAVE LOST HORSES ALREADY FROM THE IGNORANCE OF BLM. JUST BECAUSE HE CAN AFFORD TO DO THINGS. WHAT MAKES YOU THINK ANYONE ELSE CAN? THE POOR GET POORER AND THE RICH GET RICHER. BP OIL. 2ND LARGEST CO TO WANT TO GET RID OF OUR HORSES. (BLM AND KEN SALAZAR)..WHEN IS THE PRESIDENT GOING TO STOP LISTENING TO SALAZAR AND START LISTENING TO THE PEOPLE? I VOTED FOR OUR PRESIDENT. I MAY NOT THE NEXT TIME. WE HAVE A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY. BUT IT IS GOING TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. WHAT IS GOING TO BE LEFT ONCE THEY KILL OFF ALL THE HORSES, BURROS, WOLVES, BEARS, LIONS AND WHAT EVER ELSE ON 4 LEGS. WHEN HUMANS STARTED TO INTER FER WITH NATURE, ALL IS GONE. NEED TO MAKE THAT CHANGE, LIKE PROMISED. AFTER BUSH, THINGS WERE TO GO FOR THE BETTER. NOTHING HAS CHANGED. THE ROAM ACT IS NOT FOLLOWED BY BLM. THEY MAKE THE LAW AS IT IS NEEDED. LOOK AT WHO GETS THE REWARDS. BLM AND SALAZAR, BP OIL . THE TAX PAYER IS GETTING THE SHAFT, THEY USE MILLIONS OF \$\$\$ TO DO THEIR DIRTY DEED. SELLING THE HORSES FOR \$25.00 A LB. WHILE OUR GOV. IS GETTING PERKS WHAT DOES THE CITIZEN GET? A LOT OF WHAT I HAVE SAID WILL ROLL INTO OUR PARKS. THEIR WILL BE SOME REASONS TO OVER CHARGE TO GET IN. OR BE RESTRICTED, BECAUSE OF WHAT EVER.

GET THE FKKKK OUT OF AFGHANISTAN !! BUILD SCHOOLS AND CLEAN UP OUR WATER !! WHAT HAPPENED TO 'TRANSPARENCY' ?? QUIT LYING !!!! REMEMBER THOSE PROMISES YOU MADE? GONNA KEEP 'EM, EVER ? ? ?!

Everglades National Park is slowly being taken for development, and the panther habit is being systematically destroyed. See the St. Petersburg Times article entitled "Florida's Best Managed Extinction" If you would like a copy, I will be glad to send it to you. It's haunting to think that the government and developers are doing, and getting away with, this. Mitigating the land taken for development doesn't happen; there is none left to mitigate. Again, let me know if you would like a copy, if you can't find it on the internet. Ansel Adams said that it is horrifying that we have to fight with the government to save the environment. I think he hit the nail on the head.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I hike at Torrey Pines, a Park Reserve in my area, once a week. It's beautiful, it's a healthy pastime, and it's free. National parks provide a place for people to become healthier and happier, with beauty delivered straight from the Divine. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Expand programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. And the Department of Education could work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks also provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. They were established to protect important wilderness areas from destructive ideas and destructive corporate executives. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative toward developing a new public-private partnership that will prepare our vitally-needed parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign, one that will capture individuals' imaginations and that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, and mandatory, funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, as yet unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised, exclusively to support parks, seashores, forests, and important waterways across the country, rather than just representing yet another neocon broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is for responsible Americans--Democrats and Republicans-- keep that promise. --Do more to use national parks in their role of inspiring and educating young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs such as Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low-income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers helping to develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build upon programs that already work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under- resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. A vastly overpopulated country drowning in pollutants emitted by supply-side economic madmen foisting off unneeded products onto brainwashed overconsuming victims is not capitalism, not Americanism and not even sane conduct. Study the loss of caribou alone; the lesson is clear. This is our most vital asset--people caring about perpetual upkeep of our living heritage, our air, our water and our wildlife. Real Americans, not pseudo-religious neocon reality bashers do in fact care very deeply about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Only the BLM and EPA and the corporate business lobby apparently hate reality so much they're willing to destroy it in the name of short-term stolen "profiteering". Please remember the importance of protecting state and especially our national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service; these are extremely central and vital programs that improve our communities, and generate jobs, income and tourism dollars as well as educating citizens about priorities in realism. National parks are good investments in our future--perhaps the best investment we have.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of the important area of the United States is the National Parks. National parks play a tremendous role in attracting people to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. Your administration must take the following steps to preserve these important areas: --Take the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. --Use this opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.

Dear Mr. President Our National Parks are a miracle of politics and nature. Set aside through great efforts, maintained by passion and shared with joy with generations of families, both American and from abroad. PLEASE don't let these gems fade away! You can take the following steps: --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew America's commitment to our national parks, perhaps through a new public-private partnership. --We need a new national campaign that will involve young people, especially, in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for their future. --Got extra billions? Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Let national parks to inspire and educate young people. . Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This wonderful program should be expanded! --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. For instance the Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --Consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

Advertise them on website let Americans know what they are in for. Separate the parks by states so people will know what is near them. Have periodic special events listed to encourage people to visit.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you, Mr. President, for emphasizing the need for our people to make use of "the great outdoors." I think of our national parks. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to America's Great Outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. With America's finest outdoor classrooms National parks can serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. --> Listen to the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group who spent more than a year developing a vision for ways to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. --> Grasp the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. I think you should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national program that will involve people throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --> Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, not yet spent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --> Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they can bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. Could the Department of Education work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences? I think so, don't you? --> Build on programs that work, like the Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program. It has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working across the country. --> We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. --> Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We should have cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. Thank you, Mr. President, for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National Parks are our country's greatest resource. They are part of our essential infrastructure that support your green efforts, education goals, and support the public health. Follow the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans two them in the next century. Use the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

I have visited a number of them in my lifetime. We have spent untold taxpayer dollars on wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now it is time to invest here in America.

It is within your power to save or to allow the destruction of our beautiful places. I pray you will make the right choice.

LOOK WHAT JIMMY CARTER DID - HE DOUBLED THE NATIONAL PARKS ACREAGE WE NEED SOME VERY LARGE GULF MARINE SANCTUARIES OFF-LIMITS TO DRILLING, AND SOME MORE MOUNTAINS OFF LIMITS TO MOUNTAIN TOP MINING. FEEDING PERCEIVED SHORT TERM GREED AND NEED IS NOT SMART POLICY WE ALSO NEED THESE TO ESTABLISH HEALTHY BASELINE AREAS REQUIRED TO FAIRLY EVALUATE AND PUT A COST AND TAX ON THE HUGE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF DRILLING, COASTAL DEGRADATION, AND MISSISSIPPI RUNOFF

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'm still glad I voted for you to be the current president, even though so far you've let me down by not ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, not appointing progressive judges to balance the courts Bush stacked in favor of reactionism, letting Bush's DEA head sit in her office doing her best to circumvent my state's laws that protect medical marijuana use waaaaaay too far into your presidency, and not, yet, better protecting our environment. How glad am I going to be that you're the current president when I vote in 2012? It's up to you. Our children deserve to enjoy the natural beauty of our country the way we could while growing up. Please seize your best opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's "great outdoors." Surely you realize that an overwhelming majority of American's expect their president to do ALL within the power of that office to protect our environment, including our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find more ways to support conservation of our farms, rangelands and forests. National Parks are vital to the health of our people. (Sort of like the Arts are vital to the health of our school children, so please work on get them back into our public schools ASAP, please.) Please direct your administration to immediately:

I realize that you have many issues competing for your support. National Parks are something for all Americans to enjoy, yet they are always coming up short when people look for causes to support. Please stop all your divisive activities and support something that all Americans can support. Just a thought, but what about authorizing drilling in ARNWR (which would be controversial) and using funds generate on the leases solely for support of our National Parks(in addition to, not in lieu of, current funding)

America must lead the global biodiversity conservation effort. Before it is too late, a bold, visionary expansion and completion of the biodiversity conservation system here in America is needed. This is not a "special interest", but is advocated by leading scientists in the fields, such as, Edward O. Wilson (In his recent book, *The Future of Life*). Long-term biodiversity conservation is the goal. Preserving viable, diverse ecosystems of the Earth obviously benefits all for the long-term. Three or four new National Parks should be declared in most states...save the last greatest places before it is too late! The West, the Southwest, the Prairies, Coasts, Great Lakes, Appalachians, Southern Swamps & Tropical Forests and the Northeast Forest all need our attention. Examples include: the Maine woods between Allagash Waterway and the Quebec border, several new park in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (not to mention Wisconsin & Minnesota), expansion of Appalachian Mount Parks, Sabine Swamp/River in Texas-Louisiana, Oregon's Willowa-Eagle Cap-Hell's Canyon & the Siskiyou-Klamath, as well as the Cascade Crest of Oregon, and places in the Southwest like the Gila Wilderness as well as the best places in Arizona and Texas. The effort must be visionary and comprehensive in order to preserve the greatest biodiversity for the great time. The established national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, grasslands, coastal freshwater and marine reserves are gifts from the foresight of the previous generations. We now must have even a greater foresight and pass our gifts to the future generations. This is a vital responsibility. Sustain America's spirit, ties to the land and history. Please work on the completion of the Biodiversity Conservation System here in America, be a role model for global efforts and assist global efforts. Thanks so much!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I hope you will create, expand, and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers, and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands, and forests. I hope your administration will take the following steps: --Follow the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century.

America's parks are very important to me. I also work in an on the California coast in the service industry and parks are very important attractions. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

I want the next generation to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to use this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. A major part of America's great outdoors is our national parks. Your administration should consider seriously taking the following steps: Americans care about the future of these wonderful places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

I listen to the news while driving to work and I think, well here I am going to earn tax money for a system that I have no control over. Just a cog in the wheel. Well, you know what? I have bushes for birds in my backyard, I have flowers for the butterflies, I'm teaching my granddaughter to love the outdoors, I serve on the city parks commission, I'm trying to get together a group to start a community garden, I work at the gardens at the fairground so others can enjoy their beauty, I pick up trash along the road. I do this. An individual. It seems to me that somebody in a position of power should do a little something for the environment too. So give the parks a fair shake. Because there's only one world and it's all got to end somewhere.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the next generation, my two daughters and two grandsons, to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to take this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission. --Take the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced.

Listen to the National Parks Board.

I suggest that you read the bestseller, THEODORE ROOSEVELT- WILDERNESS WARRIOR, to find a mentor for such action. His political party was not happy, but he had the courage to stand by his convictions and knowledge. He refused to give in and to give up!

P.S. - while you're at it, get back on the bandwagon for green, sustainable, renewable energy sources and infrastructure!!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The next generation, that's your children/grandchildren and mine, should be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I ask you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, rangelands and forests. 1) Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission (well respected folks) who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. 2) Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. 3) Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and use the current \$17,000,000 revenues for their intended purpose to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. 4) Do more to use national parks as classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. 5) Build on programs of tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways but it is under resourced. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. 6) We need to evaluate and consider new sites to expand our park system. 7) Provide wildlife corridors using federal, state and local agencies because wildlife doesn't use boundaries on maps. Thank you for SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING my comments.

Now is the time to protect our wilderness and the wildlife that depends on it for their existence. If you do not do this during this term of office, it will be lost.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This letter is about National Parks. it would be wonderful for our country and those of us living here if your administration would do the followings: --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century, which means to apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. apparently seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally intended, to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT), a fantastic opportunity which allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers should be expanded. This program allows teachers to develop and present interpretive programs and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. And even better if the Department of Education would work with the Park Service to provide kids with hands-on learning experiences. --increase funding to the Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program. this program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. --Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is crucial to protect our national parks and wilderness areas from development, especially by oil and coal companies, and from lumber industries that employ clear-cutting. I want the future generations to enjoy America's great outdoors, too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand, and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands, and forests. When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks and the wildlife that lives there. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well-respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks and preserve them for future generations. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the future. Leasing to gas and oil companies needs to be cut back as newer, cleaner energy sources are developed. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries, without fear of being hunted and killed. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

Instead of doling out taxpayers money to those who are not working or those who are capable of working but won't and you know fullwell who they are, why not reinstate the tried and true organization the CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS aka CCC used so successfully in the 30's. At least this way the taxpayers can get a return for their money. Our national parks and infrastructures certainly need the help.

I am asking you to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. National parks play a tremendous role, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Encourage the Department of Education to work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. National parks are good investments in our future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have always enjoyed hiking and camping in our national parks, forests and recreation areas. My children and I go on vacation to our National Parks every year. We go camping and canoeing in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area near our home, on many weekends throughout the year. We also camp for 2 weeks every summer on Cape Cod National Seashore in Truro. I have plans to take them west to camp in the Grand Canyon and the Rocky mountains next year. I am also a boy scout leader and take boys of all ages into our national and state parks and recreation areas every month. . I want my future grandchildren and the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors also. So I am asking you to please make it a priority of yours to create, expand and better protect America's commons, our outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. I have spent many weeks camping, hiking, learning and appreciating nature in our national parks and forests. National parks play an important role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. I can't think of anything more important than that to teach our children. I believe that our national parks have suffered from neglect and understaffing for the past 20 years. I would love to see your administration do more to make our National parks, forests, wilderness areas and recreation areas a higher priority on your agenda for the benefit of all Americans. Please consider taking the following actions to support and build our national parks. :

I believe that the vast majority of Americans care about the future of our incredible natural places. Everyone shares the goal of preserving and protecting as much of our natural heritage as possible, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future. Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of America and its people. Thank you also for considering my comments.

Our family has spent most of our vacations enjoying our country's magnificent National Parks. Many of our friends have done the same. Some of our most enjoyable discussions with family and friends revolve around the amazing and wonderful experiences we've had at our National Parks. --Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. --Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are vital investments in our future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the new century. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and water resources across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's been happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. We already have a great program, but it's under-resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for our growing population to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we lose them to neglect or destructive uses. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within, park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

Please keep our parks in good order! Many are in need of repair. National Parks are America's greatest gems! People from all over the world come to visit them. Please help them be places we can all be proud of by reading this message.

Institute a CCC-like program in support of employment and the National Parks as part of America's great heritage. Peaceful assembly of our citizens from all walks of life in these parks and in these jobs builds our citizenship.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of the role that National and State Parks have played in my life and that of my parents and children over the decades. Please consider these points:

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people, not just physically, but psychologically. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks, WHICH ARE AMERICA'S TREASURES. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --We need more parks for people to enjoy in an environmentally friendly way. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and PROTECT THE REMAINING NATURAL AREAS before we use them all up. AMERICANS CARE DEEPLY about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING NATIONAL PARKS and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. NATIONAL PARKS ARE ONE OF THE BEST INVESTMENTS WE HAVE IN AMERICA'S FUTURE. THANK YOU for considering my comments.

The National Parks are one of our most valuable assets, please continue to support them.

Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. As a camper, I know first hand that these are needed, and could very well help our economy. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise.

In Massachusetts there does not appear to be any attempt to improve fresh water fishing (especially Bass). The economic impact of bass fishing is in the billions. As a 100% disabled Vietnam Veteran I feel more could be done to enhance the fresh waters of New England. Restore structure in bodies of water that are heavily fished. Build some boat ramps, none really exist now. Restock fresh water bass (large mouth & small mouth). Looking at the impact in dollars bass fishing has and the taxes generated, there does not seem to be anything being done to improve the sport or waters.

Protect all species now. Trying to save one at a time is a rat race. --Save our wild horses. Why aren't our calls and signatures being heard? It's time to remove Salazar. His conflict of interests is out of control. This should be an elected position.

It is important to my family that the National Parks are preserved as a showcase of what the United States was like before people started paving over it and driving out wildlife. It is more important to protect the environment and wildlife than to build another strip mall that ends up half empty.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree with all the statements below, for the most part. I also understand that you have a responsibility to the country to try to get the nations budget under control. If only money grew on trees. Well, in the past it did and we allowed industry to destroy many of our beautiful forests. I have every confidence that your indigence will not allow that to happen. I would appreciate it if you could enact legislation that could prevent other administrations. As for your effort to encourage the children of America to connect with the great outdoors, I truly commend you for seeing the importance of this. I have recently turned 50 and over the past few years have also been trying to reconnect with the outdoors. It is of the utmost importance that today's children embrace the great American outdoors. It is also our responsibility to ensure it is there for them to experience. No better return on investment will be found than educating our children with the importance of the wilderness

In these challenging times, I appreciate your efforts to move this country to a better future, and recognize the enormous competition for limited funds, and the enumerable problems and issues that require your attention. However, the national parks play a tremendous role in connecting people to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. I have observed that people tend to be more cooperative, sympathetic, and positive when they are exposed to natural areas, especially the awe inspiring nature present in our national parks. I realize the tremendous strain currently being place on limited resources, but please consider the following steps: Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders.

Please make sure parks are kept affordable for all Americans. They belong to all of us, and we should have access to them. Depending on park fees to support them can make visiting and camping too expensive for lower-income Americans.

When I was young my family usually had two vacations every summer. My dad would pick out some destination. But then we also went camping for a couple of weeks. We usually went to Yellowstone Natl Park, or Teton Natl. Park, or the Windriver Natl forest. A couple of times to Glacier Park, and a few times to the Grand Canyon. You couldn't ask for more beautiful and wondrous country to be in. Now, Yellowstone's roads are in dire need of repair.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times. Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. In my 80 years I have never been more sure of the necessity of taking care of our environment that these steps will accomplish.

My childhood consisted of camping and backpacking trips with family, friends and scout troops. We didn't have the money to spend on staying in hotels and flying in airplanes - so we learned to love and appreciate nature and her creatures instead. I would never give up the memories nor my lifelong love and respect for what we have in this country. Since then I have traveled extensively and know that we have some of the most beautiful natural resources in the world. I ask that you help preserve this beauty by keeping parks open, clean and protected for this generation and all who follow.

I am a retired Naval officer, a veteran of service during three wars. Since retirement, my wife and family and I have toured this beautiful country of ours, and we have camped in National Parks everywhere, enjoying every one of them for their wondrous scenery, wildlife and the courteous and efficient employees of the National Park service. I am, writing to urge you to give serious consideration to the recommendations of the Second Century Commission. Please,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mr. President, I am a fan of our park system from way back - I am 76. Many of my peak experiences have been in our national parks. They are truly America's best idea. The upcoming centennial of our parks needs to be celebrated and spotlighted, especially with attention to some of the things which are still needed. I am very disillusioned when I see examples of and proposals for national park usages (and any public land) which involve the use of motorized equipment. This method should be reserved only for those who are physically handicapped; and even then if the use would damage the ecosystem, then it should not be allowed. None of us have the right to "play" in everybody's land in a manner which uses precious fossil fuel and pollutes the air or damages animals or plants. Our parks can contribute to the health of our people - physical and mental. Please help with the following: I would love to have served on that group. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The failure to apply that fund to our public lands is one of the worst crimes committed by past administrations and elected officials. I have seen first hand the benefits from that fund and conversely have also seen the tragedies which have resulted from failure to provide those funds for the designated resource. I have been an advocate for and volunteer in public recreational lands since the 1960's. It just sometimes breaks my heart about the shenanigans that have gone on to divert the L&WC funds. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. I have volunteered over 200 hours each of the last 6 years at my nearest elementary school in its courtyard garden. We must work to ensure "that no child is left inside." I have been a dues paying member and volunteer for two dozen park and natural places organizations for over 35 years. I have put what money I can plus my time for outdoor education and public land purposes.

It is very important to me that the U.S. continues to invest in the national park system. As we look at the Great Outdoors, national parks play a vital role in our heritage, and many areas have extremely heavy use. I personally make a point to visit national parks when I am traveling. .

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's National Parks are one of our country's greatest assets. National Parks, Monuments and Forests are a significant part of America's Great Outdoors. Our family ranging age from 11 to 83 just returned from a visit to three National Parks -- Theodore Roosevelt, Yellowstone and Grand Tetons, Fossil Butte National Monument and several surrounding National Forests. Please direct your administration to take the following steps: -- Consider the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. -- Capitalize on the Park Service Centennial and renew our commitment to and investment in our National Parks. Establish a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. -- Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support National Parks, Seashores, Forests, and Waterways across the country. -- Use National Parks to inspire and educate young people. Our National Parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. -- Establish funds for local units of government and 501(c)3 organizations to establish buffers and wildlife corridors to connect National Parks to other conservation areas and State Parks and Forests. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting National Parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National Parks are America's best idea. Please establish programs and funding to protect and enhance our National Park System and other outdoor conservation and recreation land protection efforts. This is a key component of America's future. Thank you for your consideration.

As public school educator, I used the parks to help broaden the education of my parents and students. As a mother, it was the best place for my family to reconnect to nature and each other. We camped in a tent in most of the major National Parks! Please support the National Parks for the future belongs to our children and keep these icons available to all people; poor as we were and all races! Thank you for your support.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I know you recently visited Acadia National Park in my home state of Maine. I am a part-time Mount Desert Island resident. I was away from MDI during your visit, but I am so delighted that you and your family visited so many of my favorite places from the Claremont and Havana Restaurant to Cadillac Mountain, Ship Harbor and Bass Harbor Lighthouse. I, too, have been up in the lighthouse tower. It provides quite a dramatic perspective of the Bass Harbor Bar over which I have sailed and kayaked. In fact I'm especially delighted that you spent time on the "Quiet Side" of MDI visiting Acadia's treasures located there. My little cabin getaway is in Southwest Harbor. Your recent experience demonstrated how national parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old (regular Americans and the first family!), to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. Please have your administration take the following steps: Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. When reflecting on your recent vacation, please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. Acadia has been wonderful for Maine and the Nation and national parks are good investments in our future throughout the nation. Thank you for considering my comments and please come back to Maine again. It was great having you here.

I have visited the Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, Yosemite National Park, Niagara Falls, and was married in the Black Hills of South Dakota. National parks are a great treasure and need to be maintained.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Your administration should do more for the National Parks. Please follow the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. Please seize the opportunity of the upcoming Park Service centennial to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. Please provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. Please do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. Please build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Please provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I think of "America's Great Outdoors", I think of our national parks. Your administration should take the following steps: --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under-resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

The national parks are a prime example of America's Great Outdoors. Parks connect people to nature. They also preserve the natural and cultural diversity of our nation. If we keep the air over our national parks clear, that contributes to the health of our people. National parks provide outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission and their vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them now and in the future. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Money (\$17Billion dollars) should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. --Build on programs that work. As an example, the Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. Americans care about the future our National Parks. Many programs managed by the National Park Service improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The National Parks are the best idea this country ever had and if they are not taken care of, well shame on all of us. We'll deserve what we get from all of the potential natural disasters out there. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Please consider taking the following steps: Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

I love our parks and want to see all of them in my lifetime.....I hope you can help make this happen!!!!!!!!!!!!

From my own personal experience in the National Parks, I believe there is no greater way to have people come to appreciate the importance of preserving nature and living a sustainable life. Experiencing these great outdoor spaces, is a wonderful opportunity to find peace within and promote peace without, to care about the preservation of wildlife , both animals and plants, and to appreciate the benefits of fresh air, clean water and quiet. I highly encourage your administration to take the following steps:

Please have someone in authority contact Ken Salazar to tell him to immediately cancel the wild animal management programs of the Bush administration. The worst of these programs calls for the round-up of our magnificent and historic "wild Mustangs" and sending them off to slaughter houses. Every wild animal management program of the Bush administration must be cancelled immediately. Please make sure that Ken Salazar gets your message.

In another matter... LEGALIZE the Use of and Cultivation of MARIJUANA.

As a longtime volunteer in the national parks, I urge you to provide the support necessary to keep them open and available to all Americans.

Growing up in Montana in the 40s and 50s and later along the Oregon Coast, I appreciate nature and spent a good deal of time out-of-doors. Living in the 90s near Kings Canyon/Sequoia, I spent a lot of time hiking and visiting those national parks. I know what a connection to nature brings, particularly after studying with a Lakota teacher for five years. No where but in nature do we learn from experience about the interactive quality of all life. Since what we value is enhanced, protecting our National Parks and when possible, adding to them, is vital.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of all our Federal Lands and National Parks. They have played a tremendous role in our family in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. Federal Lands and National Parks have provided some of our families America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. Our one grandchild who we raised was able to write an essay on the Oregon Trail from our past visits to the sites in Idaho, Oregon and Washington States. The teacher values her up close and personal research and did not require her to do any research via books. We would appreciate it very much if your administration take the following steps: --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service Centennial provides to renew our Federal Lands and National Parks and the interest that will be created.. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. An extra added benefit may be short time employment for individuals who are out of work and live in the areas that the work needs to be accomplished. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Do more to use National Parks to inspire and educate young people. Our National Parks are and have been in the past classrooms for discovery and learning for students, teachers and families.. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. Also the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences.

Remember to keep guns out of our parks.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our public parks. At the local, state, and national levels, our public parks play a tremendous role in connecting people to the outdoors, which promotes a sense of community, a connection to the environment, and a healthy lifestyle. Public parks also provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. Please take the following steps: Even something as simple as financial incentives (e.g., cost-sharing or loans) for states and municipalities to conserve parkland along thoroughfares and byways or reclaimed urban areas can help plant the seeds of a connection to the environment. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting public parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. Public parks are good investments in our future.

Continue vacationing at our great National Parks and setting such a wonder example for us all.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times.

This is essential if the parks are to continue to support the large predators that are vital components of maintaining a healthy ecosystem. I moved to this country in 1978 from England. I have been so impressed by the national parks as showcasing everything that is best and most admirable about this country. I now live near Mount Rainier National Park--a beautiful place--and while some rebuilding has occurred, it saddens me to see shabby restrooms, worn out facilities and reduced ranger programs. The parks are an incredible resource that can be used for environmental education, fitness, environmental preservation and a celebration of all that is best about this country.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a sixty-three year old, appreciative holder of a Golden Eagle Pass to our National Parks. I believe our National Parks are one of the most glorious aspects of our country. When I & Sallie married thirty-four years ago we bought a van and travelled the country for a couple of months. Sallie grew up in the Philippines and was constantly amazed at the size, variety and beauty of our country. We continued to buy vans for travel and camping until well into our fifties. Now a bed and shower if required. There are very few parks we have not visited. I agree with the form letter following, but would like to add I believe motorized recreational vehicles should be banned from all but those areas dedicated to such things. Snowmobiles in Yellowstone are an insult to nature. The

I love this country, and its parks are an overwhelming asset please give priority to our parks.

When I was a child I had a viewmaster (low-tech 3-D viewer) with discs of National Parks. I looked at those pictures again and again with wonder, and wanted so badly to see those places in person, vowing that when I grew up I would do exactly that. I am now 70 years old, and have been to all the parks on my list save one (maybe next year). Some of my happiest memories are of visiting our country's magnificent parks. It brings me to tears to think of those lands being used for logging, mining, oil drilling.

I live in the Appalachian Chain of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and have easy access to the Blue Ridge Parkway - if you have never driven through it, you ought not to miss it. You can start near where you are in Washington DC, and get on the Shenandoah National Park Drive, and then hook up to the Blue Ridge Parkway, and head further south. The land is open and gorgeous, and you can see forest and meadow, and the deer and wildlife in abundance with each turn in the Parkway. It is nothing short of breath-taking to stop at all of the pullover sites to get great views. Take your camera along, as you will want to record what you are seeing. You will see why these mountains are called the BLUE Ridge Mountains. And are so often portrayed in artist's paintings. There are several pull-off points, and I recommend you pull off in Floyd, VA, and get lunch at the Blue Ridge Diner, and try #6 on their lunch menu, and ordering your dessert with your order for your sandwich, so they'll be sure to save you some - it goes quickly!!!! It is a quick hop back on the parkway, and on to many more great views. Please give the funding of our National Parks the attention they deserve.

My two daughters and I have traveled the west in thorough enjoyment of our National Parks and by all means do hope they are always protected. My daughters and I all feel until we can see all the beauty of our great nation we have little desire to travel abroad. I do pray our governments first concern is to always protect them for future generations to enjoy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am sending this letter because of how much I love our National Park System. Several of my favorite parks are Great Rocky Mountains, Glacier, Yellowstone, and the Grand Canyon. I feel as if my visits to these parks have fed my soul. I felt so humbled in the face of nature at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. I told a friend that I would pass up a tax-free gift of \$1,000,000 if the condition was never to visit Yellowstone again. I believe that if all the children in our inner cities or poor rural areas could visit places, such as these great parks that I mentioned, it would forever change them and give them the hope they need to break out of "their assigned place" in "society" that tells them that they can't succeed or aspire to more. Please do all you can to support the "America's Great Outdoors Initiative." I strongly urge your administration to take the following steps:

Let the federal government be an enabler for towns, counties and states which wish to permanently protect land. Renew a dedication to pedestrian based recreation . This is the means to achieve maximum sustainable recreation without degrading resources .

All great presidents have strongly supported the National Parks - now it's YOUR turn!

I believe the beauty of our national parks and areas that highlight America's beauty throughout the country must be protected.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I was a child (I'm now 85) my father and older brother drove us from Brooklyn to California, with frequent detours to stop at national parks. We made a similar trip with our two sons many years later, and now a young couple who help us maintain our house and garden are taking their son and daughter on a drive to the west coast with planned visits to a number of national parks. Our older son has already taken his sons to a few of the parks. It is a great experience for all, and especially opens the eyes of young people to the some of the glories of our country. We hope that your administration will take the following steps: --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised: to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. What is happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low-income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers, where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials that they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. The Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it is under resourced. There is no need to reinvent the wheel: invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider bringing new sites into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food they need and can reproduce successfully outside, as well as within, park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts among federal, state, and local agencies and private landowners, because birds and other animals do not understand boundaries on a map.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My father, who was in the Civilian Conservation Corps as a young man, was sent from Chicago's South Side to Jackson, Wyoming to work. When my husband and I visited Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks, he told us about his work in the CCC's and described it as the experience of a lifetime to work in such a magnificent area. He specifically mentioned that the sun shone every day that he was there. Dad worked in the steel mills on the south side and held that picture of fresh air and beauty all those years. My husband and I are frequent visitors to our national parks and always find those visits to be a time of renewal. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in protecting our parks for the next generation. Americans care about the future of these incredible places so they will be there for future generations to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service. Once these parks and animals are gone, they cannot be replaced.

THESE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT STEPS TO ME which your administration needs to take: --We need more parks for people to enjoy. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that will protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. If our NPS makes the parks too popular and therefore more crowded, the resulting visit will be less satisfying. (Shuttle buses, crowded and noisy trails and other facilities, difficulty in finding overnight accommodations, more trash and garbage, etc. Therefore it is imperative to bring into the system all remaining desirable areas in the entire USA. Permanent funding with increases based on the costs for staffing and maintaining the high quality needed for our old and new National Parks as well as for purchasing adequate new property for new parks. Thank you for considering my comments and those of others with many important steps the administration needs to take right now.

Our 8 year old daughter loves the National Parks. Do this for the children.

Every year when I go on vacation, our National Parks are an important destination. Please be pro-active in the following ways.

Let's initiate a "National Natural Heritage And Appreciation Month" for the summer of 2011.

I can think of no better way to create jobs in America than employing people to maintain and upgrade our National Parks.

Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico and in our rivers and streams reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. We never take a vacation without visiting a National Park. We've witnessed first hand the struggle to maintain these beautiful places and we hope you will listen and act.

I really enjoy our national parks, and feel it is very important to adequately fund them re: both staffing and maintenance. You can't really expect them to remain the wonderful resource they are by neglecting them. Also, I oppose allowing any loud, disruptive, or destructive activities that in any way disrupt the serenity and natural state of the parks. Snowmobiles should not be allowed in wildlife areas, and off-road vehicles also should not be allowed. Wildlife should always and everywhere be protected. Thank you.

The National Parks are America's treasure and must be preserved and honored for the history, beauty, wildlife and solace that they provide.

Thank you for considering my comments; let's work together to secure and preserve America's National Parks for all of us and future generations too.

When we think of America's Great Outdoors, we think of our national and state parks. -- Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated unspent for its intended purpose during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This money should be spent as originally intended to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just languishing as another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. -- We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and to protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

To fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Services to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. I would hope that preserving large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensuring wildlife conservation, maintaining public access to parks and open spaces, as well as reducing the impacts of climate change, and protecting our cultural heritage is still a priority.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Mr. President, Being a 'city girl', born and raised in Chicago, with concrete as my backyard, whoever would have thought that I would have fallen in love with the state of West Virginia? After arriving in a spectacular and heart stopping landing at Chuck Yeager airport we drove a breathtakingly beautiful road to Hawk's Nest State Park where we would stay while we rafted the Gaully River. It was an amazing place! Full of history and great beauty. One felt that you got a 'snapshot' of what a primitive America looked and felt. We've been back many times and when we share our experience at this state park, people are shocked that a little known state holds such wonders. Please protect our state parks. They are the priceless gems of our country.*****

A word about our own attempts to make "America's Great Outdoors" work for us, after we've studied the seven recommendations in my letter from the NCPA: * * * *
* * * * --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans two (sic) them in the next century. * * * *
* * * * * * Now for our personal story. For the past several years, I've been retired. My wife keeps working part-time, but I've never been able to fight off my love of travel! In April of this year, we left on a 50-day trip to see the Southwest of our country. We stopped and visited some 17 of our National Parks and Sites, including the following: -- Shenandoah National Park (last visited by us in 2005) -- Andrew Johnson National Historic Site (1996) -- Natchez Trace Parkway (2008) -- Big Thicket National Preserve (new for us) -- Padre Island National Seashore (new) -- Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site (new) -- San Antonio Missions National Historic Park (1993) -- Amistad National Recreation Area (1996) -- Big Bend National Park (1996) -- Fort Davis National Historic Site (1996) -- Chamizal National Memorial (new) -- White Sands National Monument (new) -- Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument (new) -- Fort Bowie National Historic Site (new) -- Chiricahua National Monument (1988) -- Coronado National Monument (1988) -- Tumacacori National Historical Park (1988) -- Saguaro National Park (1990) -- Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (new) -- Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (1988) -- Joshua Tree National Park (1993) -- Santa Monica Mountains National Recr Area (new) -- Channel Islands National Park (new) -- Mojave National Preserve (new) -- Grand Canyon National Park (1990) -- Wupatki National Monument (1990) -- Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument (1990) -- Petrified Forest National Park (1990) -- El Morro National Monument (1996) -- El Malpais National Monument (1996) -- Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument (new) -- Washita Battlefield National Historic Site (2008) -- Ozark National Scenic Riverways (1997) -- Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Hist Site (1997) -- New River Gorge National River (1997) -- Bluestone National Scenic River (new) That's 36 parks visited this spring. My wife and I have made the National Parks work for us is seeing America's Great Outdoors! And we still have another 21 to finish this summer, including Glacier National Park. We can't wait!

Add to remaining natural areas whenever possible...

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Also, create more job stimulus money to maintain and improve the National Parks

Instead of allowing beautiful natural areas to be snapped up by real estate developers, require developers of large scale projects to contribute to the development of substantial public use parks in lands close to their developments in equal measure to the the amount of land turned into subdivision, shopping area, etc. Money should not speak louder than environmental needs. In Western North Carolina developers sell their products on the area's natural beauty while destroying forest, meadows, farm lands, mountains and streams to build houses and amenities for people who are moving here to enjoy the very things their realtors are destroying. It is really insane greed and economic blindness, to allow this to happen. As United States Citizens we need to find ways for local governments to require developers present environmental and community impact statements to prove that they are not harvesting resources to the ultimate harm of the natural and social worlds that they operate in.

PLEASE SAVE THE MOUNTAINS OF APPLACHIA FROM MOUNTAIN TOP REMOVAL COAL MINING.
THEY ARE THE OLDEST MOUNTAINS IN THE WORLD, AND THEY ARE BEING BOMBED 24/7.
PLEASE STOP THE WARS!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, the first thing that comes to my mind is our nation's wonderful national parks. I believe our nation needs, and I urge your administration to take, the following steps: --Heed the advice of the National Parks "Second Century" Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial in 2016 provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program can, and should, be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under-resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our increasingly diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Recently it has been shown that many of our ills like depression, diabetes, and other stress related illnesses can be combatted safely and effectively by having patients take long walks in natural environments. Physicians are beginning to prescribe these nature walks for patients now. The part natural areas, local trails and parks and especially National Parks can play in these treatments is critical. Everyone and every different concern is asking for more money in an already stressed budget, however, once these natural areas are lost or destroyed there will be no remedy. Please enact or strengthen legislation that will ensure that our National Parks have the necessary funds to continue to protect both wild life and people in the future. Another way these areas can be preserved is for the Federal Government to provide a means/ mechanism for all regional state and local agencies and landowners adjacent to park areas to work together toward a common end protecting wildlife, plants and waters beyond park boundaries. Water is critical for all life. I urge you to fully and irrevokably fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to purchase private lands from willing sellers within and around the National Parks. National Parks are one of America's greatest treasures and also one of the things that many other places in the world do not have. We must find a way to preserve and protect public lands and waters to ensure wildlife conservation, limit human-wildlife conflicts, secure the health of the naturally protective, water, air, and earth renewal systems / cycles that reduce the impact of climate change, protect our cultural heritage, and enable everyone in America to have access to this heritage. Your administration could take the following steps:

Save our heritage!!!!!!

Start conserving. Step up to the plate. Your political career is not on the line so please stand up and take action. Conserve conserve conserve. And by the way look at the wolf massacre set to occur out west.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am asking you to seize this opportunity to better protect America's public outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments. National parks serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for future generations. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally intended to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. . --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the value of our national parks to our people in difficult times. National parks are good investments in our future.

Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. . This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. National parks are good investments in our future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing to ask you to use "The Great Outdoor Initiative" as an opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, rangelands and forests. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. . --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners to achieve this. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too, and to breathe the good air it makes for us, and I want the other living things that share these spaces with us to stay alive. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our family farms (industrial farms are the nation's worst polluters), rangelands and forests. National parks provide America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, civics and ethics education for millions of people each year. Who knows, a little more green, a little more contact with the wild, a little more space that isn't "owned" (and exploited) and people might be weaned from their current and politically destructive addiction to anger and indignation! A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy; and the animals and plants in these places care even more. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities.

We count on our leaders to ensure that the right things get done. And are counting on you to point these funds in the correct direction. The supply is limited- and will run dry; preservation is essential.

National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission. --Develop a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times.

An immediate moratorium on large-scale OHV races on public lands.

Dramatically increased fines for OHV violations and an increase in OHV fees for use on our public lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increased enforcement of OHV laws and regulations on public lands paid for by rider's fees and permits.

Visible identification on OHVs to aid in law enforcement.

Restrictions on OHV activities on public lands including a prohibition of OHV use on Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)s.

Closure of public lands to OHV recreation if it has been demonstrated that land managers cannot adequately enforce relevant laws in these areas.

Investigation and prosecution of OHV riders who engage in harassment, intimidation, retaliation and cyberstalking of citizens who report illegal activity to law enforcement.

A permit system for OHV activity on public lands to control the scale of activity.

A comprehensive public relations campaign that informs riders of the laws and regulations pertaining to OHV activity.

Large format signage, informational kiosks with maps in areas of high use to inform the public of the relevant laws and identification of legal routes and areas.

A study of the air quality impacts of OHVs on federal lands and adjacent communities including fugitive dust and green house gas emissions.

A national campaign to designate legal routes, close illegal routes, erect fencing to protect lands off-limits to OHVs and restoration of areas damaged by OHV activity.

Cooperation of the BLM with local law enforcement and federal law enforcement agencies to address OHV abuse areas of mixed public/private land use areas.

"Sting" operations by federal law enforcement agencies on holiday weekends and in areas of high OHV use including the Pacific Crest Trail and lands adjacent to wilderness areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)s, Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMA)s and other federal lands including designated wildlife corridors.

Allocate additional resources toward expediting implementation of the BLM National Trails inventory and Trails Management Program.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is tragic to witness the gains of the last few decades to protect America's great outdoors unraveling before our eyes by irresponsible, unmanaged and uncontrolled OHV activity. In many cases, due to a variety of reasons, the federal government has failed to protect this nation's cultural and natural heritage from the adverse impacts of OHVs. This must change with a renewed effort to control the millions of OHVs on our public lands while we encourage the American public to experience our public lands by engaging in more sustainable and responsible recreation.

I would love to see all national parks not destroyed. I would like to take my son to them when he gets older and can appreciate them for their age and beauty. I haven't seen all the national parks but I would like to. I love nature. I would hate to see this whole planet be nothing but one giant city that thinks it can still live without nature. Why would you want to destroy what nature gave us anyway? To make something we can live without? If our forefathers could live without all the high tech stuff we have now then so can we! I love nature, I think it's beautiful, wonderful, relaxing. And isn't nature one of the top "cures" for diseases? If you think you can make a better planet by destroying what was given to us and many before us then think again. Just because it sounds cool and effective doesn't mean it will be. So rethink what you want to do before you destroy and make humans an endangered species.

We must protect our environment! It is a matter of life and death, not just for plants and animals, and fish, and birds...but for us. We are all in this world together and need each other. Please stop work on Pebble Mine.

We should seize every opportunity to preserve wildlife and national treasures whenever possible. Opening a mine near Bristol Bay would be a disaster in the making.

Dear Sir, You are asking for national input about this project. I believe that we need to stop destroying our planet in the name of 'economy' and 'economic growth'. There are better ways to employ hard working citizens than by destroying the very habitat that helps keep us supplied with quality air, water and life. Please do not allow this project to move forward and prevent it from happening for thousands of years. Thanks for your time.

Please protect Bristol Bay by maintaining strict oversight at Pebble Mine. We depend on our government to keep our natural treasures safe. Thanks for your work in service to our nation.

Please stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay.

Dear Sir or Ma'am: The proposed Pebble Mine project threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life, would detrimentally affect the Bristol Bay watershed and surrounding recreational resources by the common pollutants produced by large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Clean Water Act standards and mineral development standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent to prevent environmental desecration. Most

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Greetings Department of Interior Analyst, I am writing to voice my opinion regarding the proposed "Pebble Mine" above Alaska's Bristol Bay. This mine would risk polluting a relatively pristine area, which in turn would threaten both wildlife and humans - the humans because the area has a human population (many of whom are members of Alaska's native tribes) that depends on hunting and fishing which would be threatened by the mine. More specifically, the proposed mine would use a metallic-sulfide extraction technique which may need to be better regulated under the Clear Water Act. This fact is of particular concern here because (according to my understanding) the proposed mine is close to wetland areas that could be disastrously affected if any spills or leaks occurred from the mine. For these reasons, I am asking that you study the mine project carefully, and I hope that you will ultimately recommend against its approval. Thank you for your time. Best wishes,

President Obama, Please impose a 7-year moratorium on all new offshore drilling in the Arctic in order to avoid a repeat of the Gulf catastrophe in the heart of polar bear habitat. As global warming continues to melt fragile Arctic habitat, polar bears and other imperiled species are fighting for their lives. Yet Big Oil is escalating its campaign to open America's prime Arctic wildlands -- including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the Western Arctic Reserve and the Polar Bear Seas -- to massive oil development. Vast swaths of land and sea along Alaska's north and west coasts, the fragile home of polar bears, whales, caribou and millions of birds, will be ravaged by the oil and gas industry if pro-polluter policies put in place by the Bush Administration are not reversed.

Having just hiked Mount Marcy, the tallest mountain in New York State and one of the Adirondacks' 46 High Peaks this weekend, the exhilaration that comes from leaving one's comfort zone and entering the natural space we have preserved is unmatched in any video game or YouTube video out there. Future generations of Americans cannot respect what they do not know - maintain our wilderness!

Stop the Pebble Mine!!!!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is hope on the horizon! In response to several abuses committed against citizens of the great state of Idaho, our very own legislators are responding, and in a POSITIVE way! Earlier one of the recipients on this email list suggested a BOLD yet SIMPLE solution to dealing with abusive, criminal, arrogant groups of people operating unlawfully within our borders. Unlawful, unconstitutional criminal organizations otherwise known as the BLM and USFS. The proposed solution was simple. Turn control of forests and lands within the borders of the state of Idaho over to Idaho control. Now Idaho has written a proposal, passed by the state legislature, to challenge the right of the USFS and BLM to manage lands within the state:

<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2010/HCR058Bookmark.htm> It is obvious no one could destroy the forests and lands within the state any more than the USFS and BLM have already. Top honors for most public land destroyed goes to Suzanne Rainville of the Payette National Forest. In the Payette and Boise national forests, where 800,000 acres of timber was immorally and irresponsibly allowed to burn to the ground. Along with THOUSANDS of critically endangered species forced to die a horrible death along with their habitat! An estimated \$4 billion in standing dead timber was allowed to rot, go to waste or clog Idaho rivers and destroy tens of millions of dollars worth of bridges and roads, and the devastated forest is the "gift that keeps on giving" with every new mudslide and flood, more than three years after the forest' incineration. View photos, FOIA documents and read more here:

<http://usfspayettenationalforest.blogspot.com/p/9-million-wasted-by-payette-national.html>

The federal government is allowed by the US constitution to own up to 10 square miles for any one building or purpose. Therefore the USFS and BLM are unconstitutional entities. It came with great surprise as I glanced upon a bill in the State of Idaho legislature proposing to challenge the constitutionality of the USFS and BLM!!! It is in it's preliminary stages. However, it needs all the support it can get. Read the entire bill online here:

<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2010/HCR058.htm> and here:

<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2010/HCR058Bookmark.htm>

do not allow harm to come to Bristol Bay, its waters are not polluted and its fish swim happily

I implore you to stop the Bristol Bay Pebble Mine from destroying a beautiful wilderness area. I had the pleasure of working at the Wood Tick-Chik State Park in the Bristol Bay area of Alaska and will never forget the incredible beauty of this vast landscape. I would never want that to be lost from this earth. I vividly remember the salmon runs and when I think of the Pebble Mine and the impact it would have on the salmon, I don't know how we will survive if it starts up. Those wild Alaskan Salmon are one of the few fish left with so many health properties that are not loaded with mercury and other harmful chemicals. I pay twice as much for those salmon and will not eat farm-raised salmon due to health concerns. The oil spill has done enough damage to our countries water eco-system for one generation. Please do everything in your power to protect Bristol Bay and the salmon. Stop a few people from profiting from the mining activity and keep the natural wealth for all Americans. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I urge you to stop the mineral development projects in this pristine corner of the world until standards for sulfide mining become sufficiently stringent to ensure the continuance of species in the ecosystem, the safety of the watershed, and true collaboration between the Federal government and tribal governments. “He knew about concerned citizens. Wherever they were, they all spoke the same private language, where “traditional values” meant ‘hang someone.’”

Do we really need an excuse to do what's right? People need to slow down the use of fossil fuels. We can not continue to pull on the earth as we do and think that it can go on forever. We need to do all we can NOW to save all of nature, because if the air is completely polluted, the water is contaminated and the balance of nature ceases to exist all by the hands of people abusing it, instead of treasuring it, will anything else really matter? The Bristol Bay is their home not ours to do with it whatever we want. Every corner of this world IS NOT OURS and should be left in it's pristine natural environment.

I was pleased to learn there is the federal government is considering action on the Pebble Mine at Bristol Bay. Given the unusually pristine, wild area that surrounds the mine, it is not an appropriate location for such an environmentally degrading activity. The question is not only whether the mine currently meets Clean Water Act standards, but whether those standards themselves are sufficient to protect rare ecosystems like the Bristol Bay area. That people in the area depend on the bay for subsistence fishing is more reason still to protect the bay. Moreover, the cumulative effect from so many years of mining is an insult to public lands that cannot be measured in a single year's pollution output. No such new mine would be allowed in locations like this today, and that fact alone is reason to take a new look at closing Pebble Mine. Thank you for your consideration,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The National Wildlife Refuge System provides homes for rare red wolves and hundreds of other endangered and threatened species.

<http://action.defenders.org/site/R?i=6AT3QHcC0ux_PnHcClzUYQ..> Speak Out for Our National Treasures Take Action <<http://action.defenders.org/site/R?i=VKVQbRSIBxhieATK462HMA..>>

Urge your senators to declare National Wildlife Refuge Week to support our important network of wildlife habitat across the nation. Dear _____, For over a century, Wildlife Refuges have been a haven for our most cherished animals, providing essential habitat for hundreds of imperiled creatures -- and critical stopovers for migratory birds. From red wolves to red knots, grizzlies to gnatcatchers, America's wildlife needs our National Wildlife Refuge System.

<<http://action.defenders.org/site/R?i=diQF9OnuhVVRcvQMC3PMSQ..>> Take action now -- urge the U.S. Senate to declare October 10th - 16th, 2010 National Wildlife Refuge Week to recognize the importance of these national treasures. Our National Wildlife Refuge System includes all types of habitat found in the U.S. -- from the frozen Arctic tundra to the fragile wetlands of the Gulf Coast. These special places are crucial in the conservation of our treasured wildlife -- and play a vital role in helping wildlife survive the ravages of a changing climate. For instance, North Carolina's Alligator National Wildlife Refuge is the only place in the world where wild red wolves make their home. With refuges in every state and U.S. territory -- and within an hour's drive of every major metropolitan area -- these treasures also offer unsurpassed recreational and educational opportunities and generate around \$1.7 billion in revenue for local economies each year.

i'm confused on the fact that you would consider allowing industry to pipeline through a protected area. My confusion lies in the basis of why the forests, parks and monuments were set aside in the first place. Was it not to protect them for the enjoyment for future generations. i am concerned that allowing industry to further encroach onto our last protected wild lands. any unnatrual impact could have irreversible consequences. i urge you to reconsider letting exxon/mobil or any other industry to further compromise our pristine national treasures. thank you for your time,

I strongly urge you to stop Pebble Mine. This is not a suitable area for such a mine and traditional ways of life need to be respected. Mining in this area would threaten Bristol Bay and its wildlife and must not be permitted. In fact, Clean Water Act standards need to be tightened.

Good morning! Thank you for taking the time to note down my message. As a supporter of the National Resources Defense Council, I am writing in opposition to Pebble Mine. America's wild places need to be more protected, not more destroyed. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To whom it may concern or should concern, I have seen over the years the ongoing battle over land use. I used to commercial fish for salmon in Alaska and saw the destruction of logging and mining on the native fish populations. I also saw what openspace and wilderness gave to people. We need to leave wilderness places alone for the survival of all life on this planet. We don't need pebble mine. You know this. We need food and we need clean air and we need clean water or what have we really got? You can have money but if you don't have your health or nourishment for your body and soul, you have nothing. This is a basic truth and to support destructive practices makes no sense. Destruction is destruction. What else can you say about it? We don't need it, so don't do it.

Please save Bristol Bay. Do not allow Pebble Mine to pollute this beautiful area and its wildlife, especially the salmon. We have too few untouched areas left. Future generations will be grateful.

I am writing to you today because of my concerns about the proposed Pebble mine in Bristol Bay. My concerns are the Pebble mine will pollute the waters of Bristol Bay which will in turn threaten the wildlife and the salmon. This in turn effects the substance life style of those living there. This is a large scale metallic sulfide mining, these kinds of poisons do great harm to the land and the wildlife. These types of chemicals do not just go away they stay in the land and water for a long, long time. This could spread to affect a larger area than just the mine. I believe the Clean Air Act standards for large scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. Basically, the dangers to the environment, people, land and wildlife are too dangerous to allow this mine.

The purity of Bristol Bay and what it provides as habitat for salmon, many varieties of other wildlife and traditional ways of life that rely on hunting, fishing and collecting plants in wilderness is unsurpassed in the US. The type of mining promised by the Pebble Mine project endangers all of that in the Bristol Bay watershed. Those public lands need to be protected for us and for our children and their children. Metallic sulfide mining on the scale proposed by the Pebble Mine will make the wilderness uninhabitable for most native species. Please help protect the wilderness and what it provides for subsistence and for recreation. Please help create strong federal oversight of the mining project so that the mining does not do harm to the wetlands and for water resources, which are becoming rarer and scarcer. What we do today matters for us and for others tomorrow. Please act wisely in this matter. Thank you

Please protect Bristol Bay and other threatened places from the ravages of mining and invasive exploitation. Please be an advocate for environmental protection. A blessing on the land,

To all concerned with the permitting of Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay: It is with sadness that I hear of yet another attempt to gain profit at the expense of the environment. Is there no end to the unbalanced approach to the use of our natural resources? Is there no end to the lack of respect for our native people and for the wildlife which inhabit the few remaining wild places? Please do not permit this inevitable tragedy. Make greater efforts to insure the protection of such places. This type of activity has no measure of guarantee for the protection of the environment. It only guarantees a disaster in the making.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I write to express my deep concern about the prospect of the Pebble Mine being a destructive force in Pebble Bay. Having travelled recently in Alaska, I had the chance to hear directly the concerns of Native Americans living in villages that would be negatively impacted by this mine. There were concerns that the innocent and collegial social relationships would disappear, especially among the children, as evidenced by the villages already impacted in this way by mining. There were even greater concerns for the wildlife. Salmon will be negatively impacted. I am concerned for these people, for the wildlife, and the environment. I understand that toxins will pollute this pristine watershed. I urge you to stop this mine. I urge you to strictly control and monitor all mining in order to protect the environment and the web of life that depends on it. Substantial fines and legally enforced cease and desist orders cost money, but are necessary tools to protect this precious resource. Please move quickly. Thank you

Please stop the Pebble Mine; it will endanger Bristol Bay, where clean waters, salmon, so much wildlife and a traditional ecosystem survives. We have lost so much to pollution and man's intervention - why sacrifice this wonderful area? We need to protect important habitats such as this that would never again be the same. Our natural resources are our greatest asset, our heritage that we can pass onto generations. John Muir is rolling around in his grave over the destruction we have witnessed the past hundred years. Please save Bristol Bay - these mining companies cannot be supervised. They are for-profit profiteers - at the expense of everything and everyone else. This type of business has to stop. Respectfully yours,

We were only given one earth, and one planet; and we have been very negligent in its protection! There really is no such thing as Minimal invasion, or destruction! We are the Caretakers and not the destroyers. Why do we keep turning a blind eye to all of our destruction? We need to work much harder at being the solution! It does seem that everytime our protectiveness and good judgements are comprised it is due to monetary gains; oil, gold, and mining interests. Please stand with the people, as we all move forward to close public lands in the Bristol Bay Watershed to the large-scale mining of metallic sulfide mining. Sincelely,

Please stop Pebble Mine. Pebble Mine will pollute Bristol Bay endangering the wildlife and water shed. Gas mining here in the states have polluted millions of gallons of fresh drinking water. Now we are set to destroy another source of water. We need to have stronger standards for our water. Not less. Large areas of the world are suffering from drought. With global warming this will probably increase. The short gain of profits should not trump the need for clean drinkable water. Once this land and water is polluted, it will take decades, if ever to recover. The Pebble Mining Company certainly will not pay for any damages done. Only the people to live there and the wild life. We all know that corporations take short cuts to save money and have little concern for the environment. Oil companies down play the spills or will fight years to wear down the government attorneys and end up paying little to no money for the damage. Let's not allow this to continue. Their is no need to open another mine on government land. One in which recreation and protecting our national heritage should take top priority. Not the profit of one company.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Once you ruin the earth with a mine like Pebble Beach it can NEVER be reclaimed. Please think about the future generations and do not mine in this sensitive area for all life

Dear Federal Government, Allowing the Pebble Mine would be a salmon and economic disaster to Alaska, period. DON'T ALLOW IT. There are lots of ways to express this opinion, basically DO NOT ALLOW Pebble Mines. Protect our salmon.

I for one feel the cost to the environment is too high. Please do not let the mine activities proceed.

It is amazing to me that we are still fighting the battles of the 60s, but we must continue to fight the powerful,greedy, self-interested parties to save our planet, the garden that God gave us to tend with all the beautiful plants,animals, and natural beauty there for us to enjoy. YES, stop the Pebble Mine drilling. Stop the Bristol Bay drilling. If I were given the choice to stop driving or save a pristine natural area, I WOULD STOP DRIVING. We must work on using our intelligence and money to develop alternative energy sources. Work at better mass transportation-like the fine example ofSeattle, WA. If all the money that was WASTED on lobbying for the "wrong" causes could be channelled for the "right" causes, we could do it. Every single thing we do should have an overriding principle of being environmentally correct, from packaging, to recycling possibilities. Why can't we understand that we are short-sighted and that we are really taking away from ourselves,from our own heritage and that of our childrens. I am proud to belong to NRDC and World Wildlife Federation and Audubon, and Sierra Club, and other animal rights groups. Thank you for your fine work. I so enjoyed reading of your legal victories in the latest "Nature's Voice, Sept/Oct 2010. BRAVO! Thank goodness for Pierce Brosnan, Robert Redford, and other NAMES who have some political power to fight for US.

I am taking this opportunity to speak out to save one of America's great outdoor spaces - Bristol Bay. There is plenty of evidence in other geographic areas that large-scale metallic sulfide mining is disastrous to wildlife and the environs that support it. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and also the traditional subsistence ways of life of the tribal people that share this land. Instead, I would like to see these public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Let us see our federal government make it a top priority to protect habitat, subsistence and recreation. Let's strengthen the relationship between federal and tribal governments. Our federal government should provide strong oversight over the permitting process for Pebble Mine as well as analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Standards for mineral developments in these extremely important wetlands should be tighter. Once the wetlands are ruined, most likely they, and all hope of their ever supporting life again, will be forever gone. I'd like to also ask that government please take a stand to make the Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining more stringent. Thank you for listening - I hope you act soon to safeguard Bristol Bay against Pebble Mine.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To those "in power": The destruction to be caused by the Pebble Mine 'project' is a greedy act which enriches a few at the cost of irreparable damage to nature. Priorities must be evaluated, a change in mindless short term profits at the expense of others and nature needs to be implemented. Money cannot buy every thing !

I am totally opposed to this mine planned for Bristol Bay. I have seen what mines do to mountains, to streams and to lakes. They rape the land and create major pollution, leaving all that is near to deal with the mess. The effects on wildlife are forever. Please do all you can to kill this travesty.

Bristol Bay is home to an abundance of wildlife and is an integral part of the sustenance of the community it surrounds. Its clean waters and pristine habitat would be destroyed if Pebble Mine were permitted to develop the area. The area is also a cherished recreational spot for many people, which would be wrecked by the large-scale mining of metallic sulfide. I encourage the federal government to reconsider allowing this spectacular area to be developed and forever altered. At the very least, further environmental impacts should be studied and considered before any mining is done in this area.

Greetings: I submit that the world is a far better place when clean water, wild salmon, and wildlife in general are REAL and a mine at Bristol Bay is just a nightmare.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please help stop Mitsubishi's plans for an enormous, disastrous, toxic, open-pit gold and copper mine in the heart of Alaskan wilderness. Nothing less than an American natural treasure is at stake! Bristol Bay is home to orcas and beluga whales, wild moose and caribou, and one of only two populations of freshwater harbor seals in the world -- all intimately connected to the health of the bay and its world-class salmon runs. Those salmon runs also support thousands of sustainable jobs in fishing and tourism as well as Alaska Natives who depend on the salmon for food. The massive Pebble Mine would be dug right at the headwaters of the pristine watershed that feeds Bristol Bay. Foreign mining companies, including Mitsubishi, Rio Tinto and Anglo American, are eyeing low-grade gold and copper deposits on pristine land in the Bristol Bay watershed in an area known as Pebble. A Bush-era management plan could open up more than 1 million acres of public land in the region to mining. The only way to extract this ore is through destructive and pollution-producing hard-rock mining. They couldn't pick a much worse place on the planet to dig a 2,000-foot-deep open-pit mine. Sited in a known earthquake zone, the Pebble Mine's colossal earthen dams -- which are supposed to hold back some 10 billion tons of mining waste including toxic byproducts like arsenic and cyanide -- are a disaster waiting to happen. But it wouldn't even take an earthquake to irreparably contaminate this unspoiled corner of Alaska. Just constructing the Pebble Mine -- before it goes into full-scale operation -- will permanently destroy over 60 miles of salmon habitat. As all large mines do, it would leak, spilling copper -- which is toxic to salmon -- right into Alaska's biggest sockeye salmon fishery, on which wildlife, Native communities and commercial fishermen all depend for their survival. Will Mitsubishi back down when faced with worldwide opposition? It did 10 years ago. When Mitsubishi and the Mexican government planned a massive industrial salt plant in the planet's last untouched gray whale nursery at San Ignacio Lagoon in Baja, Mexico, millions of concerned people joined with leading Mexican environmental groups to oppose it. Working with an international coalition, public opinion was brought to bear on Mitsubishi -- deluging the company with more than one million petitions. In the end, the Mexican government called a halt to the project, and Mitsubishi abandoned its salt plant project. Today, Mitsubishi needs to know that proceeding with the disastrous Pebble Mine will give the company a black eye in the view of millions of American consumers and is an unconscionable act, in and of itself.

SAVE BRISTOL BAY!!!!

To America's Great Outdoors, Please take a strong stand opposing the plan to create the Pebble Mine ! Bristol Bay is a unique treasure, and is NOT a suitable place to start major extractive industry! The sockeye salmon fishery is the heart of this environment and is an essential asset to local people and to salmon-lovers the world over. Large scale sulfide mining would devastate this pristine place with heavy metals and destroy the wildlife habitat, poison local creeks and streams and simply ruin one of the world's spectacular wetlands.

to whom it may concern, please do not allow the pebble mine to operate. this is a sacred spot to indigenous and non-indigenous people.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I urge you to stop Pebble Mine, which threatens not only the clean water of Bristol Bay and the wild salmon and other wildlife that exist there, but also the traditional subsistence ways of life of the people who rely on the bay for food. Large-scale metallic sulfide mining should not be allowed on public land in this sensitive area, and protecting this area should be the government's top priority. We are losing ecologically sensitive areas at a rapid rate and must protect what few pristine lands we have left. Please let me know how you plan to deal with the Pebble Mine permitting process and with the proposed mining's impact on the Bristol Bay watershed.

Cordially,

Stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay!! Block this disastrous mine, which would endanger Bristol Bay's spectacular wildlands, world-class salmon runs and other outstanding wildlife!!!

Please protect this incredible sanctuary for future generations. Once something like this is gone, it can never be returned.

Won't you please help save the pristine Bristol Bay? It is one of this earth's most enchanting places. I couldn't imagine that anyone would want to harm it (even for money). Thanks for your consideration.

I encourage you to save the Bristol Bay area and not allow Pebble Mine to operate there. We need to save these pristine areas for future generations and the health of the planet. A mine such as this would disrupt the eco-system there and, among other things, disrupt the salmon run.

Dear People, I'm writing in support of protecting Bristol Bay from the Pebble Mine. We must protect our watersheds. What are we thinking, threatening drinking water sources? How short sighted do we want to act. Thank you for doing all you can to protect the earth, giving the generations yet to come a chance to inherit clean water and air.

There simply is no good reason to development Pebble Mine except for selfish motives of greed. The agrument against its development are clear. Please have the responsibility to not destroy this beautiful, significant area. Thank you.

I am all in favor of the Capitalist System but today the government must balance the needs of our planet, Business, Corporations and future generations. Big business has repeatedly proved that their own P & L statements come first, not infrequently at the expense of every thing else. Our government needs to PROTECT and preserve the Bristol Bay area in it's current condition. If that means no Pebble Mine, then that is what must be done. Thank you.

I am deeply concerned about protecting our planet for future generations and very upset by the destruction industrial society has wrought. I would strongly urge that you listen and research what the environmental groups are advocating in regard to the mining in Bristol Bay. Protecting what is left of our natural resources, environment and wildlife need to be given utmost importance for so many reasons too numerous to mention here. Yours Truly,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please consider this a formal request to protect Bristol Bay's clean water, natural resources, and native subsistence lifestyles by STOPPING THE PEBBLE MINE from development. Metallic sulfide mining causes too much damage to risk this large-scale venture on public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed. The citizens of this country count on our federal government to assure the continued existence and protection of our most precious natural areas. Habitat must be protected. Subsistence of native peoples must be respected. Recreation and enjoyment of this special place is the right of all Americans. For these reasons, the government must provide strict oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and pay close attention to scientific analysis of long-term impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. This country needs to show respect for our few remaining wetlands by creating and enforcing serious standards for mineral development in these areas. If federal and tribal governments strengthen their cooperative relationships, communication will make it clear that Clean Water Act standards for all types of mining need to be more stringent on sensitive lands. I voted for President Obama in 2008 partly because he said his administration would respect and protect the environment and allow development of natural resources in a way that will not adversely impact our most precious unspoiled lands. I expect you to fulfill this commitment. Thank you for your attention.

To Whom it may Concern, Bristol Bay and wildlife areas like it are becoming scarce. Why would we want to introduce something as destructive as hard rock mining into an area as beautiful as Bristol Bay? Yes, the area is rich in natural resources, but is also rich in history. American history. Visit it yourself, it will take your breath away. Thank you,

Mining does nothing except enrich the mining company. The expense, which not enough people understand, is the destruction of the environment. The US government only receives a nominal amount of money anyway after considering all expenses, so we end up destroying our planet, killing wildlife, including our food supply, and for what? To enrich some company who will then not be in business in 50 years when the environmental problems finally are discovered. Don't do it!!!! Please do all you can to help our dying planet. We don't have another one. Our en

As a taxpayer, I am urging you to support expansion of the federal government's efforts to preserve and protect as much public land as possible. As we search further and farther for more sources of natural resources, we encroach closer and closer to sensitive areas that need protecting in the face of ever-expanding demand for wood, coal, oil, gas, water and mineral resources. Really, only the federal government has the power to keep these demands in check and protect natural areas and the organisms that call them home. We truly need these areas protected, if not for me, for future generations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As one who truly appreciates the great outdoors, it troubles me a great deal that the beautiful area around Bristol Bay could possibly be ruined for many generations, perhaps for millennia, by development of the Pebble Mine. I have seen other natural, wilderness areas that have been blighted by mining. It is pathetic! Especially when you consider the consequences to the wildlife of the areas affected. Until we learn to mine without such devastating results we should learn to do without the minerals we think are so important. I, for one, would be willing to put up with any hardship that results from not mining. I feel the Federal should be able to veto any project like the Pebble Mine that could have similar consequences.

As an employee in the outdoor industry, my job and my weekend pursuits are directly tied to America's great outdoors. Getting Americans active and outdoors - and ensuring they have affordable, accessible places to play - is good for us, our communities, and our economy. Preserving special places and creating new places to recreate are important to me and future generations; that is why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to protect America's open spaces, parks, forests and wildlife habitats, and to engage Americans in a conservation agenda that recognizes Americans' ties to our lands.

I am outraged that the government is considering opening up more than 1 million acres of public land and priceless habitat to mining. The Pebble Mine will also threaten Bristol's Bay's clean waters, wild salmon and wildlife. Protecting habitat should be a top priority. This requires a federal government that is willing to stand up for what is right, not the interests of big business and mining. Standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter and Clean Water Act standards should be more stringent for metallic sulfide mining. Please do everything within your power to protect Bristol Bay. Thank you,

I ask you, please, to oppose the Pebble Mine and the threat it would pose to Bristol Bay's wildlife, including important salmon runs. Thank you,

Pebble Mine is a bad idea. Helping the already beleaguered wildlife is priority. This is a no brainer, PLEASE HELP STOP THE MINE! Thank you

It is imperative for the future of the planet, for the future of unborn generations, and for the physical welfare of the current inhabitants to protect Bristol Bay from incursions into the clean waters where thousands of species live. A student of mine once said, years ago, that "civilization is only three days old," because that is the length of time on average that man can live without clean water. When watersheds and habitats are destroyed, we live on borrowed time, and all the "material progress" that people are after, ultimately destroys them. I hope that you will do your utmost to save Bristol Bay.

I am writing to oppose any mining in protected areas, including Bristol Bay. Use of solvents and other chemicals to leach out desired metals is disastrous to living species including ourselves. Humans are taking too much from the planet, and a comprehensive approach including population reduction is essential if we are to have a habitable planet in the future. Protecting some natural areas is a necessary start. Thanks.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Why would anybody want to threaten and/or destroy a thriving ecosystem like Bristol Bay, AK for the sake of a finite mine?? The mine won't last, and you can't eat it! Please protect the Bristol Bay watershed and ecosystem for all time.

I am writing to object to the development of the Pebble Mine threatening Bristol Bay. As a visitor to Alaska, I deeply value its natural areas and do not want to see its waters and wildlife degraded.

Please stop the proposed Pebble Mine in Alaska. It is bad for America and the world. Thanks You,

Every dollar spent on destructive projects like this brings the U.S. another step toward the past, rather than moving us into a future with energy security that comes from renewable energy. Please stop this disastrous effort and redirect our country's time and effort to productive, positive initiatives such as wind, solar and geothermal energy development, along with a build-out of smart-grid technology. Respectfully,

I am writing to protest mining in the Bristol Bay area. I was lucky enough to fly into that area a few years ago and marveled at its pristine beauty. It was fall and hundreds of brown bears were feeding on the incredible salmon runs, as were the rainbow trout I was fishing for. Mining in such a delicate and pristine area is criminal. Wild salmon are almost extinct in the most of America and this plan would ruin to last, great wild salmon ecosystem in our country. I vote no!

Sirs - Please consider the wildlife and ecology values when you decide the future of Bristol Bay in Alaska. Some things on this planet are more valuable than mineral extraction. When once lost, such places cannot be restored, and Bristol Bay is one of them. There are many sites which can be restored, and they should be used. Thank you

Bristol Bay's pristine and habitat-rich environment would be threatened by a metallic sulfide mine. Please strengthen clean water standards for mining to help protect this beautiful area. Thank you,

Dear Administration Officials, This is a plea that you please not allow anyone to despoil Bristol Bay. After the recent BP disaster in the Gulf, I think it's clear to everyone that we're not even close to having the sort of regulations in place that will protect our natural treasures. The last remaining thriving salmon populations are also in this area. As a Californian, I've seen what the collapse of the salmon fisheries means--not only to the environment but to fishermen and their families as well. Please don't let this happen in Bristol Bay. These are public lands. Please protect them for ALL Americans, rather than let a few corporations profit at our expense. Thank you,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I attended the meeting that was held on Sept. 1st in Ft. Pierre, SD. I would like to make some comments that I did not make that day. I am very supportive of the Presidents push for this program. I work for South Central RC&D and we have been working with the city of Murdo, SD to put in a fitness trail around the city park. We have a beautiful park that get utilized by not only the residents of Murdo but also travelers since we are located along I-90 interstate. The problem we have is that we cannot find the funding for such a walking/fitness trail. We have submitted grants for the last 2 years and have been rejected. This sounds like this would be the perfect fit to what we are trying to achieve. So my suggestion would be make funding available to any size of trail projects small or large. Thanks

stop the peeble mine.

I've seen the devastation that mining has brought about in my home state of West Virginia: mountaintops stripped bare, creeks and rivers polluted, fish and wildlife threatened or wiped out, communities flooded, people sickened by toxins....the list goes on and on. Please don't set the Pebble Mine loose on Alaska. Stop it now, I beg you. Thank you for listening.

Throughout history the public has had to foot the bill for superfund sites left over by industries unwilling to take care of the earth after plundering it's resources. How can anyone blame people for rallying against these industries looking for future sites. I, for one, ask that this project be suspended indefinitely. Thank you,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a hillbilly of southwest Virginia and I will never see Bristol Bay or any of the beautiful landscape and animals that live in the area of the proposed pebble mine. I will probably not live to see the next decade for I am a survivor of a brain injury and on disability social security. I give what I can to the folks who are trying to save Bristol Bay and the environment and still make ends meet to pay for my medication and the house hold bills. It is not easy to make ends meet but I think that it is important to make sure that there is a wild scenic area still in existence for my children and nieces and nephews and their children for the the children I will never know to experience and for the world to experience in the coming centuries. God gave us this land to be stewards of and he said to us the fields and plants and animals wisely. He never said to exterminate them and to destroy his world for our own selfish greed and well being. In point of fact the most amazing and beneficial drugs and scientific breakthroughs are coming from studying the way nature has found to solve problems and if we destroy nature we will most likely destroy the one thing that may save us in the future. It may be a cure to a disease or a computer design or a osmosis or electrical energy design that is made from biomimicry that we have found but that discovery may never happen if we continue along the path of destruction and selfish greed that we are currently on. I urge you to stop and think for a minute of the lost future we are making for ourselves and change the way we live and think to correct our actions so that tat future will be saved. It is not to late and you are the one who can make that change and that difference. I pray you will be the one with the courage and the foresight to do what is right not what is easy or complacent and follow the pack but to do the correct thing the one that a statesman does and think of the future of the country and the world and stop the destruction before it begins., Please may God grant you the strength to fight the dragging tide of corporate greed and do the right thing for the earth and the future of the earth and mankind. Stop this destructive course before it starts. Change our ways and put us on the path of environmental stability. Sincerely Yours,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Have we finally gone to every other corner of the planet and exploited the resources we need to live our "advanced" life style? If we want to exploit the last remaining home to the native salmon and native Alaskans and Baluga whales shouldn't we try to finish the job at the already developed sites? Can't we find an economical way to extract the remaining minerals from these existing mines and mitigate the ongoing pollution and degradation to the environment at those sites? Probably not. If we can't extract vital minerals without destroying the source of what we need in order to survive, then isn't it time to take a look at what we are doing to our home, everyone's home, planet earth? We are defecating on our own nest and leaving it for our children to clean up or live with. Is that what they mean by being good stewards to our children's future? It is way past the time when we can act like we don't need to be responsible because our resources are limitless. It isn't that the earth won't heal itself, it's more to the point that we may not be one of the surviving species to enjoy the benefits of the eons of time that it will take to stabilize the environment so that animals can once again flourish without being poisoned by visible and invisible toxicity. The Pebble Mine is not the beginning of our degradation of the planet it is the beginning of the end of our survival as a species in this world. We have to be responsible for more than our own greed. Please don't allow this ill conceived ticking environmental bomb to be started in the heart of what is left of the pristine places on earth.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

First, I call for a major jobs program in "vegetation management" to do important work for habitat and to reduce fire danger while avoiding use of toxic herbicides which threaten aquatic habitat. Next, seeing that Mr. Obama ran on the platform of protecting the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (as well as co-sponsored the Roadless Area Conservation Act), certainly all 58.5 million acres included in the rule must be protected (even in the Tongass and in those special interest-dominated Rocky Mtn. states that are trying to weasel out of the roadless rule). Now, proceeding from Alaska and proceeding south, there must be protection of 4 very notable wild areas of Alaska. The western Arctic is the wildest area in the USA and there must be considerable wilderness protection for this region. Next, I applaud the Obama Adm. for realizing that Bristol Bay is too important to salmon and other species to allow offshore drilling in that area -- but we also need to protect that watershed from the massive Pebble Mine proposal (the EPA should use its power under the Clean Water Act to halt this horrific project). The Arctic Nat'l Wildlife Refuge must be fully protected and abusive practices must not be allowed in close proximity to it -- the man-made "island" to get around some laws near ANWR must not be allowed. And lastly in Alaska, the Tongass roadless areas must be once again a part of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (or RAC Act), while the greedy Sealaska Corporation must not be allowed to act like they were shortchanged so that they can cherry-pick the largest ancient forests (over limestone and karst areas) in the Tongass too clearcut and send the logs to Asia for maximum profit. They already have some lands delineated, have largely trashed them, and they do not deserve more. Moving to Oregon, there must be protection for the Devil's Staircase area in Siuslaw National Forest, there must be some protections for eastern Oregon forest which is in legislative form currently I understand, there must be a lot more wilderness areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Rogue River watershed (including the one sizable forest parcel of BLM the Zane Grey roadless area), the damaging Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline must be halted before any construction begins, BLM must withdraw their damaging timber sales in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument area to allow for that important monument's expansion, there needs to be a lot more protection in the most biologically diverse subwatershed in Oregon which is the West Fork Illinois River, and the most important suggestion of all is to support the visionary Siskiyou Crest National Monument and Climate Refugia to promote species recovery and to help many species survive accelerating climate change. The watercourses encompassed by the Siskiyou Crest are chiefly the Rogue and Klamath Rivers. The 4 damaging major Klamath River dams need to be dismantled as soon as possible -- rather than wait for 2020 as is proposed under the inadequate Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement. The Spring Chinook, Coho, and other native fish species may well be gone by 2020 unless dam removal is accelerated. The Siskiyou Crest National Monument and Climate Refugia would give further protections to key parts of the Rogue and Klamath watersheds which can help threatened and endangered species survive. (It should also be pointed out that there should be ongoing water-flow studies throughout the Klamath River watershed -- and this center for temperate diversity should not allow commercial farming within the National Wildlife Refuges of that watershed.) Now to other areas of California (though the Siskiyou Crest and Klamath dam advice include areas in Oregon and California), there should be a completion of the Congressional District #1 wilderness area designation through protection and wilderness designation for the Smith River Additions and the Orleans Mountain Roadless Areas (the latter of which are

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Sir: As a government official, I am sure you are aware of the environmental and health dangers being poised with the pebble mining. I am also expressing my concern over your beautiful Bristol Bay and surrounding areas. I too, would not like to see such a wonderful place destroyed for short term gain due to the mining. It would be a permanent loss for your country. Governments all over our world need to be strong against lobbyist against the environment and bring about tight controls to protect what is left for a safe environment as well as clean up those areas that have been adversely affected. Please don't be falsly influenced by such monetary gain. Thank you.

This message is to protest, object to and request your intervention with Bristol Bay's so-called Pebble Mine. The very concept of public lands argues for their management in the interest of the public. Precedents involving public lands going back into the 19th century show frequent favoritism of private interests at the expense of public interests. This trend is unacceptable. It is undemocratic. Bristol Bay is a magnificent remnant of some of North America's most spectacular country. There have been plenty of other spectacular places on the continent that have long-since been cemented over through short-sighted and prejudicial management decisions. That trend should end short of the Bristol Bay dispute. I and many others do not want Bristol Bay cemented over. The Pebble Mine threatens the surrounding waters, fish, other wildlife and the wishes of the local populace. The whole habitat should be protected, not ruined for no greater purpose than to mine gold representing largely obsolete values. Protecting Bristol Bay is your responsibility. Subsistence living has been prevalent there for centuries. It should be encouraged to continue. Recreational potentials should be promoted, not extinguished and even they should be managed with long-term protection of the region in mind. Strong federal management in protection of the public interest is in order here. Categoricaly Clean Water Act standards for metal sulfide mining should be rigorously guarded. Regulation in the public interest is your responsiblity. Thank you for your consideration.

This message is in reference to the Federal Lands to Parks Program. The BONUS Plant <<http://www.lm.doe.gov/bonus/Sites.aspx>> located in Rincon, P.R., administered in part by the Department of Energy (DOE) and The Office of Legacy Management is a good candidate to be considered. This property and land was expropriated for an energy research purpose. At this moment is not been using for energy research. Currently, there are many organizations interested in preserved this land in its natural state for its great value in helping many environmental causes. What we need is a formal request from your agency/organization for this land to be used for an environmental purpose. We understand this is not an easy and quick process but we believe it has potential for development. Currently, there is a movement in the community to preserve this land. NPS <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/flp/flp_get_land.html> , GSA <https://rc.gsa.gov/ResourceCenter/laws_regs_all/> , GSA Property Transfer <<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21045>> , NPL <<http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/directory.html>> , DOE Environment <<http://www.em.doe.gov/Pages/EMHome.aspx>> , University of P.R <<http://research.uprm.edu/>> , DRNA Urban Forest in P.R. <<http://www.drna.gobierno.pr/biblioteca/leyes/ley-de-bosques-urbanos-de-puerto-rico/>>

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We should be pursuing cleaner, greener sources of energy. We should also refrain from using up our resources in harmful ways, in this example the Pebble Mine which will adversely affect Bristol Bay. We are a nation in desperate need of creating jobs, please use some of the reinvestment act money to train people to work in a cleaner, greener industries which we can start here, in America. I am tired of watching natural resources being squandered. I remember being ten years old and being warned about global warning. Not enough was done, and here we stand telling our children that many opportunities were lost. Please take the appropriate actions with Pebble Mine. If I can help in some small way, let me know. Kind Regards,

I am concerned about the proposed mining in the wilderness watershed areas of Alaska including Bristol Bay. I do not approve of issuing drilling and mining permits that will certainly destroy this pristine area. The mining is not necessary; nor is the drilling. I do not believe that either would be conducted in an environmentally safe manner regardless of what the oil and mining company ad agencies are publicizing. I will not vote for Arkansas representatives to the House or Senate who will not oppose land and habitat destruction in these Alaskan areas. I do vote in every election. I urge you to make sure that no permits are granted.

Please expand the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and protect potential expansion areas from harm by BLM. I want the next generation to know that some of us wanted them to enjoy this unique ecological area of Oregon and that we worked to protect it for them.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The area under discussion and motivation to change one of the most beautiful areas in our great land are in direct contradiction to each other. To see the earth ripped and destroyed in such a way makes me wonder if we have any qualities left in ourselves, not overpowered by the great wanting to make money. The allowing of this by our past president greatly saddens me as much as other things he left office allowing. What crimes are being committed in this country just because he gave free range and opportunity to people whose main object in this life is to make yet more money - at whatever cost it takes. Although I am over 70 and have seen and experienced many things in this life, my heart is sad and heavy with the thought of all the entries the last president of this land granted secretly during his term of office. I am wondering if the three bodies of the government designed to protect and furnish the people of the United States with possibly the best living can offer equal to anywhere in the world is no longer an effective kind of government, as changed as it has been in the last decade. Now it seems there are people wishing to do nothing but destructive mining and destroying some of the most important species of animals we have in this world. The Pebble Mine would certainly add its deadly pollution materials to the waters of Bristol Bay in such quantities as to finish off the wild salmon who have been coming there for literally thousands of years. In turn, the mammals that eat the toxic salmon would in turn be destroyed and it would go on and on down the food chain, besides harming the waters and their vegetation content. If the human race is going to continue on this earth, it has to have nutritional food free of toxic hazards. We are getting so we wish to overlook these terrible possibilities so we can enjoy the profits from these types of enterprises, but really who wins. Who's grandchildren or great grandchildren will suffer from diseases caused by these toxic chemicals in the waters. What animals will be closer to extinction because they drank and swam in the polluted waters - these are not just harmless thoughts of a liberal person. This is being written by someone who cares a great deal about our marvelous way of life, about our outstandingly beautiful country which must be kept livable for future generations of all beings from the whales to the wolves and include the humans too. I often wonder why human beings think they have the right and own all other animals on this planet. Because we are at present the dominant species - not counting many kinds of insects - we think if we have the money to start a toxic industry which will make more money - all systems are go, except for our human systems, except for all the animal systems, except for all the systems that combine metals and chemicals in non-extreme conditions, and except for all the systems began on this earth before there were any living creatures here. Please please look again at this proposal and see how devastating it would be to allow it.

Is it really worth the devastation that a mining company like Pebble Mine will do if it is allowed to mine in this pristine area? Is it really worth destroying a way of life for indigenous people who depend on hugh salmon runs as a way of life? Is it really worth losing the lure of tens of millions of thrashing salmon, charging upstream that the Grizzlies, Wolves, Seals and Whales are drawn to? Is it really worth a whole system crashing down if mining interests are allowed to get their way? You tell me?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hang in there! America's great outdoors are special to us all. We have a responsibility to protect them for future generations. We can make jobs here to, and well as promoting health. Please keep America special by protecting more Wilderness and quiet recreation opportunities, preserving more habitat and connectivity for wildlife, and permanent protecting remaining old-growth forests. Here in Oregon, we enjoy some of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring public lands in the nation. But places like the Wild Rogue River, the wildlands surrounding Crater Lake National Park, and the Siskiyou Wild Rivers are at risk from logging, mining, and other harmful development. Oregon has protected only 4% of our land as Wilderness, lagging far behind our neighbors. For the wildlife that call our public lands homes and for the millions who enjoy these places for quiet recreation, it is time to correct this Wilderness imbalance. Thank you for considering my comments.

For the last almost 20 years our country has promoted mining, oil exploration, and development to the exclusion of environmental interests. It seems that since the 1994 "contract on America" the only criteria our government agencies have considered is the power and financial resources of those wanting to bypass the rules. I am writing you to ask you to intervene and protect the Bristol Bay area from the negative effects of the Pebble Mine. It is again time for America to provide the leadership and set the example to the rest of the world that not only should our environment be protected, it must be protected. Thank you for your consideration,

Bristol Bay needs to be saved from the Pebble Mine. In the most simple terms, Bristol Bay has one of the largest salmon runs in the world. Salmon, a major source of protein for entire ecosystems, is currently struggling in other parts of the west. Keep Bristol Bay clean and you feed people and ecosystems for generations to come. Allow Pebble Mine and a few people make a ton of money off the backs of our future generations. Money for a few or life for generations. There is no contest in my mind. These are two competing resources and the salmon wins hands down.

Stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a regular American citizen with strong concerns about the Pebble Mine currently proposed for Bristol Bay. This is to be an open pit mine for low-grade copper and gold. There is a long history of open pit mining in the country and the environmental devastation that occurs as a result. Eighty-five (85%) of similar mines pollute surrounding waters. We already have a history of open pit mining in absolutely beautiful country which is thoroughly laid to waste and results in toxic environmental and health concerns that are difficult and expensive to address. In this case, Bristol Bay is a fragile environment to begin with. Any disaster there would have far reaching consequences to indigent population, whales, bears, seals, salmon runs, surrounding water and more. The oil well disaster in Louisiana is still with us and it is a lesson to bear in mind. I urge the strongest, most diligent, oversight of this proposal. I also support strengthened Clean Water Act restrictions. Up to 85% of similar mines pollute surrounding waters. This is a caution we can not afford to ignore for "low-grade" copper and gold product. Alaska is a wonderful recreational resource for the U.S. and those places are growing ever scarcer. I ask that you protect this resource in the strongest manner possible. I am 100% against this project, voted for Obama and hoped for a change in policies from his administration. I appreciate your consideration. Thank you.

I understand that the Obama administration is inviting input on questions related to preserving (or not preserving) wildlands including our coasts. I would like to communicate several suggestions:

1. Environmental standards for mineral development should be made tighter. This is especially true of wetlands. We seem to have the mentality that regulations should be just tight enough so that in an ideal world, things will not deteriorate too much. Well, the world is not ideal, and things are deteriorating in spite of the regulations. The solution is to be more rigorous, so that there is less chance of things going wrong and there are much bigger consequences for the mining companies and the people who run them when environmental degradation takes place.
2. Clean Water Act standards for metallic sulfide mining need to be made more stringent to adequately protect our watersheds and adjacent bays.
3. The federal government needs to provide stringent oversight of the permitting process of large scale proposed mining operations. Cumulative effects on the watershed must be understood thoroughly and definitively before any permits are approved. This should in particular be applied to the proposed Pebble Mine near Bristol Bay, Alaska.
4. Mining should not be given high priority on public lands. Instead, in so far as the public lands are wildlands or are not environmentally degraded, preserving wildlife habitat should be the top priority followed by offering recreation compatible with preserving the environment (i.e. absolutely minimize off road vehicle use, eliminate it if possible). This should apply in particular to the proposed Pebble Mine near Bristol Bay, Alaska, which currently threatens water quality, wildlife, fishing, and traditional ways of life. Public lands in the Bristol Bay area should be closed to sizable metallic-sulfide mining projects.
5. The relationship between the federal government and that of Native American tribes should be strengthened.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A Pebble Mine located near Bristol Bay is one of the worst ways for the US to be generating "energy." Not only is this area one of the most pristine places on the planet, but there are other options that are far greener and more sustainable. Let's consider Bio-Diesel instead; if your needing oil. And solar power has become much cheaper in recent years as well as using the wind for energy. We now have the technology to move beyond the stone age, and everyone I know feels the same way! (One of millions that can't believe this is being considered is this day and age, Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority.)

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

September 27, 2010 Dear Sirs: I urge you with all sincerity to stop the proposed Pebble Mine. The name "Pebble Mine" in no small way describes the scope and scale of the destruction that this operation would bring to one of the World's great marine environments. The name should be The Avalanche Mine. An avalanche is a terrible destructive force that once begins cannot be stopped and the destruction of everything in its path is assured. My wife and I live in Western Michigan and are sports fishermen. We travel to Alaska and fish for the abundant salmon and rainbow trout in the Bristol Bay tributaries. We fish in the Naknek River near King Salmon Alaska and in some of the small streams in the Katmai National Park. This area is absolutely is critical habitat for the Wild Pacific Salmon Stocks. The Naknek River, Lake and smaller feeder streams are the natal streams, spawning grounds and nursery for five species of Pacific Salmon. The salmon life cycle that occurs in this spectacular watershed is one of the most awesome events in the entire natural world. We as citizens of the United States and as world leaders have the responsibility to protect these salmon and this watershed. These salmon are beautiful vibrant inhabitants of our planet that should be allowed to live in a natural, unpolluted environment. They are the base of a food web that supports, the magnificent grizzly bears, eagles, seals, whales, sharks, sea birds and countless other fresh and saltwater fishes. In addition, they support the Wild Alaskan Salmon Commercial and Sports Fishing Industry. Each year hundreds of bear, eagle, seals, sea birds and other fish grow fat eating these wild salmon and the millions of protein rich eggs they produce. Each year the Commercial Fishing Fleets harvest and local canneries process millions of fresh Sockeye and Pink Salmon that were spawned in the freshwater tributaries of Bristol Bay. Each year, indigenous Americans and local subsistence fishermen catch these wild salmon to feed themselves and their families. Each year hundreds of sports fishermen from all over the world travel to this area to fish for these beautiful wild salmon. These salmon provide an income for hundreds of fishermen and processors. They provide enjoyment to sports fishermen and an income to local guides, resorts owners, air charters, retailers and airlines that service the commercial and sports fishermen. The wild Alaskan Salmon that are caught by commercial, subsistence and sports fishermen provide enjoyment, income and a healthy food for countless, people, animals, birds and other fishes. To damage and destroy the Bristol Bay salmon fishery is a sin, criminal and insane. It is beyond my comprehension that anyone could propose or argue for placing an open pit mine in the Bristol Bay watershed. I am not going to argue the science for putting a mine in this pristine environment. However, doing so will result in the degradation and destruction of the wild salmon stocks in the Bristol Bay watershed. These fish need clear cold unpolluted freshwater to complete their life cycle. To destroy and degrade their habitat is to degrade and destroy them and all those that depend on them. The ethical, economic and recreational loss is assured. The evidence and facts of habitat degradation and destruction from mining operations are well documented. The loss and degradation of the Atlantic salmon stocks in the Northeast US, Canada and Europe is well documented and publicized. The Wild Pacific Salmon losses in California, Oregon, Washington, Japan and Russia are well documented and publicized. In California, Oregon, and Washington, the salmon stocks are maintained by significant hatchery augmentation. In Michigan we also have populations of salmon that supports a billion dollar sports fishing industry. These Great Lake salmon provide sporting opportunity but are not a commercial food source. The reason is that the Great Lakes and t

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Hello Current Administration - I am a concerned United States citizen writing to express my sincere disapproval of the Pebble Mine in Alaska. This area is truly one of our nation's most incredible untouched treasures, and the risks of building a massive mine nearby are too great. We all know how the mining companies will do their best to retain all of the pollution and toxins leaching into the water, but the fact is the area will be subject to the risk of a spill, an accident or even day-to-day activity that causes erosion and pollution to the area where some of the greatest fishing in the world exists. That is not to mention the incredible diversity and uniqueness of other wildlife. From an economic perspective, if you look at the tourist dollars that come into this area, and the many businesses that are kept alive by the health and pristineness of this area, I think it is prudent to consider the potential of losing that tourist revenue and closing of all those businesses. To me it is simply not worth it. I have never travelled to this area, but it has always been one of my dreams to go there and hopefully with one or more of children. Please don't risk destroying that dream. Thank you for your time,

I am writing to encourage the US government to complete a thorough analysis of the environmental impact the Pebble Mine may have on the Bristol Bay watershed. Public lands should remain pristine and free of the contamination that large-scale metallic sulfide mining may cause. In order to maintain a healthy environment for our children, we should focus on preserving the natural habitat we in the U.S. are so fortunate to enjoy. Please consider making the protection of Bristol Bay your top priority. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

President Obama: Please save nature for us and our children. For so many children, their only contact with nature is a park. Let's expand our local, state and national parks as well as preserve our vast wilderness areas. When I voted for you, I was voting for environment. Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Please save Bristol Bay. Stop the Pebble Mine. We must conserve and develop alternative technologies or we will be uncompetitive in the new world order. This is a matter of National Security. We MUST develop alternatives for the natural resources that are being fought over now.

I won't waste your time pretending to know more about this proposed mine than I do. However, I am a concerned citizen who has spent my entire adult life advocating for the environment. At this point in human history it seems quite obvious that we can't keep doing what has always been done when it comes to resource extraction. Plain and simple, there are really a lot of human beings on the planet now, and all of us want to make a buck. Our leaders need to take the long view and do what is best for us all. This mine is not best for us all. It is best for the company and its shareholders who stand to profit from it. Please do the right thing and do not give over these elegant public lands to be spoiled by transient industrial gain.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing to speak against the Pebble Mine and protect Bristol Bay. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed area should be closed to metallic sulfide mining. Protecting the habitat should be our top priority. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional ways of life. Mining should not be a higher priority than these important things. In addition, standards for mining in wetlands should be strengthened. Wetlands are not the place for any actions that pollute and harm these sensitive and important environments. In addition, the Clean Water Act should be strengthened and mining standards made more stringent. We have only one Earth. It is our only source of life. We cannot ravage it and expect to survive. We are the stewards of this precious planet, and as such, we must make intelligent decisions based on environmental care and protection. I trust you will do the right thing.

It seems incredible to me that anyone would not understand the need to save Bristol Bay. To risk the salmon and wildlife populations, to disturb the ecosystem, to destroy the natural beauty, to think it is the least bit acceptable to risk destroying or diminishing this area so that future generations cannot have it available is not something intelligent, concerned, thoughtful people would consider. I always wonder if those who are behind the idea that minerals and money are more important than the environment do not have children and grandchildren they are concerned about leaving a legacy of beautiful land and sustenance and places that touch the soul. I may be naive but the money and minerals are nothing compared to the future of our descendants and the planet itself. Thank you for listening. Please save Bristol Bay.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Pebble Mine is an environmental disaster in the making. At the center of the development it would create an immense hole TWO THOUSAND FEET DEEP and TWO MILES ACROSS, deeper than the Empire State Building and half the size of Manhattan. That is just the hole itself. Billions of tons of rock would be crushed and dumped in immense piles of toxic tailings, polluting the entire watershed for fifty to a hundred miles around, and billions of gallons of cyanide-laden toxic wastewater would be held in vast ponds, IN AN EARTHQUAKE ZONE. The associated infrastructure of roads, fuel depots, maintenance facilities, housing for workers, food halls, shops, machinery, factories, and more, would spread for many miles in every direction and permanently devastate our incomparable American natural treasure of Bristol Bay. The Bristol Bay area is one of the largest, if not the largest, salmon fisheries remaining in the world. This provides thousands of jobs for the local inhabitants, including the Native Americans who have lived in the region for thousands of years, and who are unanimously opposed to this devastating project. The wildlife of the region is incomparable - bears, whales, seals, elk, moose, birds and many others, all of which would be imperilled if this project goes forward. Given the recent Deepwater Horizon disaster, we KNOW that extractive industries CANNOT GUARANTEE the safe operation of their activities. Sooner or later, Murphy's Law kicks in and an inevitable disaster occurs. Every time. Finally, the owners of the Pebble Mine project are Mitsubishi and Anglo-American, neither of which is an American corporation. The vast majority of the profits, from this plundering of our American resources and the irreversible destruction of American fisheries jobs and local ways of life, would be repatriated overseas to foreign investors, and would do nothing to help our balance of trade and our collapsing economy. The Pebble Bay mine is a LOSE-LOSE PROPOSITION. There is nothing good about it, and its net effect would cost America dearly, in money, jobs, environment, wildlife, recreational space, and natural resources. KILL THIS PROJECT BEFORE IT KILLS US!! Yours

America Great Outdoors Like the Grand Canyon, we have a great national treasure in Bristol Bay Alaska. It is the largest wild sockeye salmon run in the world and one of the last of any kind. It is a wild place with game and native people who depend on that game. The mostly foreign owned Pebble Mine severely threatens this treasure that we all are part of. An open pit mine of this size has never been done before without harming the environment--and this delicate system is extremely fragile. Like our other great treasures, this must be protected or we will lose it. The EPA could enact 404C under the Clean Water Act and stop this now. There are some very special places where industry and wilderness should not mix--this is one of them. Thank you.

Administration Official(s), When all the issues are examined, would opening up unspoiled lands for gold and copper mining be a good thing for the people, plants, and animals of the region? Would this be in the best interest of our collective national security? Would the decision to do so improve the quality of life for most Americans? Would this decision help the plants and animals of the area? If the answer is no to these questions, then we have an obligation to each other and future Americans to reject this idea. It can only harm and provide short term economic benefit to a few at the expense of many. Thank You...

STOP PEBBLE MINE AND SAVE BRISTOL BAY !

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR I SPENT THREE YEARS IN ALASKA. I AM PERSONALLY FAMILIAR WITH THE MAGNIFICENT BRISTOL BAY AREA. FOR THE SAKE OF ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS, IT MUST BE PRESERVED. THE PROPOSAL FOR THE PEBBLE MINE WOULD DESTROY ONE OF NATURE'S LOVLIEST SCENIC LANDS. AND KILL AND DAMAGE THE WEALTH OF WILDLIFE THAT LIVE IN THE AREA TO THE DETRIMENT OF NATIVE PEOPLES. YOU HAVE THE POWER TO PREVENT THIS TRAGEDY. I STRONGLY URGE YOU TO ACT IMMEDIATELY TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THIS NATIONAL TREASURE. RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

Dear Obama Administration, I voted for you because I felt like we shared many values. One value I hold dearly is that our environment must be protected. Public lands should be protected. Standards for mineral development in wetlands should be very tight. Please save Bristol Bay and it's amazing wildlands from the Pebble Mine. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Please resist corporate interests and be a leader in environmental protection. Our future hinges on making sensitive and sound decisions about our planet in the next years. Thank you so much.

The Pebble Mine should not receive permits because it would endanger all the wildlife in Bristol Bay. If the runoff from this mine is not contained the damage to the Bay over a period of time would equal the environmental damage caused by the recent oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico.

This is a brief plea to consider the plight of our limited remaining wilderness areas. If pebble mine is permitted to proceed there is the inevitable "accident" resulting in the further degradation of our lands. The Bristol Bay watershed should be a protected habitat and not available to any type of mining. Why do we continue to destroy our valuable wild assets for short term gain? The water, the wildlife and our children will all be witness to the lack of resolve of our government and its regulatory agencies to defend our land, air and water. If any mining is to proceed, we need to define and impose the highest possible standards and maintain vigilant oversight in any wilderness area, especially in a watershed region.

Please do not let a dangerous, polluting mine destroy the tremendous and irreplaceable beauty of Bristol Bay. Our country has suffered enough outrages at the hands of polluters. Please protect Bristol bay, one of the few remaining untouched and unblemished wild areas in the USA. Thank you very much for your time.

The Pebble Mine would be a horrible disaster for Bristol Bay and all its wildlife. It would cost the people of Alaska billions in lost revenue from fishing and tourism. Please do not allow this mine to go forward.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As you know, Bristol Bay is the farthest eastern arm of the Bering Sea in Southwest Alaska. Its shoreline encompasses pristine wilderness dotted with native-Alaskan communities engaged in traditional subsistence living on land and sea. The Bay provides the worlds largest sockeye salmon fishery as well as other fisheries and is home to a remarkable wealth of sea and land wildlife. Pebble Mine is a proposed large-scale heavy-metal mine site in the heart of Bristol Bay. The mining operation would entail digging of an open-pit mine 2 miles across and 2000 feet deep, as well as construction of large impounding dams to hold waste water mixed with toxic leach residue and other mining waste product. As proposed by its foreign operators, the mine would generate 9 billion tons of waste product a year, with the sequestering dams sited within 20 miles of an active fault line. An accident at Pebble Mine will bring an end to Bristol Bay's legacy of clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. The foreign operators assure that their operation will be safe and accident-free. However studies show that 85% of mines similar to that proposed for Pebble Mine polluted nearby waters, and the construction operation itself is certain to have a devastating impact on the watershed, the wildlife, and the peoples that call it home. Thanks for your attention

I spent 3 years in Alaska, have driven the Alcan Highway twice, and cannot understand how something like the Pebble Mine can even be considered, given it's location in the Bristol Bay area. Even 50 years ago, I knew of people who worked on fishing boats in those world class waters. Native peoples have lived a subsistence lifestyle there, and deserve the opportunity to continue to do so. And, it is a prime recreation area. Allowing this mine to go into operation threatens all of that. And for what, other than to feed the greed for profit? The mine is not needed, and should not be allowed. Thank you for your consideration, _____ Olympia, WA Life is eternal;and love is immortal; and death is only a horizon; and a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight.

Please stop the mine!!!!!!!!!!

Stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay, please. The fish in the watershed, and the wildlife and people that depend on them, are too important to risk in exchange for the economic benefits of the mine. Considering that U.S. mining has contaminated portions of the headwaters of over 40 percent of watersheds in the western continental U.S., it's almost inevitable that an environmental disaster will occur, probably involving the use of metallic sulfides. Accidental discharge of process chemicals and byproducts, heavy metals, and acid mine drainage to the environment are likely. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. The rich resources of this country are not just for exploitation. They are there for refreshment of the mind and spirit, for health, for contemplation. These are resources more valuable than money.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I join Oregon Wild in urging you to keep America special by protecting more Wilderness and quiet recreation opportunities, preserving more habitat and connectivity for wildlife, and permanently protecting remaining old-growth forests. Here in Oregon, we enjoy some of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring public lands in the nation. But places like the Wild Rogue River, the wildlands surrounding Crater Lake National Park, and the Siskiyou Wild Rivers are at risk from logging, mining, and other harmful development. Oregon has protected only 4% of our land as Wilderness, lagging far behind our neighbors. For the wildlife that call our public lands homes and for the millions who enjoy these places for quiet recreation, it is time to correct this Wilderness imbalance. Thank you for considering my comments.

I am a concerned citizen who believes that we should stop the pebble mine and protect Bristol Bay in Alaska. We need to come up with more sustainable methods to mine the materials we need before any project like this is approved. Also, regulations need to be stricter for any type of mining industry, because they all have very toxic waste streams that if not handled properly, are very damaging to the environment. Usually, what harms the environment is also harmful to human health and could affect any communities living near this mining site. Please stop the pebble mine and save Bristol Bay! Thank you

Yes, this is a Stephen Colbert inspired email, so it may come off as funny. But I am truly concerned for the conservation of our lands. Please do everything you can on this front, not just for your political career, but for the good of the country.

I would like to voice my extreme opposition to the Pebble Mine in Alaska's incomparable Bristol Bay watershed. It is inconcievable that we would allow such a magnificent area to be turned into an industrial zone....and by foreign companies no less. There simply is not enough money in the world to make the destruction of this area worth it. Some things are worth far more than mere money.. such as a world class salmon fishery...A study of mines similar to the proposed Pebble mine showed that 85 percent of them polluted nearby waters. At Pebble, the proposed open-pit mine would be 2 miles wide and 2,000 feet deep. As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams -- all of them taller than China's Three Gorges Dam and located just 20 miles from an active fault line. The Obama administration was elected (in part) to protect our environment. I urge you in the strongest terms to stop this disaster before it happens. Thanks for allowing my comment.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing to let you know that I oppose the development of the Pebble Mine, and any other mine, that is being planned for Bristol Bay. Although I have not been to Bristol Bay this appears to be a wilderness place that has many benefits and should be allowed to remain free and clean. In general, mining is environmentally dangerous and can be humanly unsafe. In this day and age we should be looking to find other sources of materials/energy and recycling/conserving our resources in order to avoid more damage to our world. The Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life, but this can be prevented by NOT ALLOWING MINING IN THE WATERSHED AREA. If any mining is allowed, it should be VERY STRONGLY MONITORED by federal, state and tribal observers and wetlands mineral development should be VERY VERY STRICTLY MONITORED AND REGULATED to prevent and minimize any damage to the environment and watershed.

Bristol Bay is known for its clear waters, salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life! We are both quite concerned about the proposed Pebble Mine project in this area! We feel that the public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should remain pristine without the addition of any large scale metallic sulfide mining! The top priority, in our opinion, must be to protect subsistence and recreation resources in this area! The Pebble Mine permit process and the analysis of the cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed must be first and foremost in this entire process! Also, it would be advantageous to strengthen the relationship between the U.S. and tribal governments. Standards set for the wetlands' mineral levels should be strict and adhered to! The Clean Water Act must have high standards for large scale metallic sulfide mining and be stringent in nature! Our country is blessed with many natural and beautiful resources, and they must be held in high esteem and never taken for granted! Our respect and dedication to these areas are necessary and must be given the care they deserve now and for future generations! Thank you for your time and effort with this project! We hope and pray for the best for Bristol Bay! Kind regards,

Our fast-track, exploit-at-any-cost attitude is endangering planet Earth--plain & simple. Whatever wildlands that can possibly be saved should be saved. Thanks for listening.

Please stop the Pebble Mine project--i don't want to see the record of the "Pebble Mine Disaster" in the future. The Pebble Mine will have a disastrous effect on the pristine clean waters of Bristol Bay, its overall environment and surrounding areas. Bristol Bay is home to world-class salmon runs, spectacular wild lands and other wildlife. Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and the analysis of the cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. The federal government and tribal governments should also act to strengthen the relationships between them. In general, standards for mineral development in wetlands should be more stringent. Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should also be more stringent. Please act now to preserve Bristol Bay as the special place it is. Thank you for your consideration.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Members of the Obama Administration, Pebble Mine must be stopped. I am against any aspect of this mine being created or continued. The reason I voted for Obama was so that the permanent destruction of our earth for short term gain would stop. This is a perfect example. Please stop Pebble Mine. Thank you.

Please stop the Pebble Mine. Do it for the salmon in Bristol Bay.

The Pebble Mine is a terrible idea and should not go forward. It is a risk to wildlife, clean water, the fish population and the indigenous life style. Public land should be used for protection of habitat, recreation and subsistence not toxic sulfide mining. Strong oversight by the government should be implemented to ensure proper preservation of these precious public lands. Strict and more stringent regulations for clean water and air is important.

Whenever I contemplate a visit to Alaska, it is with a place like Bristol Bay in mind. With global climate change a reality, it is not just tourist dollars, but sequestered carbon that is at stake. With an unprecedented number of species facing an uncertain future and possible extinction, it is an intact ecosystem and priceless habitat that is at stake. Please do not let the Pebble Mine project go through, the area is too vital for all these reasons.

To whom it may concern, I am writing to voice my concerns about the Pebble Mine proposal for Bristol Bay. I'll make just two brief points. The first is that it makes no sense to destroy an ecosystem forever in order to extract materials that will probably end up in a landfill in just a few years, except, of course, for those who are making obscene profits off the destruction. The first point leads to my second, which is that communities and the environment have for far too long suffered the corporate policy of externalizing costs in order to make profits for a select few. If companies want to exploit resources, they should be made to pay EVERY cost incurred, including long term, short term, direct and indirect. Then perhaps we might see more sensible and responsible resource extraction. Thanks.

hello, I am deeply distressed by and opposed to the proposal to take public lands in the watershed of Bristol Bay—renown for the wildlife it supports—and permit large-scale mining for metallic sulfide. Please do everything in your power to prevent this travesty.

Please consider banning this mine. Short term needs need to be balanced against our natural heritage. Protect this beautiful place, and God's creatures. Thanks

Please do not permit the Pebble Mine to go forward. Bristol Bay is too precious to place at such serious risk. Thank you for your consideration,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, I am an advocate of natural, unspoiled places. It is an intrinsic necessity to uphold the right of clean water and unspoiled natural places for wildlife, and future human generations. The grizzly bears at Pebble, ie the proposed site of a humongous, pollution source, are dependent upon unpolluted water to provide abundant salmon for their existence. It should not be permitted to turn this fragile ecosystem into a polluted one for the greedy benefit of mining companies. I thought everyone learned in grade school the importance of clean water. You can't live without it. Now here they are trying to turn clean water into polluted water and I denounce it. I am all for protecting this valuable natural ecosystem.

i am writing to encourage you to block the building of the disastrous Pebble Mine in alaska. once this is allowed there is no turning back to save these precious wildlands and outdoor spaces. this is very important to me. thank you for your attention to this matter.

I would like to register my opposition to the opening of the Pebble Mine, which threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. In making your decision, protecting wildlife habitat, subsistence, and recreation resources should be the top priority. These cannot be replaced if damaged or eradicated. Other sources of minerals and other ways of achieving the same ends can be found, on the other hand, and doing so could contribute to the growth of the American economy. Therefore I advocate that public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining, that the federal government provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed, that relationships between federal and tribal governments be strengthened, that standards for mineral development in wetlands be tightened, and that Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining be made more stringent.

We need a healthy environment far more than we need another source of pollution. There have to be some areas where the planet can renew itself. It is extremely short-sighted to destroy a treasure like Bristol Bay to fulfill a less important desire for a consumer product. How useful will these metals be when we cannot breathe the air or drink the water?

Dear Sir I am asking you to do the right thing, thousands of animals lives depend on you and your conscience. Please don't allow this Mine to come to fruition.. Its a terrible idea based on human greed. This planet needs places where humans don't go,so there are clean places still on the planet that will attempt to try to heal the rest of the damage we do to the rest of the earth and the air. Please give the wildlife a place to live where the water isn't polluted with our waste where there is no air pollution and no destruction. Let the animals have a place of their own where as the old saying goes... if a tree falls in the forest and no humans are around does it make a sound... And as John Lennon would say.. LET IT BE!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I wanted to express my concern regarding the Pebble Mine. As a consumer of Alaskan salmon, I am distressed that the mine could contaminate this vital fish as well as other wildlife that is in and around the area. What bothers me the most is that foreign companies will be using this mine. Have we not learned from the BP disaster that they take things more lightly when they are not in their own backyard? What do they care if they poison the wildlife in another country? As a voter who is very likely to vote against a politician who would allow people to pollute our country, I hope I will be taken seriously. Please do not allow these companies to pollute land that our children and grandchildren will depend on. Please say no! -

Please do not allow Pebble Mines to threaten Bristol Bay. Once our wildlife or natural resources are spoiled, they cannot be repaired for our children and their children. Thank you,

Hello Bristol Bay is a cherished area that will be destroyed if open to mining. Please don't allow the Pebble Mine. Thank you,

The proposed open-pit mine by Pebble Mine is unacceptable and threatens this pristine, untouched ecosystem that supports grizzlies, wolves, seals, whales and salmon. You, the federal government, should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Don't let the greed and profiteering of big business destroy our national treasures. We must learn to leave a light footprint on this planet, and this is the time for this government to lead the way, set the example. Please make protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources a top priority. Public lands such as the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Create tougher/stricter standards for mineral development in wetlands and enhance the Clean Water Act so that the standards for large-scale mining are more stringent. Make a difference for this generation and the generations to come.

Gentlemen: Bristol Bay, in Western Alaska, has incredible wildlife, fisheries, beauty, and offers native Americans a traditional subsistence way of life. The harvesting of wild salmon provides thousands of jobs, millions of dollars to the economy, and offers a truly healthy food to Americans who struggle with obesity and diabetes. The fishery in Bristol Bay has been commercially viable for over 100 years. Unfortunately, there is a huge gold mine proposed in the watershed of Bristol Bay, Pebble Mine, which is Canadian owned. This mine threatens clean waters, habitat, subsistence and recreation. There should be strong oversight of the permitting process and careful analysis of the cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watersheds. Thank you for consideration of this valuable resource for America. Most Michael and Diane McBride --

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are so few beautiful great places left for people who love the outdoors' natural beauty in America. Some that do exist are so crowded, it shows how many people appreciate and love awesome wonders which are entrusted to us. The proposed Pebble Mine is a containable threat to Bristol Bay and it's inhabitants and wildlife users. This watershed needs to be protected by closing the area to any type of detrimental effects from mining. What a huge message you can send to Americans by retaining an unharmed habitat, subsistence, and recreational resource area. Americans need an administration that not only "talks the talk", but will stand up and "walk the walk" now more than ever. I imagine that federal contracts, as county contracts, are revocable, but not until damage is done. Please do not gamble with an area of exquisite heritage. We are still reeling from the tragedy of the BP spill. Pebble mine and Bristol Bay mishaps are preventable - right now. You are the entity that can restore America's faith in an area of government long reversing preservation of America's precious resources. Please stop the Pebble mine. Thank you,

Hello: I am writing today from Canada to ask your Government to stop the Pebble Mine. Your wild salmon and wildlife will definately be affected by this mine in Bristol Bay. It breaks my heart to see the world's beautiful creatures and lands and waters being destroyed by industry, oil and mines. We will never again see the world as it was when I was a young girl, in the 1950s. Countries have become money and power hungry in their desires of ways to get more money and power...but in this process, what God has created is forever lost. Please stop and think what this mine will mean to the beauty of your land!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership as it is embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are and have been for decades threatened by pressures like needlessly expanding population, unguided sprawling and polluting development and climate change. That's why we as citizens whose rights are being jeopardized need presidential leadership now more than ever, to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. I'm asking the President to please, please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress, in order to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness eco zones, watersheds, and natural areas. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated as "wilderness". Much worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. This is shocking, unlawful and the worst possible time to ignore scientists' recommendations and attack the efforts of those who would preserve the planet as against those who argue that whatever they do should be subject to no regulation at all--the Bush Administration's favored position. Both constraints can be lifted quickly by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Again, I want to thank the Obama Administration's leaders for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial scientist-guided legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

People who value gold, a non strategic metal, above wildlife and Earth itself are enemies of humanity. There's no middle ground. Stop the destruction!

Please save the Bristol Bay watershed and the way of life that people of it's area have made there living from for centuries. Don't let corporate greed turn one of the most pristine regions in the world into a toxic landfill. I am sure you are aware what the right thing to do is here and that is to save this place for our children and the wildlife that depend on us to protect them. Thank you.

Dear Sirs: I consider that is very important to restrict the proposed mining operation of the Pebble Mine in the watershed of Bristol Bay, Alaska. Too much wildlife will be damage forever, and the lively hood of those living in the area is at risk. Sincerely yours,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing to express my strong and heart-felt opinion that Bristol Bay needs immediate protection from those attempting large-scale mining, which threatens its clean waters, wild salmon and other wildlife. It would also seriously threaten and undermine traditional subsistence ways of life. Our federal government needs to strengthen its relationship and working partnership with tribal government and leadership to address the threats such proposed mining operations have to their culture and way of life. Additionally, after years of gutting of the Clean Water Act, I also strongly urge that its standards for such large scale mining operations be reviewed and be made more stringent. Water is a precious commodity - and growing more so each year. We must not hesitate to act to preserve and protect it and those whose lives depend on it. Thank you.

Hon. Salazar- As a life long Democrat, I urge you to do everything in your power to stop the Pebble Mine development. Save our very limited wilderness from further destruction. I fear that the human race , with its greed, will continue to overpower all other species remaining on the earth. The United States of America should be a model for environmental and species conservation for other nations. We CAN be a leader in a new thrust to protect what we have

This is written to urge you to stop the permits of the Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay for the following reasons: 1. public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed need to be closed to metallic sulfide mining to protect the water and with it salmon and wildlife. We need to protect wetlands which are an extremely important resource in a healthy water cycle. We already have too much development in wetland areas with the result of deterioration of marine eco-systems, and we need to save what we can. 2. Furthermore, especially in this area, pollution would not only stand to deteriorate an important national resource, but also in particular put traditional tribal subsistence practices at risk. Eroding the livelihood and culture of indigenous people has also had a long and infamous tradition and is overdue to be stopped. The relationships between federal and tribal government should be strengthened. If the US wants to be taken seriously as a fair player internationally, people will look at what we are doing to our own minorities if they don't have a lot of power and/or money, to see if we can be trusted or not. thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments Dorothea Leicher, Philadelphia, PA.

Please do not allow the Pebble Mine Project which threatens an important environment for sustainable wild salmon habitat to proceed. There are many polluting and dangerous elements inherent in fish farms so it is vital to not endanger one of the naturally occurring fishing grounds.

The great outdoors of America are very precious to me and I wish to see them better protected them for future generations. We need to protect more Wilderness and quiet recreation areas, preserve more habitat and connectivity lands for wildlife, and we need to permanently protect remaining old-growth forests. In my state of Oregon places like the Wild Rogue River, the wildlands surrounding Crater Lake National Park, and the Siskiyou Wild Rivers are at risk from logging, mining, and other harmful development. Oregon has protected only 4% of our land as Wilderness, lagging far behind our neighbors. For the wildlife that call our public lands homes and for the millions who enjoy these places for quiet recreation, it is time to correct this Wilderness imbalance. Thank you and I hope you will do all you can to protect what we have left.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development, and climate change. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. We ask the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and we urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Again, we want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. We look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

I want to know that my leaders in government cherish America's natural spaces as much as I do, and that leaders will go to the mat to preserve our landscape for the next generation and the one after that, too. It is a top priority to preserve what we have already set aside and to expand our shared outdoor spaces including parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, rivers and monuments and to conserve our farms and forests. Please, please take the long view and put preservation before short-term energy, industry or special interest desires.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The CHALLENGE involved in protecting Bristol Bay is that its unspoiled, valuable wilderness lies adjacent to the proposed site of the controversial Pebble Mine which, according to the NRDC, generates over 9 billion tons of waste generated by hard rock mining. The Natural Resources Defense Council states that a survey over 40 years shows that hard rock mining pollutes nearby water resources 85 percent of the time. This pollution, which is a matter of record, would threaten the Bristol Bay watershed, which is one of the world's most productive wild Chinook salmon fisheries, and is critical to the survival of Alaska's eagles, brown bears (Alaska's grizzlies), and seals, as well as native Alaskan communities. Clearly, our world is now a global community. There is not a doubt in my mind that the pressure involved in providing the energy required to sustain modern life is enormous; however, we dare not jeopardize any further the interdependence of ecosystems that are already hugely impacted by global warming, if only because we ourselves are ultimately just as threatened by global warming as are the currently endangered polar bear, beautiful white beluga whale, the brown pelican, etc. Even if one's house were made of gold, its beauty and protection could easily slide into oblivion should it be overtaken by mudslides like those that toppled trees in Japan. Fortunately, we are not without resources. WHAT WORKS regarding effective strategies for conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors is applying the wisdom of four-star environmental protection groups, rendering their experience specific to stated environmental challenges. As regards the Bristol Bay Watershed and the Pebble Mine, I am writing this letter at the behest of the Natural Resources defense Council, "the earth's best defense." However, I'd like to quote the words of _____, taken from his visit to the America's Great Outdoors website earlier today, that "Both the Nature Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund are nonpartisan, well-established organizations with a long history of promoting habitat protection and restoration and using funds efficiently [while] working with the local population to find practical ways of achieving environmental protection and helping the local economy." Let's roundtable with these fine organizations. How can the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors? President Teddy Roosevelt has been quoted as saying "We are not building this country of ours for a day. It is to last through the ages." In our own day, it has been found in the instance of Bristol Bay, that the Bristol Bay's salmon fishery is a GLOBALLY significant resource and a top conservation priority. I believe this is the CRUX of the matter regarding the Bristol Bay. As Peter Lehner of the NRDC observes, the danger is that the region is now at risk of being permanently transformed if hard rock mining resource extraction commences there, with potentially devastating impacts on the fishery. This is NOT good news, particularly coming at a time when traditionally rich fishing regions have been devastated by the Gulf oil spill, additionally coming at a time when it has been found that deep sea fishing is depleting otherwise stable fish populations. MY HOPE AND REQUEST, like that of many others, is simply that you act now to RETAIN THE EXISTING LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR THE BRISTOL BAY WATERSHED. Please keep them in place so that the health of the public lands, waters, wildlife in and around Bristol Bay, along with the native cultures and industry they sustain, will remain secure and continue to thrive. Best regards,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Mr, President Although I doubt you will read this or even take into consideration the thoughts of this countries low class public, I still feel obligated to make an attempt at letting you know how I feel about the Bristol Bay Pebble mine. Not only does the mine threaten a beautiful landscape which political officials seem to have no concern over. It is a major pollutant, now lets be honest, all of us (even you) have to deal with the future water problems from pollution and overpopulation and I cannot comprehend any plausible reason for allowing even more pollution to continue. It threatens multiple natural ecosystems and also a large population of salmon. You made multiple environmental promises in you campaign that have thus far been unfulfilled and as much as I hate to do it, environmentally you are another Bush... Protecting these natural habitats needs to be a top priority and if great men in high positions cannot make a stand how do you expect the masses to do it.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments. The proposed Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened; standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter; and Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. The Bristol Bay watershed is one of the world's most productive wild Chinook salmon fisheries, and is critical to the survival of Alaska's eagles, brown bears (Alaska's grizzlies), and seals, as well as native Alaskan communities. For more than 30 years this vital watershed, which is surrounded by protected areas, has been closed to mineral extraction. However, the Bureau of Land Management, under direction of the Bush administration, proposed a Resource Management Plan that would open up 1.1 million acres of this unspoiled wilderness to hard rock mining, putting subsistence and commercial fishing activities, as well as wildlife, at risk. The Management Plan is particularly problematic because the land is adjacent to the proposed site of the controversial Pebble Mine which, as one of the world's largest gold and copper mines generating over 9 billions tons of waste, would pose a risk to the entire Bristol Bay ecosystem. The State of the Salmon conference concluded that Bristol Bay's salmon fishery was a globally significant resource and top conservation priority. Yet the region is now at risk of being permanently transformed if hard rock mining resource extraction commences here with potentially devastating impacts on the fishery. Please do not reverse three decades of sensible protections in favor of an ill-advised, ill-informed Resource Management Plan from the Bush administration, which failed to set aside enough Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and also failed to designate enough Wild and Scenic Rivers. Therefore I urge you to reconsider the Bush plan that favors short-term mineral development over long-term land management and direct BLM to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement that reflects the exceptional value of the lands and waters of Bristol Bay. Working to maintain the current withdrawal of public land from federal appropriation until adequate safeguards are put in place, BLM will fulfill its obligation to this public land. Until a better plan is devised, please act now to retain the existing protections for the Bristol Bay watershed. The health of these public lands and waters, and the wildlife, native cultures and industry they sustain depend on it. Thank you for considering my comments.

Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors. We are especially concerned about land that is being explored for NATURAL GAS. In fact, we own such land. We desperately want our federal clean water, air and other environmental laws that were set up to protect our environment to be fully re-instated for this industry. The Bush administration's exemption of this for-profit industry has already done great damage to our precious natural resources in many areas of this country. However, most importantly, we want you to know that we are enormously grateful to have you as our President. Thank you sincerely for all of the energy you lavish on the many wounds our dear country suffers. With great admiration and respect.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Our natural resources are threatened by exploding population, unguided overdevelopment & climate change. Make wilderness protection a central component of policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate cooperation among federal public land agencies & Congress to identify eligible landscapes for protection as wilderness. The US Forest Service now uses restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness; BLM remains bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President; as an emeritus member of the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), I ask that this be done.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for initiating this dialogue. One of us attended the session on the lawn of Lewis & Clark Community College on August 20, but was one of those for whom there was not time to speak publicly. The other was unable to attend because the session occurred during the work week. So we are submitting our joint comments by email. Challenges Reconnecting to our rivers: Missouri is blessed with many opportunities to connect with the outdoors, but more needs to be done to make those opportunities accessible. We could do more to provide connections with our major river systems. The Columbia Bottoms Conservation Area is a good example of effort to provide access to the great confluence of the MO and MS rivers. But at the same time, that Conservation Area is under threat of a major casino development virtually next door and within the floodplain. More thorough analysis by FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers of all "external" costs of such floodplain developments could help local and state governments to understand the true costs of such developments to taxpayers and society. The MO River from Kansas City to St Louis is highly channelized. That results in a narrow and swift flowing river which limits safe opportunities for visitor enjoyment. Programs such as the Big Muddy Wildlife refuge will provide more varied habitat along the river which will be good for fish and wildlife as well as recreation. More funds and emphasis should be placed on that and similar projects. The topic of reconnecting should also include restoration. We cannot reconnect to what is no longer present. In Missouri many of our grassland, savannah and prairie habitats have been lost. Efforts to restore those habitats on public and private land should be supported. Private Lands: Most of Missouri's grasslands and forests are in private lands. A significant portion of the state is managed for agricultural production. Supporting good conservation practices on private lands is essential for protection of the great outdoors. Initiatives for conservation easements, for example, are a good tool. However, such conservation easements need to be enforced. In Missouri conservation easements have been granted along the Ozark National Scenic Riverway, but not always fully enforced by the National Park Service. Crop Reserve Programs are another way to encourage stewardship on agricultural lands. Our growing population and suburban sprawl constantly put pressure on family farms and forests. We should encourage tax and other policies that enable families to keep their land undeveloped without incurring unnecessary hardship and expense. Public lands: Missouri has many public land ownership levels -- federal, state, county, municipal. All provide levels of access and types of high-quality outdoor experiences. Missouri's outdoors are perhaps best known for our Ozark rivers and streams. We are blessed with the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, which include stretches of the Current and Jacks Fork rivers and is managed by the National Park Service. That linear park is currently undergoing a revision of its management plan. The process has highlighted some glaring management problems which have been a growing concern for years. The NPS has failed to follow the mission of the Scenic and Recreational Riverways designation and has allowed numerous illegal river access points, unauthorized ATV traffic and excessive equestrian use to mar and pollute the rivers. Due to agency analysis and public input, a goal of the management review now is to focus on improving water quality and river habitat and to provide for appropriate, but not destructive, recreation. Carrying through will be a difficult task. The background message to this experience is that proper manage

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Living in Germany for many years as an American, there are many alternate ways that can be implemented to negate the need to use the "potential" energy from Bristol Bay and we need to "bite the bullet" and get on with saving instead of consuming energy. For example: -Slight "for Americans" increases in the price of energy to reduce consumption. Too many pickup trucks driving around with one person in them. Why? Jobs in Detroit? Not hardly as many are Japanese. -Credits for investment in proven technology for personal homes in solar, heat pumps, and photovoltaic technology to make homes energy independent. -Payments for proven insulation technologies to assist the above in homes and companies aimed at the little guy. -Reduction of energy usage through required upgrades in use of LED and other technology for home and industrial lighting. Too include commercial street lighting. The items above are just a few ideas that if we were in a real war like WWII would have been implemented to focus our resources to win the battle. We are competing with the world for resources have a smaller population than the upcoming nations like China, Brazil, India, etc. so we have to think smart with our current small lead in technology to be able to let our grandchildren have at least an equal life style to ours in the future. Jobs and money are finite and either we suffer a bit now and develop new ways to reduce our consumption or the world market will take care of it and leave our grandchildren poor

Dear Mr. Salazar: Bristol Bay is under attack. At least that is how we, who appreciate the great outdoors and love to eat wild caught fish from Alaska interpret the mining industry's proposed incursion upon this watershed. Policies exist in Alaska to protect the waters and streams there from overfishing. I already have lived this year without U.S. wild caught shrimp from the Gulf of Mexico. That because of improper oversight over the oil industry in those waters. Now it looks as if our wild caught salmon is also in danger of pollution from nearby large scale mining operations. Please ensure that the fishing industry is not compromised so that the Earth can be mined. Frankly, I fail to see a way to protect these waters should mining commence. The Lord has given us dominion over the land. With that control comes responsibility to care for and protect fast disappearing wildlife, wetlands, and Native American ways of life. Have you looked into the sky lately? This season when I looked into the skies, I saw very small groups of birds in V formation. Where have all the birds gone? They have gone to farming, road, home, and infrastructure building. I pray that you require stringent standards for water quality should mining commence and that the Native American community in the Bristol Bay area become participants in the decision making process in a proactive way.

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The BLM is currently bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Republicans for Environmental Protection (www.rep.org) believes that we have a moral duty to ensure that future generations can enjoy America's great natural heritage. Specifically, we urge the administration to support and advocate the following: Designation of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain as wilderness. Permanent protection of roadless areas in our national forests. Expansion of North Cascades National Park in Washington State to include lands in the American Alps (www.americanalps.org) proposal. Presidential veto of any legislation that would weaken the Antiquities Act. Thank you.

Dear Secretary Ken Salazar, America's "Great Outdoors" are not vanishing by some spontaneous black hole. They are being actively destroyed by for-profit interests, and their protection requires the Administration to confront and stop these interests. You may start by desisting from further permits for the blasting of the Appalachian Mountains by coal companies, one of the Greatest Outdoors our nation enjoys. You can also stop issuing permits for the filling and destruction of wetlands by developers, and stop issuing timber sales and oil leases in our remaining wilderness landscapes. To make a contribution to America's Great Outdoors, the Obama Administration can simply stop doing harm.

Virginia and I applaud America's Great Outdoors Initiative by the Obama Administration. We are grateful to see the President making conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Indeed, we see America's natural resources being threatened by expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We desperately need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that everyone, now and in the future, may enjoy them. Virginia and I are asking the President: Please make wilderness protection a central component of your policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We do so because the President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, and unfortunately, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. And the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both of these constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and Virginia and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. In closing, we want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. We look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Attached are comments of the Working Forest Coalition (WFC) on private forestlands. These are for submission to the America's Great Outdoors initiative. The WFC consists of the following forest owners, conservation and wildlife groups, resource professionals and environmental organizations which participated in several of the AGO listening sessions: American Forest Foundation · The Conservation Fund · Environmental Defense Fund · Forest Landowners Association · National Alliance of Forest Owners · National Association of State Foresters · National Wildlife Federation · The Nature Conservancy · Pacific Forest Trust · Society of American Foresters · Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership · The Trust for Public Land · U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Inc. America's forestlands, nearly sixty percent of which is privately owned, are an essential part of our national green infrastructure. These forests provide Americans with clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. Good stewardship sustains and enhances the value of these forests and helps meet some of America's most pressing needs such as renewable energy, greenhouse gas emission capture and storage, products for everyday life and job creation in rural communities. To ensure that private working forests continue to be a vital part of America's Great Outdoors, the WFC calls upon the Obama Administration and Congress to adopt goals and innovations in three broad areas (which are detailed in the attached document): * Strengthen existing and emerging markets for working forests * Structure tax policy to support working forests * Invest in working forests conservation Thank you for your interest in the WFC's comments.

Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's beautiful clean waters. Public lands should be closed to large scale mining. thanks,

Dear Sir or Madam, Please stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay, one of the most pristine areas on this earth. The Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. In my opinion, public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. Further, the federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened. Standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter. And, Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. Thank you

Please do what is right regarding Bristol Bay and the proposed Pebble Mine. Don't let the unchecked expansion of corporate interests and obsession about improving the economy corrupt the knowledge deep down that we all have about saving special places. You have the ability to do right by future generations, please don't allow the exploitation of the Bristol Bay paradise. You may think that "responsible development", regulation and oversight, can protect these last wildlands that you hold your finger over. But Americans have heard that before. There is more to life than money. Paradise is worth saving

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hi, Please support more wild and scenic rivers and better protect our rivers for people, fish and wildlife. Please support the Foothill Conservancy's efforts to Save the Mokelumne with National Wild and Scenic River designation. As a mother of two boys and resident of San Francisco, the wild and beautiful Mokelumne is the highpoint of our summer. My city boy have spent hours fishing, hiking and swimming along the shores of the Mokelumne. They have learned how to ride rapids, catch crawdads and pick blackberries for jam and cobbler. In the day and age of video games I fell blessed that my children have had these opportunities. We are truly blessed to have an opportunity to visit such an untouched wilderness area so near to San Francisco. Please save the Mokelumne.

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS This is our country. It does not belong to corporate interests which will pay for leasing rights, tear up the environment, vow to reclaim the land, report that it is restored and walk away, heading for the next pristine environment which may hold profits. We have seen the Exxon Valdez disaster, the 2009 TVA coal ash containment pond disaster, the 2010 West Virginia mining explosion which killed many miners, mountain top removal mining scars throughout West Virginia with heavily polluted streams, an estimated \$6 billion clean up of nuclear waste in South Carolina, and most recently the BP Gulf Oil disaster. Space limitations allow mention of only these few examples. In 2009, the EPA had to agree to buy out the people of the town of Treece, Kansas, because the whole town is contaminated due to mining for lead, zinc and iron ore which occurred up to the 1970's. This followed the buy out of Picher, Oklahoma, just across the road from Treece, for the same reasons. These are all instances of man-made disasters. For the most part, these disasters occurred in plain sight. Some occurred due to outright error, some because lax regulations allowed profit-seekers to implement the cheapest methods of extraction, containment, disposal of waste and safety oversight, regardless of the dangers to human health or the environment. Please reconsider any approvals for foreign or national interests to mine the pristine environment of Bristol Bay in Alaska. How will the U.S. government control abuses to the environment -- the land and water, the air and the animal population -- not to mention the human populations. What if there were an earthquake in this fragile area which released contaminated sediments into the wetlands and coastal waters? How will this area ever be fully reclaimed after the intrusion of so many new roads, equipment and infrastructure to sustain such a huge project? You could look to the north in Alberta, Canada, at the environmental disaster created by mining for oil at the Athabasca Tar Sands Pits. Or fly over our own State of West Virginia.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing today urging the President to make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Our natural resources are severely threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development and climate change. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President. Thanks for your consideration of my comments.

Dear Administration Official, I am amazed that the Pebble Mine is still on track for being developed. It poses a dramatic threat to a rare and fragile area that belongs to all Americans - for the benefit of very, very few. Chemical waste in this area - when standards are already too loose - would devastate the place. You have a responsibility to the rest of us, to protect the unique and beautiful Bristol Bay. I urge you to act responsibly.

Especially with climate change upon us and likely intensifying immensely over the next 100 years, we need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that they will be available as crops fail and there are massive population movements to escape devastating changes in regional ecosystems in the South and Southwest. Having places and pathways will be critically important not only for humans whose livelihoods fail, but also for the migration and protection of animal and plant populations in places they can fit ecologically. I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worst: The Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done.

Good Afternoon Dept of Interior, The proposed Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay watershed should be stopped. Bristol Bays clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and public lands should be protected from the destructive abuses that would certainly occur if the Pebble Mine became a reality. The federal government should do all in it's power to protect and save this valuable resource. There should be stronger relationships between the federal and tribal governments in the area to protect traditional tribal lifestyles. Standards for mineral mining in wetlands and Clean Water Act standards for large scale mining should be more stringent. Please stop the proposed Pebble Mine, prevent the gradual destruction of the diverse and productive Bristol Bay watershed.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'm asking you, Mr. President, the President to make wilderness protection a central component of your "America's Great Outdoors Initiative". You have the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Again, I want to thank the you and your administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

Citizens are very aware of the impact of draught years and that they are inevitable and that they will get worse as the decades go by. There is not enough water or power or water sewage treatments or roads available to accommodate for more people and more buildings. We need to take a stand that over-population is ruining our social and wildlife resources. It makes us braced to claim the dismal water and power resources for our own. The reality is that if we take care of open spaces, our wilderness areas, and protect farmland we have a chance to keep our communities and this State alive and sustainable. Local governments are misguided to encourage more building in order to get more money for their coffers. It is an act of desperation but the ethical considerations are being ignored. Saying 'no' to more homes and buildings would help create an ethical decision to take care of what we have and stop over-crowding, more traffic jams, more water scarcity. We must stop local politicians from bringing in more people to balance their budgets. They did not rebuild the infrastructure and plan for the inevitable draught years when the budgets were in the red, they just increased their own salaries. Now must come a time of correcting this mistake and returning to sanity. More over-population will not solve our problems. Please put the long-term view first and give our children a land that we leave for them that is sustainable, that promotes agriculture, and that protects as much open space and sanctuaries for wildlife as possible. These decisions are difficult but they are ethical. thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To: President Obama, On the Preservation of America's Natural Wonders "If you ignore beauty, you will soon find yourself without it...But if you invest in beauty, it will remain with you all the days of your life." ~Frank Lloyd Wright I LOVE Beauty – beauty in all its intricate and splendid forms – be it, a spectacular sunset descending into the pink hue sky, a school of dolphins charming us with their spins and flips, a tiny hummingbird hovering before our very eyes, a beaver building a dam, horses running in freedom and ecstasy through a meadow of lilies and daffodils, a rugged mountain challenging us to climb, or simply a quiet walk through a dense forest – the list is endless. As you have admired works of art in the finest of museums, I invite you to imagine this magnificent planet as a canvas upon which a higher power has created and manifested the most stunning, staggering and breathtaking beauty of all. One need only be conscious of this remarkable beauty – the rugged mountains, pristine lakes, roaring seas, remarkable wildlife and rich forests – to understand the magnitude and critical level of importance in its preservation. "In all things of nature there is something marvelous."~Aristotle The great outdoors is "Free" medicine for the mind, body and soul. · The great outdoors "connects the spirit to nature" – it nourishes and feeds the soul with its intoxicating beauty. The oxygen we inhale in the great outdoors has reviving qualities, is healthy and pure, and keeps our spirits youthful. · The great outdoors clears the mind of everyday stresses, while giving us the ability to view life in its true perspective. · The great outdoors strengthens and tones the physical body, helping to keep disease at bay. · The great outdoors brings families closer together as they rally in joy at the prospect of hiking together, with pets in tow, on a glorious Saturday afternoon. · The great outdoors offers the outdoor participant the rare opportunity to be an observer of our precious wildlife in their natural habitat and hopefully instilling a newfound understanding and appreciation. · The great outdoors may even save a marriage or two as the couple reconnects through laughter or admiring the beauty of nature as it unfolds before them. · The great outdoors may help to instill values and respect in children, and get them off the computers every now and then. "Our task must be to free ourselves...by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty."~Albert Einstein Now, it is up to us, to live up to the task as responsible stewards of the earth to protect our natural treasures, our natural heritage, and magnificent wildlife. Our public lands are continually challenged and stressed with increasing development and pollution pressures, and climate change posing the gravest risk of all. It is time to take bold and urgent action to protect our land, water and history for generations to come. As scientist estimate that 20-30% of species could become extinct by 2050 as a result of climate change, it is time to take the critical steps needed to protect habitat and help species in peril by making this a top priority. Dedicating long-term funding for natural resources adaptation strategies is one important step the Administration can take and the development of a national adaptation strategy that clearly delineates how natural resource agencies should practice climate-smart conservation. Seize the opportunity for a stronger and more united America by creating, expanding and better protecting America's shared outdoor spaces – protect wildlife habitat, clean up our rivers, expand our parks, conserve working farms and forests, create more trails and places for kids and adults alike to simply enjoy the great outdoors in this great country. As well as our wildlife, our prec

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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I work for one of the government's largest land management agencies, but we are rapidly losing our ability to protect what's inside designated protected areas, due to losing habitat and connectivity outside of our boundaries. Increasing protection in these neighboring lands in these boundary areas, and/or in tact ecosystems will provide additional areas for wildlife and flora to continue to flourish. We can not allow our protected areas to become islands. When the research has already been accomplished, and we can articulate why an area is important, we need a support system to acquire or protect these lands.

Dear America's Great Outdoors Initiative: The Administration needs to seriously take on the issue of protecting our "nation's lifelines" -- our rivers -- for this and future generations. In many communities, like my own, the publicly accessible portions of rivers are linear parks, open to all regardless of age, ability or income. Our local river, the Mokelumne, is used by hikers, swimmers, birders, wildflower watchers, young people courting, families picnicking, anglers, rock climbers, artists, parents teaching their kids about nature, cyclists and more. It provides a place of inspiration, re-creation, enjoyment and solace for our local public. And in this, it is not alone. One cannot know America without knowing rivers. One cannot understand our history, our literature or our culture without knowing what a river is. Yet our river, like so many others in the U.S., is threatened by yet another unneeded and poorly planned dam. The Administration needs to embrace the goals of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, to balance the development of rivers with the protection of others for this and future generations. Supporting the grassroots effort to designate California's Mokelumne a National Wild and Scenic River would be an excellent place to start. See www.savethemoke.com Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Bristol Bay is a wetland home for bears, wolves, seals and whales, all drawn by salmon runs which support valuable commercial fisheries and indigenous people. Yet our American public lands and our rich heritage of wildlife, sustainable fishing and native peoples are about to be sold out to foreign mining companies, including Mitsubishi, Rio Tinto and Anglo American. After watching British Petroleum trash our Gulf, why are we so eager to let another batch of foreign multinationals trash sustainable fishing, pristine coastlines and public lands in Alaska? I grew up in Arizona, where the evidence left by hundred year old hard rock mining abounds. It was hard to take a hike in the woods around my home without stumbling across abandoned mine shafts. In some areas, slag heaps from old gold and copper mines covered acres of land, and were still leaching poisons into the watershed. In Jerome, where my cousins had a ranch, smelters spread pollution to such an extent, that the mine was forced to buy out local ranchers, because sustainable grazing land was now toxic. My cousins literally loaded their home onto trucks, and left the land their family had homesteaded more than a hundred years earlier, forced out by the cumulative impacts of mining. Miners came and extracted gold, silver and copper. After the mines closed, the damage remained. More than 100 years after the Arizona gold rush, the native people I knew, many of whose relatives had worked in the mines, still looked at gold with dread. They said it made non-Indians crazy. According to the Constitution, native tribes are sovereign people under the jurisdiction of the US government. Tribes which are stakeholders in Bristol Bay should be included in the oversight process for any possible mining permits, with full rights to raise questions and have their concerns addressed. According to NRDC, "a study of mines similar to the proposed Pebble mine showed that 85 percent of them polluted nearby waters. At Pebble, a proposed open-pit mine would be 2 miles wide (enough to line up nine of the world's longest cruise ships end-to-end) and 2,000 feet deep (enough to engulf the Empire State Building). As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams -- all of them taller than China's Three Gorges Dam and located just 20 miles from an active fault line. A single accident here would be disastrous. But even the construction and operation of the mine could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem. It's a risk most local Alaskans are not willing to take. The true gold of this region, they say, is its fish and wildlife." The hundred year old mine tailings I grew up around were in desert country, where pollutants were relatively stable. Pebble Mine is proposed for a wetland. Mining in a wetland makes pollution instantly waterbourne. Why let foreign multinationals trash more American coastlines, wildlife habitat and sustainable industries? Congress needs to tighten all mining standards, and particularly Clean Water standards for sulfide mining. Yours,

Please stop the Pebble Mine to save Bristol Bay. The public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to metallic sulfide mining. The government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting processes. There should be stricter standards for lage -scale metallic sulfide mining to protect water and wildlife. The two things human cannot live without are water and oxygen. Please protect the water of Bristol Bay and all those animals, plants and humans who live there.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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As a future Meteorologist, I would like to see a big change in air pollution and climate change. There should be laws made so that is mandatory. Keeping this planet healthy should be top priority. Our oceans and wildlife should be protected. Factories and other big companies should not be allowed to dispose of waste into the air. Nor should they run off waste into our oceans. It is killing our ocean and wildlife population and its harming our air; causing climate change. If we continue the way we are, future generations will not be able to fix what we have done. They also won't experience the beauty of Earth like past generations have. It is time to start now. AND MAKE IT MANDATORY. Everyone must help.

Dear Department of the Interior/relevant Obama administration official(s), I'm writing to voice my strong opposition to permitting Pebble Mine to go forward in Alaska. I am sure that proponents of this proposed mine will attempt to play down or dismiss the torrent of opposition to it as an ephemeral reaction to the BP disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. I assure you that, for me and everyone I know who feels similarly, that couldn't be farther from the truth. The idea that the clean water and extraordinary wildlife of Bristol Bay, and the indigenous people who depend on that wildlife to live, could be decimated for large-scale metallic sulfide mining of low-grade mineral deposits on public lands, made me physically sick even before we learned what can happen when exploitation of resources at any human or environmental cost is the prevailing ethos (or absence thereof). I, and millions like me, are horrified and angry that such a venal act can even be under review by this Administration. We veered between rage and resignation at the systematic dismemberment of hard-won environmental regulations in place prior to the Bush administration, thinking we just had to hold on until this President took office. Now, we ask you to live up to our expectations that you will do a cost-benefit analysis of this situation that is moral, adult, farsighted. Is the nation's need for hard-won, deep-dug copper and gold so dire that it justifies pollution, disfigurement and possible destruction of extraordinarily beautiful wildlife habitat? Are these low-grade minerals worth the havoc wreaked on the indigenous people who have made their living from this land for 11,000 years? Will this be so much as a blip on the national economy's radar? And even if the economic gain were significant, at what point do we draw the line on the devastation of fast-disappearing, near-pristine wilderness? Please -- however jejune it may sound to you -- please think of our children. Ask them whether they'd rather have a gold bracelet or another circuit board, and maybe a .000001% improvement in the GDP, or know that the salmon, the grizzlies and seals that depend on them, the whales who need so much clean water to survive and reproduce, will still be there in large and healthy numbers when your kids' own children arrive on this planet. Be wise. Thank you for your thoughtful attention.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I urge you to rethink the Pebble Mine situation. It threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Our public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources for future generations should be the top priority, not Corporate Profits! The Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed should have strong government oversight. The relationships between federal and tribal governments should be nurtured and strengthened. The standards for mineral development in wetlands and the Clean Water Act should be tighter. Our Public lands should be managed in a way that demonstrates good stewardship of these valuable resources. Thank you for your consideration. Respectfully

I would like to express my deep concern over creating inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations. Locking the public out of public lands would actually disconnect people from the great outdoors. OHV recreation is the best way to get out deep into a wildlife area and away from the city. It is a family-oriented activity that parents can share with their children and teach them about wildlife. Learning about it in books and videos just isn't the same thing. Many citizens can't hike for very long. They might have a bad knee or back, might be out of shape, might have asthma, etc. OHV recreation lets these people still enjoy the wildlife areas. They can still share the experience with their families and don't get left behind. Wilderness access trails must remain open for these people in particular. Most people involved in OHV activities are often very responsible citizens and treat the areas with the utmost respect. As with any activity, you do get the occasional "idiot" that makes the rest look bad, but that is a rarity. The reality is, many members of the OHV community volunteer their time, money, and vehicles to maintain and preserve wilderness areas. After all, they go to the wilderness to enjoy it and want it to remain that way. Time and time again, I have witnessed fellow OHV members pulling together to repair fire-damaged areas (from lightning, etc.), remove fallen trees that block fire trails, repair washed-out trails, help with fuel reduction, remove trash, etc. They are a valuable asset to groups such as the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service. These government-run groups are over-burdened, under-funded, and under-staffed. They need the help of the OHV community. Without it, the areas would not be properly maintained. Fire roads would be overgrown or blocked, and that certainly doesn't help the wildlife when the next fire comes along. You must keep access to the wilderness open for the public. It is actually better for both the citizens and the wildlife. Thank you for your valuable time,

I want my generation and the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors. Hey leaders in Washington, expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces including parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, rivers and monuments and conserve our farms and forests! You also desperately need to open more national parks to off-road bicycling. What better way to environmentally explore the Great Outdoors? You can also go fast enough to outrun BEARS.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Decision Maker: Construction of the proposed Pebble Mine can't be allowed! If constructed, it would generate more than 10 billion tons of toxic waste, to be stored in the Bristol Bay area just 20 miles from an active fault line. And if constructed, it would irrevocably alter for worse Bristol Bay's clean waters. The wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life there would be 100% threatened. My greatest personal concern is that America's (and the world's) largest sockeye salmon run, and Alaska's largest Chinook run, could disappear if this proposed mega-mine is built. Currently, Bristol Bay generates between 10 and 30 million sockeye fish caught each year, with an average of 23 million, according to Greenpeace online. That's a lot of extremely healthy, wild fish! Numerous medical doctors of high reputation such as Dr. Andrew Weil, Dr. Nicholas Perricone, Dr. Christiane Northrup, and Dr. Joseph Hibbeln, recommend eating wild-caught salmon as part of a healthy diet and in order to prevent or treat a wide variety of diseases. And the American Heart Association recommends two 6-ounce servings of fatty fish per week to prevent heart disease! (Wild-caught salmon is, of course, an iconic "fatty" fish, with upwards of 1,000 mg of omega-3 fatty acids per serving and low in environmental contaminants.) I am a voter, and I voted for the Green Party in the last presidential election. Protecting Bristol Bay, however, is so important to me that I would gladly throw my vote, and urge others to do likewise, to now-president Obama in the 2012 presidential election IF he would only press the Environmental Protection Agency to use their authority to stop the Pebble Mine from being built. And the EPA has that authority under the Clean Water Act. What needs to happen is for the public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed to be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. We need affordable, sustainable wild fish to nourish America's citizenry--not dirt-cheap gold rings and copper bullet casings, with nothing but frankenfish for dinner! The federal government should closely oversee the permitting process and impact analysis for the Pebble Mine. The federal government should strengthen its relationship with relevant tribal governments. Standards for mineral development need to be tightened for wetlands. Thank you for taking my concerns into consideration!

If there will ever be a time, now is the time to pass full funding for LWCF!!! It's a hard time in DC to do anything, I know, with elections around the corner and then a lame duck session. But we must seize the chance, build on the bipartisan support of leaders like Senator Burr, and find a way to make it real this year!

I urge you to stop the owners of Pebble Mine from proceeding with their plan to engage in metallic sulfide mining in Alaska's Bristol Bay. Their mining activities would have irrevocable consequences to the salmon, wildlife, and subsistence way of life of people in the area. In addition, the Clean Water Act needs to be strengthened to insure greater protection from this type of mining. Thank you for consideration of my urgent appeal. --

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Mr. President, I have two young kids with whom my husband and I share our passion for the great outdoors. We surf, climb, hike, fish, like to travel to remote areas, and these are all things we want our kids to be able to teach and enjoy sharing with their kids. Because of this I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces. This includes parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness trails, wild and scenic rivers, and historic sites and monuments. Equally as important is to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests. Before the world is private and paved, before the only way to view "wild" animals is in a zoo-like setting, set some limits and better the world for our future and for the future of our children.

My votes put you in office, my tax dollars fill your stomachs and wallets, and now my stephen colbert wants to help my Earth. Need I say more? Do what your payed to like the rest of us!! DO what is best for America!!

As a concerned American citizen, I am writing to express my strong feelings regarding the Pebble Mine development. This project endangers so much of what makes America great: clean waters, wildlife, forests - all of which are irreplaceable. This mine would endanger Bristol Bay and the surrounding habitat - an irreplaceable piece of America. I urge you to strengthen the federal government's oversight of the permitting process and to strengthen the restrictions around mining near wetlands, including restrictions in the Clean Water Act. Protect this beautiful and fragile public area from being lost to short-sighted private profiteering! The federal government should protect the interests of its citizens, not corporations! -- The only thing we have to fear, is fear itself. (and spiders....)

The proposed Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay region threatens the Bay's clean waters, it's salmon fishery, and the wildlife and native cultures that depend on those waters and fishery. Please ensure that the public lands in the region remain closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. The low-grade ore there can hardly be more valuable than a pristine environment, which provides a livliehood to the locate inhabitants and tremendous recreational opportunities to the rest of us. And be sure to consult with the local tribal governments, they are the people on the ground who would have to deal with the effects of toxic run-off from such mines. Tighten standards for mineral development in wetlands, and make sure that Clean Water Act standards are enforced. This can all be obviated if the mines are never approved in the first place.

Absolutely NO to Pebble Mine or any mining or clear cutting in the watershed of Bristol Bay. It should be a top priority to put in place some kind of permanent land protection for this area to protect the pristine views, watershed, and clean waters of the bay that harbor wild salmon and other wildlife. The impact of large scale strip mining and leaching of run-off toxins into the waters would be very destructive to the environment of the area. The impacts would effect tribal communities, recreation, fishing jobs, food supply and wildlife habitat. A pristine ecosystem would be lost forever. Not only should this area be protected, but standards for mineral development in wetlands and large-scale metallic sulfide surface mining should be strenghtened under the clean water act to safeguard the environment.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is my understanding that the Obama administration finally wants to work to protect our nation's wild spaces (as opposed to the administration's quite disastrous environmental record to date). So I am writing to ask that you do the right thing to protect Bristol Bay by closing the public lands in this area to all large-scale metallic sulfide mining, and working to protect the (so far) clean waters of the Bay, the fish that live there, the wildlife that reside in these wild lands, the traditional subsistence ways of life of the native people here, and the recreation resources in this area. Needless to say, the Pebble Mine would threaten all of these, and the federal government should start NOW (1) to analyze the long-term impacts that this mine could have on the Bristol Bay watershed, (2) to create much better and more environmentally protective standards for mineral development in the wetlands, (3) to create more stringent Clean Water Act standards for this type of mining, and (4) to oversee the entire mine permitting process to be sure nothing is allowed that would have adverse environmental impacts. As a Native person, I would also ask that you work honorably with the tribal governments in this area, honoring native values and working to prevent any harm to traditional subsistence ways of life here. Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

I'm a young (just graduated college) American woman starting out a career in environmental policy. I've been to two of the AGO Listening Sessions to speak out on this issue, because I think it's one of the most important ones of our time. I'm so glad this is happening. But here's the elephant in the room: Our health and the health of our environment is a non-starter if the global climate is dysfunctional. I appreciate that some of the solutions people have been proposing are direct and instantly implementable, like funding for buses for kids to take field trips to parks. However, as a component of any Great Outdoors agenda, we need to address the root causes of global climate change with federal policy. Here's what seems the most important to me and my friends: - Begin a transportation shift (yes, I know this is difficult!) away from automobiles and toward bike, light rail, and bus. This approach has the bonus of decreasing our reliance on foreign oil and on mining in fragile ecosystems like the tar sands of Canada and of course the Gulf. Changing the built environment into something more pedestrian-friendly, as a side benefit, may help reduce obesity. It also will have a major effect on carbon emissions, which is really what we're going for here. - Change ag policy to allow and encourage more small farms, which are less carbon-intensive (I have heard that farming is one of the major sources of carbon emissions.) Another side benefit is that the availability of fresh produce goes up, and American health as a whole improves long term. - Protect and preserve open space, not just so that people can go see it, but for carbon sequestration purposes, too. Thanks for hearing my three cents. I really hope you can get Congress on board for this one. Good luck.

The debate over this mine and its impact on the Bristol Bay setting has many elements which are too complicated for the layman to effectively measure. So I have to leave it to you in the federal government, you who are there to safeguard our environmental as well as our economic interests, to look after my citizen/consumer interests. I hope I can safely leave it to you to ensure that corporate profits don't drown your decisions

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, I want to share with you a program that is working well in Chicago, Illinois. The Chicago Park District runs TRACE – Teens Re-Imagining, Art, Community, and Environment. Our program cultivates young creative activists who seek to collaboratively understand their world, using environmental stewardship as a major component of the program. TRACE teens develop visual and performing arts methods, practice public speaking, and explore environmental issues. The youth actively engage in their local parks through environmental advocacy, which allows them to combine physical activity with a commitment to conservation. They learn about the natural resources in their local parks and communities, what's lacking, and use their new-found knowledge to educate their peers and others. Due to our limited funding, the TRACE program currently only collaborates with three parks in the city, and an average of 60 youth. While this is a great start, we know that there are thousands more youth seeking ways of engagement that are positive, educational, and fun. The government could financially assist in expanding this program, and our reach.

As stewards for future generations, we owe a duty to preserve the gift of our natural resources-allowing the mining operation would damage Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Again as stewards, public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting natural habitats and recreation resources for the use of current and future generations should be important goals for the government. Also, protecting this area could strengthen the not always strong relationship the federal government has with tribal governments. Given the recent BP issue, the federal government should provide stronger oversight of companies that could cause devastation to our natural resources and communities. Thank you for your consideration

The Pebble Mine is another Gulf oil spill times 10. Mining companies are famous for their disregard of the environment...look at the Mesabi Range, the UP in Michigan, the Appalachian Mountain, the abandoned mine fields of the Sierra Nevada, and others. Pristine waters, the North Pacific fishery (especially wild salmon), wildlife, the topography, Native communities' cherished way of life...these are all imperiled by a mine at the head of Bristol Bay. Please...do not allow foreign interests with problematic reputations with regard to the environment to endanger a unique and precious piece of our world. Thank you for your consideration .

Dear Caretakers of the American Great Outdoors, I have never been to Bristol Bay. I have never been to Alaska. My idea of what these areas represent may be romanticized. I do hope to go there someday. I hope to see the complete beauty of our natural wilderness that still exists...a wilderness that we, as Americans, can be proud of...that we, as Americans, can share amongst ourselves, and with the rest of the world when they come to visit. In the meantime, I am concerned about the destruction that may be caused by the anticipated Pebble Mine. I am concerned about the damage to the delicate ecosystem that may be caused in that area, and ultimately, the effect this destruction may have on the rest of our world. Please help protect and maintain this beautiful wilderness, this invaluable ecosystem, by preventing the construction of the Pebble Mine which would cause destruction to the area. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors . Please include historic preservation in the funding. Once these spaces and places are gone....they are lost forever.

It does not take much thought to realize that destroying our environment will destroy us. Please take steps to strengthen regulations on mining and drilling and be sure they are enforced. Protect particularly fragile natural settings from any commercial exploitation. Access to clean air, a safe water supply and soil free from contaminants should be considered a fundamental right of all citizens.

Hello, I am writing to urge you to protect and save Bristol Bay from the disastrous Pebble Mine. America's beautiful public lands should be EXEMPT (and kept that way) from any commercial mining, or other commercial interests, that threaten to diminish it's beauty, threaten its wildlife, and scar the earth forever. Public lands were put into a trust for all of us in this country and for all generations to come. We cannot allow such indiscriminate use of mining to destroy what we cherish and hold dear. And the actions of mining companies always do. They threaten wildlife, wetlands, watersheds, and the very being of what is a public land trust. No matter how many promises or written agreements are signed by mining companies, the result is always the same. You do not have to look too far into the recent news headlines to find horrible consequences from mining company disasters and the companies total lack of responsibilities for their actions. It is we, the people, who pay the price, often for generations to come. And it is the land, our environment, that pays the price in devastating effects from these senseless attempts to ravage the earth for more fossil fuels. We have the ability for so much green energy use and yet so little is done to harness it. How much longer do you think the earth will survive if we do not take control now and stop mining companies, such as Pebble Mine, from destroying land and habitat. Enough. I urge you to stop the Pebble Mine; in no part should it ever be allowed. And I would urge you to do the same for other mining interests that think they can over take public land and public opinion, and put, not just the land itself, but wildlife, the oceans, and all of us at risk. Thank you.

Dear Sirs, As a concerned citizen, I would like to voice my objection to the Pebble Mine project in the Bristol Bay area. I could explain my objections with a long e-mail but hopefully logic and care of our great outdoors in America will be enough to stop all the erosion of one of our most treasured assets. PLEASE SAVE BRISTOL BAY Regards

The Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay would be TERRIBLE. Destroying the environment for living animals would be a trajedy. As Americans, we take for granted our pleasant living conditions and set our expectations high. At the same time, we often turn the other cheek when something like this occurs. The pebble mine would make animals suffer, lose their homes, die, and for what? A mine? Humanity needs to step up and speak for those without a voice. DO NOT ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF PEBBLE MINE TO GO FORWARD.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To Whom it may concern It seems as though the loudest voice is the one heard. Unfortunately, the land and native inhabitants have little voice compared to millions of dollars that corporations flood on their own behalf for increased profits. This one sided voice of the all mighty dollar must stop. The benefits of healthy waters for food, recreation and conserving native ecosystems impact the earth and all who live in it. The Federal Government should remember who they serve. Businesses require supervision in following their regulations, the BP Gulf disaster should be your wake up call. Serve and promote a safer environment

Bristol Bay is one the few pristine wild spaces left in our increasingly populated and polluted world, in which environmental degradation is out pacing preservation and renewal of the environment. The Pebble Mine will threaten the clean water of Bristol Bay, including the salmon runs and other wildlife. Our very lives depend on a diverse and healthy ecosystem. In a world with so few healthy, diverse ecosystems left, it is unspeakably important to protect Bristol Bay from the damage the Pebble Mine will wreak. We need greater government oversight of mining projects, and more stringent regulations. I am a 25-year-old who loves the natural beauty and wild spaces of the United States. I am honestly skeptical that if I have children, they will never be able to experience the beauty and splendor places like Bristol Bay, if the government does not step in now to protect it.

Please give serious thought to ending mining in the Bristol Bay area. There is too much at stake on both large and small scales, too much damage already, too much ignorance of future damage. I am sickened by the endless destruction of the natural world for the economic gain of the few. Exploitation of local cultures, local resources and local wildlife has been policy for too long. Turn it around. Turn it to good for all who will follow. Thank you for your consideration,

, I write to ask you to protect Bristol Bay and it's wildlife and all the environment. Please stop any mining projects and in particular the Pebble mine projects. Too many species are at stake along with the pristine beauty of this landscape. Please protect Bristol Bay!

To Whom it Concerns: I would like to see the Bristol Bay's water remain clean for the sake of the wildlife, the wild salmon and other fish, and for the sake of the economic value this area provides simply for its beauty as a natural area. Such awesome beauty should be closed to the damning and damaging processes which come with large scale mining operations. Accordingly, please protect this area for the habitat and natural resources. Additionally, I wish the government would provide stronger oversight regarding the Pebble mine permitting process as well as with the analysis of the cumulative impacts associated with such mining processes to the Bristol Bay area. Due to the impact such large scale mining operations can have, I would also like to see more stringent Clean Water Act standards for all similar operations. Thank you for your consideration,

Salmon are being threatened in far too many ways, from water diversion in California rivers, to possible escape of genetically engineered double growth hormone fish. Public lands should provide a refuge for them, not yet another threat. The world needs salmon far more than it needs the Pebble Mine.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Pebble Mine would endanger the entire Bristol Bay ecosystem. Please do not allow it.

Why do people have to destroy what God built? This bay is home to salmon and many other God made creatures. I'm not a fanatic but these places WERE made for a purpose. Is money more important than leaving areas like this bay alone? Sit down and think hard about it. I think you will come to realize the destruction it will cause. I thank you for listening to me and I'm sure MANY MANY more like me.

My wife and I were privileged to visit Bristol Bay in 2007 on a self-guided tour that included kayaking, hiking and wildlife viewing. We were so deeply touched by the incredible and unique beauty of the Bristol Bay area. We feel strongly that the proposed Pebble Mine will threaten the clean water and the salmon and the whales that depend on the area. Please see that Bristol Bay receives the protection that it deserves so that all of our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy the area. Thank you.

Dear Sir, I am very dismayed over the possibility of Pebble Mine. The clean waters of Bristol Bay provide habitat for wild salmon and other species, which in turn provides livelihood for fishing communities. Salmon spawn in the Bristol Bay watershed, and metallic sulfide mining would be disastrous to their future. If the streams and brooks encoded into the salmon's DNA are destroyed or polluted by development, the salmon will die out. The federal government should oversee the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of environmental impact on the watershed. Standards for mineral development in wetlands should be much higher. The need for dialogue and relationship between the federal and tribal governments seems very great. One hopes the discussion will proceed with deep sensitivity to habitat, wildlife, and human beings. Bristol Bay is one of the earth's great treasures. Please save it for generations to come. Sincerely yours

To whom it may concern, I'm opposed to the proposed Pebble Mine development. This type of large scale mining would have an adverse effect on the immediate and surrounding environment for generations to come. Do we really want to leave this legacy. We need to strengthen your "clean water act" so this type of outrageous plundering of the land should never be an issue again. Please consider what ramifications this project will have for the future and I feel confident you will see the negatives far exceed any possible benefit that might result. Please pass on my thoughts and all other NRDC comments to the President and his Interior Secretary, as well as the appropriate committees. Thank you for your time. Regards

It's highly inappropriate to destroy/toxic pollute this spectacular unique wilderness area & violate Indigenous rights. Do your job-Protect Our Public lands, waters, wildlife, economy & health! You work for citizens, not industry! Your attention to this most urgent matter would be much appreciated by all present & future generations of all species. Thank you

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are the stewards of this marvelous land, and we hold them in trust for future generations. It's up to us to protect and expand America's parks and forests, our wildlife refuges and wilderness, the wild and scenic rivers, and the historic sites and monuments that teach us about our past and excite the imaginations of our children. We must find new ways to conserve and restore all our lands, the farms as well as the wild lands. Don't pass up this opportunity to act as the good leader we need.

Without air to breathe, water to drink and food to eat, we are all dead. Jobs, economy, civil rights, nothing will matter without a sustainable land base. Please do everything in your power to protect our and our fellow species' abilities to survive. Conservation is the ultimate health care action.

I am writing to urge in the strongest terms to put an immediate end to plans for the Pebble Mine that threatens Bristol Bay. Our poor planet is losing more and more habitat in the goal of exploiting the resources for economic gain. I have grandchildren, and I want for there to be a verdant and diversified world for them to grow up in. Public lands should provide habitat, subsistence for indigenous people and non-invasive recreation. Thank you,

Save Bristol Bay Block the Pebble mine If I have to explain why, I need to vote for someone else
Thank you,

Please stop Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay. Most Americans are in favor of preserving life. Killing or even endangering salmon and other wildlife contradicts our support of life. Allowing Pebble Mine to advance puts more stock in minerals than life.

I am writing asking you to desist on the Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay. Have you been there? If you had, as I have been, you would think more about the beauty, and how few places exist in our world that stir our hearts and imagination, where a deep breath is of clean air. And of course you know that fresh water will be a major concern for the people on our planet. And how about being nice for a change to Americans other than rich stockholders? I'm discouraged but there is always some hope that you will hear me. Thanks,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Bristol Bay's public lands represent critical habitat for salmon and other important wildlife, as well as provide traditional subsistence living inhabitants a home. It also offers world class fishing which brings tourist dollars to the local inhabitants. Altogether, the salmon and trout fisheries represent 75% of the jobs in this area of Alaska. It is too important of a natural resource to risk having it essentially destroyed by money-hungry mining interests. The majority of Alaskans oppose the destructive mine. This area should be closed to large-scale mining, especially metallic sulfide mining. The top priority here should be protecting the irreplaceable habitat, and subsistence and recreational resources. If our federal government does not provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of the impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed, no one will. Allowing this mine to be constructed will further divide federal and tribal governments, something that should never be allowed to happen. This is a perfect example of a situation where the needs of the many (those that live off of or otherwise make wise use of the land and water here) vastly outnumber the needs of the few rich and greedy (the mining interests). The existing standards for mineral development in wetlands, which shouldn't be allowed in the first place, should be tightened as a result of this planned assault on the environment. To prevent future situations where large-scale mining threatens to destroy public lands of this type, the Clean Water Act standards for large-scale mining should be tightened. There is too much at risk in Bristol Bay to allow this mine to go forward.

As a citizen of this beautiful country, I am writing to express my strongly held opinion that Bristol Bay is an environmental gem that in its natural state provides benefits to our nation far-exceeding any mineral resources it contains. We have exploited our environment in unsustainable ways too long--certainly long enough to see the error of our ways. Please make the protection of the public lands in Bristol Bay your highest priority. And please change the paradigm and maintain the highest standards of the Clean Water Act in that area. Thank you for your attention.

Please halt the Pebble Mine project. I am 63 years old. The best memories of my life are trips across the U.S. with my parents visiting our National Parks and viewing the wildlife on pristine lands. My hope is that my grandchildren will have the opportunities that I had as a child. It is truly sad that we are destroying so many of the natural resources that the good Lord gave to us. Thanks for your consideration of my plea

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing as a concerned citizen to stop the proposed mine from being constructed at Bristol Bay. We have seen the destruction to the US Gulf of Mexico eco-system brought about by a once considered safe system of oil removal. Let us consider our other fragile eco-systems. The arctic wildlife that thrives near Bristol Bay would be endangered if a mine was to be constructed there. We need to protect what natural resources we have and not exploit animals' habitats for the simple purpose of extracting desirable minerals from the earth. Not only does this scheme endanger wild animals, but people as well. Let us be cautious in any plan that knowingly creates tons of toxic waste, and could even remotely effect the life surrounding it. If the mine does go forward, which I sincerely hope it does not, we need to consider tightening the standards in the Clean Water Act, and for mineral development in general. We cannot afford another large, or even small scale environmental disaster in our world. Let us instead, make headlines about putting the interests of our tender lands and the animals that inhabit them, above those of the corporate and commercial.

Please stop the Pebble Mine! The Bristol Bay is priceless and will sustain life indefinitely. Short-term riches, however great, must not take precedence over the resources that sustain lives over the long term-watershed, wild, sustainable salmon runs, other wildlife, the livelihoods of the native population, the irreplaceable beauty of this place. Allowing greed to supplant these values is unconscionable, one more manifestation of our tendency to put immediate self-interest ahead of every other value. Future generations will thank you for stopping this attempted devastation.

Please protect our outdoor spaces! Parks and wilderness areas are important for all of us. I urge leaders in Washington to expand and protect our parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, rivers and monuments and to conserve our farms and forests.

In the scheme of things the USA hasn't been around that long but we still act like we can do anything we want and clean up the after-effects sometime in the future. We aren't discovering new land and there's only so much we can do to the earth before we all pay the price of our lack of stewardship. There are some disasters that simply won't go away with time. We know that eco-systems are fragile. That the people, animals and fauna that depend on the watershed provided by Bristol Bay and tributaries are linked. We also know that no company willingly polices it's pollution levels if it means foregoing one penny of profit. Strict regulation by local and federal agencies has to be the rule of law. Additionally any company wanting water rights for any product with the word 'metallic' in it doesn't need to be drilling in an area as clean as Bristol Bay. The way I see it best of intentions hasn't worked so well with the oil industry why would it be any different for this operation? Must we continually be behind the curve on enviromental damage? Shouldn't the safety of the American people, it's cultures and our natural resources be the overriding concern of any business wanting to work in our wilderness areas? Shouldn't it be the overriding concern of the government? If not, why?

I was upset to hear about Pebble Mine's selfish plan, which would ruin our precious water and wildlife. Bristol Bay needs to be protected, not threatened by Pebble Mine.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have crisscrossed the world and learned quite a bit about the disastrous impact mines make everywhere. They are detrimental to the rivers, lakes, watersheds and bays and have a huge negative impact on wildlife and humans who live near-by when their ground water is being poisoned and their health ruined. The only winners are the corporations who benefit financially. We should be more mindful of our environment and do everything possible to protect it and if that can't be done adequately projects like these shouldn't be allowed to move ahead. thank you,

The Gulf of Mexico has already been defiled. We don't need to add Bristol Bay to the list of polluted waters. Please do not permit the Pebblemine to operate.

Dear Department of the Interior, I am writing to support the preservation of all natural habitat in the United States, and specifically Bristol Bay. I support the prevention of extractive industries from having access for conducting any business operations on these public lands. There is one exception: to open and operate a museum that describes the habitat destruction and public health dangers of the extraction techniques. Otherwise, these businesses should not be approved for any other purpose. The Pebble Mine directly threatens the health of the watershed in the Bristol Bay area. It is time the federal government, and that includes you, the DOI, stop allowing profiteering corporations from irresponsibly taking resources from the environment. In place of that behavior the DOI, and all related agencies, should begin giving more protection to the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts. I support increased funding for enforcement of these standards, as well as reviewing and strengthening them to take into account new technologies, and a NEW attitude supporting public safety. It is time to lock arms with the EPA, and present a unified federal approach that is more sensitive to the needs of the local tribal people. If this means higher federal taxes, then so be it. We must all pay our fair share, but it must also come with having the ethical courage to SAY NO to corporate motives and interests. Your personal behavior on this issue will reveal what legacy you leave our children. I thank you for taking my opinion into consideration as you seek to turn public opinion into policy. So many other countries squandered their opportunity to preserve due to lack of foresight and ethical responsibility towards future generations. I hope my elected and appointed official's policy will preserve the United States' natural and cultural treasures.

We have the opportunity right now to stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened. Standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter. Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. Thank you for your help in preventing the environmental disaster that Pebble Mine would be.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are few places left on earth that are as untouched as Alaska's wilderness. Don't let it become a strip mine. We only have one earth. Not only would I like my grand kids to be able to experience nature as God made it, but once we have raped the entire earth... what will we do for energy then. There IS a better way... Please don't be "penny wise and pound foolish" with our earth!! Thank you

Dear Administration, We are all entrusted to care for our generous planet. It is not being faithful to strip her of her blessings and create destruction like pollution. Please hold our planet dearly. Protect the waters of Bristol Bay from companies like Pebble Mine Yours,

Dear Friends, Now is the time to save Bristol Bay. As you well know, it's easier to stop pollution from happening than it is to clean up a destroyed area. What happened in the Gulf should bring this truth home forcefully. The Pebble Mine is a clear and present danger to Bristol Bay, a beautiful, clean wildlife habitat. There should be no large scale metallic sulfide mining there at all, and the government should keep Pebble Mine on a very short leash, providing frequent inspections. Standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. And the government needs to work with tribal governments more closely as it regulates the industrial presence in the area. America, the Beautiful will not remain so unless we are all mindful of what we need to do to maintain pristine areas.

Please do not allow the poisoning of any more watersheds! Veto the Pebble Mine and protect Bristol Bay.

Wherever there are clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife, and traditional subsistence ways of life, it is essential we keep this goodness and not destroy it. We humans must be good stewards of our Mother Earth for now and for the future. 46 years ago, I had one of my most special life experiences when I worked in Yellowstone National Park for two summers. What incredible foresight it was and still is to save this precious area for mankind to study, have, and enjoy, and how many millions of people and animals have benefitted from this incredible act of preservation. I beg you to keep this area pristine. I think it is as important to our future as you, President Obama, asking the minister in Florida not to burn the Koran.

I would like to bring that mining this area will destroy the area as you can see at Bisbee AZ where the mining tailing have cause no end of problems and eye sore. I don't know how bad the water table in the area based on all the leaching of chemicals into the underground aquifer which can cause problem to the people in the future. This is one of the problems you must face if it is worth the destroying of the area for the mine or the natural resource that can come from farming and fishing is more worthwhile then a one time resource and after it is finished then there is nothing for the future. This decision you must make and I believe you should deny the permit to do mining as it really wouldn't help the economy in the long rung but to destroy it. You have to do a long term economic analysis of what the effect of this mining and also if you do how are going bring back the area the way it is before. So with all the problems you should turn down the permit as it will not accomplish anything in the long time in the area.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Sir or Madam, I understand that the Administration has invited public comment on the preservation of America's wildest places in connection with National Wilderness Month. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the President and the Department of the Interior for all you have done to preserve wilderness and non-wilderness public lands for the enjoyment and benefit of all citizens. I would also like to register my opposition to permitting a large mining operation, like the Pebble Mine, to operate in an environmentally sensitive place like Bristol Bay. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be strictly protected to preserve natural habitat, subsistence fishing, and public recreation. It is entirely inappropriate to use such lands for mining -- unless the mined materials are essential to the national welfare -- and it is especially inappropriate to use the land to generate corporate profits. If such use cannot be prevented under existing laws, we need stronger laws to protect public lands from exploitation for profit. Meanwhile, the federal government must, at a minimum, provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and careful analysis of the cumulative effects of mining on the Bristol Bay watershed. Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Save Bristol Bay from mining and keep Alaska gloriously beautiful!

Please protect the natural habitat of Bristol Bay and stop mining from threatening clean water and wildlife!! Concerned citizen,

Protect the Kvichak and Nushagak watersheds and save Bristol Bay because there is no place like it in the world. Because there are people who depend on this river and its resources for their livelihood. Because gold mining is a dirty and unsustainable practice, Because it's the right thing to do for future generations to come. And if your still not convinced, see the film Red Gold. Thank you,

Dear Pres. Obama, We need you and Congress to pass laws that will support our Nat.l Parks, Forests, lakes, rivers, so that our next generation will be able to enjoy them, also. My husband and I drove out to some National parks this past summer and we were truly amazed at all of the beauty we experienced. We need to stop the businesses that want to build and expand their income and ruin landscapes where they wish. I'm looking for you to come through on this request, to save our sites. Already, so much of our land has been munched up by big companies, and we need the promise from you to succeed at deterring this destruction of our beautiful world. Thank you for your attention to my request.

Light pollution, air, water, sound...will there be a wild place left. I see pictures of Europe, and wonder why every square inch hasn't been developed. America's greed. We need to put some kind of moratorium on destroying our remaining land. Please do the right thing.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Planned mines like Pebble Mine caused substantial damage to ecosystems that never recover from them. Bristol Bay represents an important ecosystem for both native people, wildlife, fisheries and recreational industries, which could be significantly harmed by the mine, given the inadequate federal standards for wetland development and mining under the Clean Water Act. Arctic and subarctic ecosystems are especially vulnerable to damage, given the stress they are under due to the accelerated rate of climate change in polar regions. They need our protection more than ever.

Please save the Bristol Bay and stop the Pebble mine

I'm writing to express my great concern regarding the irreversible harm that could be caused to the natural splendor of Bristol Bay due to the proposed Pebble Mine. Alaska is our last wilderness frontier. It has already been damaged by the actions of our fossil fuel addictive ways. The Pebble Mine will devastate the surrounding wilderness, the magnificent wildlife, and Bristol Bay, itself. We need you as our leader and the overseer of our country's resources to stop the destructive practices of greedy corporations that choose not to look beyond the almighty profit. As Americans, we all need to change our thinking and actions regarding energy sources. Please be proactive in this matter. Be America's voice in protecting our last frontier. Lead us in the development of clean energy sources to preserve the natural wonders of our country for generations to come. Thank you,

Dear President Obama and staff: The AGO initiative has brought long overdue attention to the importance that our natural lands bring to the quality of our lives. Please keep and increase the tax incentives and grant programs that have helped land trusts conserve the farms, forests and waters that we so love.

The pristine watershed of Bristol Bay deserves our reverence, not a rape two miles long and two thousand feet deep. The Bush administration pursued a headlong rush to devastate the environment for the sake of corporate profits. At the moment, we see the end results of such policies most dramatically in the Gulf of Mexico, but wild lands all over our country have suffered. Let us reverse those environmentally disastrous policies, not continue them. Do not approve the Pebble Mine. All of my life my family has enjoyed respites of hiking, boating and camping on federal lands. Their deterioration has been sad. Let us not risk one of the remaining great tracts of wilderness for the sake of a mine that will do little for the vast majority of Americans.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Good afternoon, We are not experts on mining, nor do we understand all the intricacies of big business, but what we do know is that we love Alaska! We have been to Alaska four times and are always amazed at its wildness and beauty. The frontier that it represents in today's crowded, complicated world is exhilarating. What we are afraid of is that Bristol Bay – which is a place most Americans haven't even heard of – will become known only after some environmental disaster. Who had ever heard of Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound before the Exxon Valdez oil spill?! We were fortunate enough to visit Katmai National Park this past summer and got to watch the brown bears eating salmon in the Funnel River. It was awesome, and there are scenes like that all over the Alaska Peninsula. Can we really be promised that there won't be an accidental spill, leaching of toxic chemicals into the soil and rivers, or any other man-made ruinous accident? We need to be caretakers of our earth, not complete users. Please don't allow the Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay, or anywhere else in Alaska. Let's not even take the chance.

I'm asking the President to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Again, I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

Bristol Bay is worth protecting for many reasons, saving fishing grounds for future generations being at the top. Where does our insatiable greed for nonrenewable resources end? Please stop the Pebble Mine for my and other people's grandchildren.

Dear Administrator, As a lover of nature, I implore you to preserve pristine Alaska and stop the construction of Pebble Mine. It is not necessary to destroy nature--this mine is completely disastrous.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Why Save Bristol Bay? Close to 7 billion people live on planet earth. Each day thousands of square miles of natural, wild places throughout the world disappear forever. Satellite images allow us to see the clear cut forests, mountain tops removed, entire eco systems destroyed for tar sands, polluted water and stripped, dead land. The list goes on and on. Rarely do we see or read about all the wildlife that disappears along with these natural places. Mistakenly, many people assume that displaced wildlife can simply move to a new location, but that's not the case. Most displaced wildlife simply die off, disappearing forever from the face of the earth. Bristol Bay is one of our last, pristine wild places. Home of wild salmon and a multitude of wildlife. It's waters are pure and skies crystal blue. To jeopardize this heavenly place is short sighted and just plain wrong in every way. Public lands are everyone's land and should be preserved in their natural state for current and future generations, both to enjoy and improve quality of life. No man-made castle, tower or sky scraper could ever come close to nature's magnificence in it's natural state. We have all seen how the human footprint changes and destroys nature. Our footprint soon becomes a path, then a road, and then a city -- displacing and killing all God's creatures that live there. For these reasons and too many more to discuss in this letter, Bristol Bay must be preserved from mining of any kind. It's as simple as that. Very soon, our nation is going to have to get serious about clean energy like wind and solar or it will be too late. We only have one earth--and we better take care of it now by standing up for what's right one project at a time.

Please protect the public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed. We don't know what the cumulative effects will be, of this toxic mining. Protecting habitat should be a priority. Thanks,

If I asked you to name a kind of meat that is natural, healthy, uncontaminated, tasty, sustainable, essentially wild, and (why not?) tasty, what would come to your mind? For me, nothing meets these specs as well as Wild Alaskan Salmon. Anything that threatens the waters of Alaska threatens to spoil this unique resource. How can you possibly allow the Pebble Mine to introduce toxic chemicals in the name of extracting yet another NON-RENEWABLE resource, when that would threaten a unique and important RENEWABLE resource? And this is above and beyond the dangers this mine poses to the rest of this precious ecosystem... Please stop the Pebble Mine!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's great outdoors have been fast disappearing across my lifetime. Once lost, this land is lost for immense lifetimes at best. So little is left to protect, and so much of it is distant from those of us who most need the getaway from noise, machines, development, erosion, pollution that characterizes what has been done to America. I feel that you have an uncompromizable responsibility to protect them for future generations. Along with wilderness protection comes the absolute necessity to cease fragmenting habitats of our remaining large animals, and the vital native pollinators. We must protect more Wilderness and quiet recreation opportunities, preserving more habitat and connectivity for wildlife, and permanent protecting remaining old-growth forests. In nearby Oregon, places like the Wild Rogue River, the wildlands surrounding Crater Lake National Park, and the Siskiyou Wild Rivers are at risk from logging, mining, and other harmful development. Oregon has protected only 4% of our land as Wilderness, lagging far behind nearby states. California has vast population pressure on our wilderness here. The amount of wilderness is far insufficient to handle the heavy use. We need more. Because of the vital need to reverse global warming, we need to protect America's public lands from logging, and change course to healthy foot recreation and conservation of wildlife. It is past time we considered actualities - the need to preserve and live in harmony with the natural world. Political maneuvering has avoided this necessity, and brought great danger of extinction and global catastrophe. It is time for such compromise to end, and to take a stand for what remains, and to try unceasingly to restore our lands, seas, waters. We need far more wilderness sequestered from "harvest", development, or private gain at the expense of our future. We need to restore damaged areas, by establishing restored wilderness protections to even lands that have been used and abused. Thank you for considering my comments.

Dear Sirs: We have not much time left to turn around our destructive ways. We are at the crossroads. Species are being eliminated at a brutal pace. Our turn will come soon, very soon, unless we change. You're up to bat. Regards,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear America's Great Outdoors, The first thing that I want to note, is that I am pleased we now have a month to celebrate Wilderness, perhaps America's greatest legacy and heritage. What I found sad, however, is that with over half of the federally designated wilderness being in Alaska, not one of your listening sessions will be held here. This is an especially important time to listen to the issues facing the outdoors in Alaska. The state and federal government continue to battle on divisive issues, rather than settling for what is important for all Americans. Alaska must recognize that when it became a state that it joined a union and that it cannot continue to make decisions only for its own best interest. We saw this with the State Board of Game's decision regarding the trapping of wolves outside of Denali National Park. I hope that the federal government will now become more involved with the Pebble Mine that threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife, fishing industry and the jobs it provides, and traditional subsistence ways of life. We need stronger federal oversight of the permitting process and analysis of potential impacts. Our public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed need protection and should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority to truly honor our heritage over the short term gains of mining in the area. I understand that as a nation, we need to extract resources. However, we also need to think in the longterm. History and ecology has taught us how fragile wetland communities are. The standards for mineral development in wetlands should be more stringent, especially for large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Let's make sure we celebrate one of the most amazing things that makes America unique. People from all over the world come to our wild areas, our national parks, and specifically Alaska to see, feel, and experience the vast, unotuched wild areas that are disappearing from so many other places. Let's hope that America continues to be the leader in preserving these places. That can only happen with sound decisions. Smiles,

The US has a lot of resources already at it's disposal. I hate to see us overdevelop our natural heritage when there are plainly other solutions. We are one of the few highly globalized nations who seem to simply not give a damn about who or what we interfere with. The federal government should be held accountable by the indiginous peoples to uphold certain standards of action involving their livelihood. Deny the corporates!

Please help keep America special by protecting more Wilderness and quiet recreation opportunities, preserving more habitat and connectivity for wildlife, and permanently protecting remaining old-growth forests. Here in Oregon, we enjoy some of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring public lands in the nation. But places like the Wild Rogue River, the wildlands surrounding Crater Lake National Park, and the Siskiyou Wild Rivers are at risk from logging, mining, and other harmful development. Oregon has protected only 4% of our land as Wilderness, lagging far behind our neighbors. For the wildlife that call our public lands homes and for the millions who enjoy these places for quiet recreation, it is time to correct this Wilderness imbalance. Thank you for considering my comments.

Stop destrucing the pebble mines. Its so sad to see just majectc beauty be destroyed by man.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Official, I urge you to do all that you can to save and protect Bristol Bay and the waters, wildlife, lands and habitat that would be threatened and damaged by Pebble Mine. Metallic sulfide mining should be prohibited in an area such as this. Thank you for your work and efforts in this important matter .

Bristol Bay and the remaining wilderness is too precious to dig up! Mankind does not need another mine. The sole purpose of this endeavor is for wealth - we have to learn money and the environment aren't in the same plane, i.e. air we breathe and coins we buy things with. Leave whats left of the environment - to future generations!!

Please consider what is best for our environment and its future and the future of our children. Please do not continue with the mining plans. Thank you,

I appreciate the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. Please make wilderness protection a central component of the President's policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities.

Dear Obama Administration officials: As you consider ways to preserve America's open spaces and natural beauties, I respectfully ask that you provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process near Alaska's Bristol Bay. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life, and so the area should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Instead, the government's priority for this area should be protection of habitat, subsistence resources, and recreational opportunities. More generally, we can preserve our open spaces and natural wonders by improving relationships between federal and tribal governments, tightening the standards for mineral development in wetlands, and increasing the requirements under the Clean Water Act for allowing large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Regards-

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a former resident of Alaska, I would like to express my opposition to the Pebble Mine in Alaska. The mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. The standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter and the Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. I believe public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large scale mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. Additionally relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened. Best Regards,

Hi, I am writing to request that everything possible be done to protect this wild place. Remember, irreparable damage has been done all over this earth to capture a few "pebbles". The rewards are fleeting and the final results are devastating. In the end I'm afraid man-kind will find, too late, that obtaining "the pebbles" wasn't worth the sacrifice. Ask the people and the pelicans in the Gulf! Respectfully yours,

Please do not destroy the incredible resources of Bristol Bay for a stupid mine that will destroy something that cannot be replaced. It is difficult to think that this is even an issue in the 21st century. No Mine period. There is no way to make it safe for the environment and the mine itself is not important enough to justify it. Save Bristol Bay not just for today but forever. Thank you,

Hello, To be concise- DO NOT PERMIT IT. It will, as we know from long history, become an unrecoverable disaster. And, for what- more fast money for the owners. As always, at the end they will declare bankruptcy and walk away from their promises leaving devastation and ruin of this part of magnificent America and nature. So many of our values rest upon this kind of action to NOT do the easy expedient thing and think only short term. Please have some greater integrity and not bow to the temptations of the influence of the corporate money that so sways those of our government so frequently these days. Think BIG and LONG term, not the reverse and not about the money. Do the right thing- start a new trend by doing so. Thank you.

Alaska's Bristol Bay is an important pristine wildlife sanctuary. It provides a clean refuge for threatened western salmon while protecting the native Alaskan's subsistence lifestyle. These features make Bristol Bay incompatible with the proposed large-scale pebble mine using large-scale sulfide mining techniques. The Bay should be closed to these mining activities and be preserved as a protected wildlife habitat and native Alaskan sanctuary. The Federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed with a bias towards wilderness preservation.

Greetings, I am writing to plead with you to help preserve the natural beauty and resources of Bristol Bay. The bay is home to wild salmon and other irreplaceable wildlife which we must learn to sustain, not poison. Mining is an extremely dirty and harmful business and it has no place in delicate ecosystems. Please do what you can to work with tribal authorities to investigate the environmental impact of Pebble Mine on Bristol Bay and the traditional ways of the native peoples, and determine the most earth-friendly methods of preserving the bay's treasures for the present and the future. Best Regards,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay.

Dear Obama Administration: Please do not let Bristol Bay be ruined by allowing the Pebble Mine. The Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. The federal government must provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process, and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Relationships between federal and tribal governments would benefit greatly from being strengthened. Standards for mineral development in wetlands must be tighter, and Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining must be more stringent. Please consider these facts and this logic in deciding to save and protect our few remaining natural places. Thank you.

I am submitting my comments ahead of your September 30 deadline with regard to mining in Bristol Bay watershed. Bristol Bay must be saved from the ravages of the disastrous mining operation known as Pebble Mine. The mine would effectively destroy, for all time, the beauty of Bristol Bay's wildlands, clean waters, life of the salmon runs, natural habitat of wildlife native to the area, subsistence living traditions, and the serenity offered by natural areas which should not be systematically destroyed one by one. The public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be off limits to large-scale metallic sulfide mining, and priority must be given to protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources. The government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine, the first step being a thorough analysis of cumulative impacts to this pristine area known as Bristol Bay watershed. Going forward with the plan would undermine tribal and government relationships, wetlands development standards, and current laws and standards for permitting or excluding mineral and other development in wetlands. Once destroyed, this beautiful area could never recover. Thank you for your time and attention.

Department of the Interior I would like to be counted as a voice against allowing the Pebble Mine to use its destructive mining practices in the environs of Bristol Bay. The indigenous people and the wildlife of the bay, not to mention the beauty of the area, must NOT be left at the mercy of this heavy-polluting process. Whatever it was, we can do without it more easily than we can recreate habitat, a broken subsistence economy, and the recreational value that are all under threat if this mining project goes forward. Thank you for your attention.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up in the Bronx- so my experience with the great outdoors didn't extend much past a playground near my apartment building, and my experience with wildlife was limited to the Bronx Zoo. But, after living for four years in upstate New York and spending every summer in Ithaca, I really became the person I am today. Whether it was walking along a path in one of the many gorge trails nearby, swimming in a stream fed by a waterfall, picking blueberries in my friend's backyard or even going out onto Cayuga lake to do research- I really fell in love with our natural world. I can't imagine living in a world where you don't get to have those experiences. In our society we spend so much time indoors and on concrete- it's even more important to protect our last natural stands. The AGO initiative is our opportunity to make sure our National Parks don't fall into disrepair; that they have the resources to be as vibrant in fifty years as they were fifty years ago; that even kids growing up in the Bronx have the opportunity to spend a long weekend outside. This fall, our leaders in Washington should fulfill the promise of our national parks and fully fund the National Park Service budget and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The Department of the Interior has an opportunity to do something heroic for the planet. The Department of the Interior can stop mineral mining that will undoubtedly be destructive to the ecology of Bristol Bay with its clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife, and traditional subsistence life of its native peoples. A study of mines similar to the proposed Pebble mine shows that 85% of them pollute nearby waters. As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams, waste that could pollute and poison pristine water. Please prove to the American people that the Department of Interior can provide strong and objective oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and careful analysis of the cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. When you have done so, I believe you will decide not to allow this mine. The possibility of an accident there would be disastrous. But even the construction and operation of the mine could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem. It's a risk environmentalists like me are not willing to take. I hope the Department of Interior is also not willing to take such a fool-hardy risk.

please permanently protect bristol bay, our wildlife & world matter! thank you,

To America's Great Outdoors: Please record my opposition to the Pebble Mine proposal. Bristol Bay would be despoiled if the mine proposal is activated. It is too valuable an outdoor resource to undergo that fate. The watersheds that contribute to the bay should be closed to mining. Furthermore, the government must provide strict criteria for any kind of large-scale mining, and there must be vigorous monitoring for any projects which might be approved. Any other approach is an invitation to abuse of the criteria and destruction of the resources involved. For example, the Clean Water Act provides for the possibility of imposing strict standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Such standards can, and should, be imposed and should involve broad public input. Thank you for considering my views.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For the past 25 years I have experience the beauty of the lakes, rivers , mountains and fishing in the Bristol Bay area. Three generations of my family have traveled to King Salmon to fish ever year. I cannot believe anyone would allow an open pit mine in an area that has the world's largest sockeye run. The major problem with the proposed open-pit mines is how they will contain the tons of waste to find gold. Stop and think about the problem with storing tons of waste forever. They will never be able to contain the ground water pollution which will expose the surrounding land, and wildlife to deadly conditions. Please think again, when they are gone we will have large toxic lakes that cannot be used. The area will have a 2 mile wide and 2,000 feet deep pit without life. And forever we will live in fear that the Billions of tons of waste will not harm our land and water. Common sense should tell us that this is wrong. The only reason for this posed mine is money. If we look at the past, mining companies come and go, they leave toxic waste behind and NEVER clean-up before they leave. How can anyone tell us that they will remove tons of toxic waste. They can't , they only tell us they will store it there forever. Please do not allow any open-pit mining in this area. Thank you

Pebble Mine should not be allowed because of the damage it will do to the wilflife and environment. Pebble Mine threatens Bristo Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wilflife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. Please consider what is important to us citizens. There has already been too much distruction of our environment through mining and we must preserve our pristine habitat in the Bristol Bay area. Thank you,

I'm writing to ask the US government to have to good sense to put a halt on plans to open Bristol Bay in Alaska to mining. Though the financial temptation might be great, we cannot risk polluting some of America's last true wilderness. The proposed mine is projected to generate billions of tons of waste and would pollute the pristine waters nearby, killing off native species and forever altering our relationship with the land and those who live and make their living there. We have a duty not just to our environment and its habitats, but to our fellow humans as well, to prevent this land from being destroyed in this way. The mine might last a few years, but the destruction it would leave behind would be irreparable. Thank you. -- "Today's problems cannot be solved if we still think the way we thought when we created them." - Albert Einstein

I want the next generation, including my newborn son, to enjoy America's great outdoors too. I want to thank the President and Secretary Salazar for their efforts to expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces including parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, rivers and monuments and to conserve our farms and forests. I hope that Congress will get beyond the bickering and ensure theses programs are funded!

I am strongly opposed to the proposed Bristol Bay Pebble Mine. Please do not allow this mine to begin operations ever! The location of the mine is in sensitive wildlife habitat and would do great damage even under the best of circumstances. The bounty from the natural habitat as it is today is much more valuable than any revenue or profit obtained from the proposed mine. Do not permit the proposed mine! Thank you. Respectfully Submitted,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, My sister and brother in law make their living fishing off Bristol Bay in the village of Ekuk. My wife and I went to visit them at their fish site and help fish for 6 tides. The experience was eye-opening, and fantastic. We met Alaskans of all stripes, natives, old-timers, and newcomers. All benefited from the bounty of the Bristol Bay fishery. The fish are phenomenal. It is beyond comprehension that anyone would consider placing this priceless fishery at risk, but clearly those who shortsightedly favor developing the Pebble Mine are doing just that. Once an ecosystem like Bristol Bay is compromised it can never return to its pristine, bountiful state. Please tighten wetlands protections in the regulation of mineral development. Please ensure that oversight of the Pebble Mine licensing process takes into account cumulative impacts on the Bristol Bay watershed. Please strengthen the Clean Water Act for large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Please stop the Pebble Mine and preserve the Bristol Bay fishery for generations to come.

I am writing to let you know that I believe there should be no mining at Bristol Bay. The proposed mine threatens the purity of water and land, and destroys the well being of native people as well as animal and plant species. The degradation of the planet through reckless extraction of resources needs to be halted, now. Public lands should be used for the well being of all, not the profit of a corporation at the expense of activities like outdoor recreation and preservation of habitat and native ways of life. I urge you to support strong clean water policies, strict evaluation of the impact of this mine, and to strengthen policies which protect wetlands from the effects of mining. Thank you,

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Again, I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Sir or Maam, Every time I hear of drilling for something in and around Alaska I cringe. Alaska is one of the few naturally beautiful places that so many species flock to for rest and rejuvenation...including man. Please reconsider your plans to allow drilling in this region. It would be a terrible shame to see such a beautiful land and all its creatures destroyed for a little profit. Thanks very much for your thoughtful consideration.

what ever happened to the saying "this land is your land, this land is our land" ?? we are losing public land at an alarming rate. i wish for my children to be able to enjoy the outdoors i grew up in or atleast close, because lots have changed already, if we keep going we're going to be stuck in overpopulated cities. There will be a band of outlaw outdoors ORV riders for surely. please let me use what little land is left for me and my children to use. we hike, fish, camp, ride ORV's so we pretty much fill the realm of all around outdoor people. its public land and should remain as so. The goal to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking. The Initiative must preserve Multiple Use lands as Multiple Use for current and future generations to enjoy these and all other forms of recreation. The initial Wilderness Act envisioned about 20 million acres as suitable. Today we have over 120 million acres of Wilderness where public access is restricted. The majority of the public have been forced onto smaller and smaller areas outside of Wilderness. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors we do not need more Wilderness areas, we need less.

The proposed Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay will put at risk one of the most outstanding wildlife habitats on the planet. Many wilderness areas are endangered, but few so directly and for so little long term economic benefit as the pristine Bristol Bay by this disastrous and ill conceived mining project. Even on purely economic terms, endangering salmon runs and putting at risk already over stressed fisheries makes absolutely no sense.

It is inspiring to see the President make America's Great Outdoors Initiative a national priority. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

I love our nation's deserts--from the Joshua Trees of the Mojave to the great Sauaros of the Sonoran Desert to the beautiful pinyon and junifer forests of the Colorado Plateau. I want the next generation to enjoy America's public lands too--especially the fantastic wild areas managed by the BLM . I urge leaders in Washington to protect our public lands--especially those managed by the BLM that have been neglected for so long. Our deserts and arid lands will be profoundly affected by climate change. We need to save the best of what is left and manage the rest to sustain us all. Thanks.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please do not risk the destruction of this beautiful bay. What is the matter with us we should leave these wonderful areas as pristine as we found them. What are a few dollar compared? Do the right thing and protect the Earth against big business. Remember we don't take money with us, but what we leave for our grand children is priceless. Thank you.

I understand that the Pebble Mine would greatly impact Bristol Bay and its wildlife, including salmon. I hope that every effort will be made to protect Birstol Bay from harm.

To Whom it may concern, Years from now, when the last of God's greatest gifts to this planet and the humans who inhabit it, has been destroyed by pollution and construction, and disrespect for it's fragility, we will know who could have stopped it! PLEASE, for the Love of God, put sanity over greed this one time at least! Thank You,

Dear Sir/Madam The future of our wonderful wilderness looks terribly grim with all of the mining and oil companies being given carte blanche to lay waste, pollute and destroy nature's fragile balances. We deserve better of an administration than to have it sell off what few of the wilderness areas are remaining. This administration has become gluttonous in its desire to destroy the wildlife and its habitat. It is a no-win situation if it continues in this manner. All the areas now about to be destroyed will not allow much additional time before resources run dry. Leave these refuges of beauty with the wildlife that God created and think laterally about the situation. Limit population increase, make it more expensive for people to waste rather than save resources, stop all the building in the cities from leaving on the lights 24 hours a day, limit packaging of food, cut back on air conditioning, make more public transport available and make it more difficult and expensive to run a private car. These are the ways to provide for a future. Shooting wolves in the national parks, destroying the habitats and food sources of wildlife and other ghastly policies will do nothing except enrich shareholders and corrupt politicians. Pebble Mine is a perfect example of this misguided policy and will doom yet more of the wilderness without any lasting gains. Yours,

I believe we have a responsibility to protect this nation's treasured places for future generations of Americans. That is why I would like to see the promise of full, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) fulfilled in order to achieve the Obama Administration's conservation vision for the 21st century. LWCF is a simple idea that remains as important today as it was 45 years ago when President John F. Kennedy enacted it into law. Please support full, dedicated funding of LWCF to protect clean drinking water, support jobs in local economies, and conserve our common heritage and natural areas for wildlife, recreation, and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. ago when President John F. Kennedy enacted it into law. Please support full, dedicated funding of LWCF to protect clean drinking water, support jobs in local economies, and conserve our common heritage and natural areas for wildlife, recreation, and for our children and grandchildren to! enjoy.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

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I am writing to strongly urge you to reject Pebble Mine and protect Bristol Bay with its clean waters, wild salmon, and other wildlife. The mine threatens all of these along with traditional, sustainable ways of life. In fact, the federal government should strengthen its relationship with tribal governments rather than ignore their interests. Overall, public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Instead, the top priority should be protecting habitat, subsistence living, and sustainable recreation. The federal government needs to provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. You must also tighten standards for mineral development in wetlands and make Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining more stringent. Again, please protect Bristol Bay and all the life it supports from the devastation of Pebble Mine.

Please do all you can to protect Bristol Bay. Wild places like this are American gems that deserve our protection. Thank you.

It is vital that the Pebble Mine project not go forward as planned. Pebble Mine seriously threatens Bristol Bays waters, wildlife, and salmon. Clear Water Act standards are not stringent enough for metallic sulfide mining. There needs to be a much closer working relationship between the feral government and the tribal government. Please do not allow this project to go forward. A very concerned citizen

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. We're asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Again, thanks to the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. We look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency. Peace!

The Pebble Mine project in Bristol Bay, Alaska must never be approved. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, and wildlife. This pristine environment must not be sacrificed for greed! Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority! Do not approve this project under any circumstances! Too much of our Alaskan heritage is already under threat.

I voted for President Obama because I believed he would see that our precious resources of wilderness, rivers, seacoasts, and other such lands would be protected by the US government. Now I am asking the President to make wilderness protection a top priority. He has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Thank you, Mr. President for what I feel certain you are willing and able to do.

Dear Obama Administration Officials, What we don't have in the USA is enough protected, unspoiled wilderness areas. We are a large country but only protect roughly 4% of it as wilderness. That is not only short-sighted, but a reflection of a mentality that views nature as only as a commodity. Some of the greatest poets--Emerson, Thoreau, etc--regarded nature as the embodiment of God. I don't view carving up some of the last of our unspoiled wilderness and replacing it with a mining operation as an improvement. I'm tired of seeing what man can do to a wilderness and somehow viewing it as an "improvement" and would like to see more of what nature can do on her own in creating beautiful wilderness areas like Bristol Bay. I strongly oppose this mining operation. Please let Bristol Bay continue to remain pristine. Our future generations will thank you. I would also like to say that I am against strip mining of any kind. We can't lose beautiful mountains like those in West Virginia and other areas to strip mining.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

the government needs to protect the natural areas including the animals, birds etc that inhabit these areas. once a species is extinct it cannot be brought back. greed, big business have been in control to long. we destroy precious creatures, plants, trees and even insects in the name of progress and in the long run in danger our own survival (ie: global warming). one of my biggest concerns are the wild mustangs, cougars and polar bears. there is still way to much poverty and people being paid to much (politicians, sports and ceo's). not all of these can be solved by government but it would be nice to see a start made. bickering between the elected officials of this country should be lowered all so.

To Whom it May Concern...I find it absolutely insanely outrageous that a stunningly beautiful area such as Bristol Bay is being considered as a potential mining facility.Bristol Bay is a pristine,untouched natural wonder teeming with wildlife,vegetation,forests,pure water,plentiful salmon runs and on and on.The entire area is part of America's great outdoors...a pearl in our natural world.I am angered that fools would want to take this natural wonder and turn it into a toxic wasteland which is nothing but a greedy ploy to exploit natural resources which are quickly disappearing because of stupid projects like Pebble Mine.Stay out of Alaska.You are not welcome here.

Who gains by mining Bristol Bay? Everyone else looses. Stop the mining at Bristol Bay. It is horrendously destructive.

Bristol Bay is a pristine, beautiful paradise, for Beluga whales and countless other species, including homo sapien. There is no justification for destroying this paradise for a few dollars, which will only go to a foreign country anyway. We don't have to destroy everything in the name of greed. We can save something, including Bristol Bay.

Please be sure that no strip mining of any kind is allowed near Bristol Bay !!!!!

Dear Sirs: I have major concerns with the proposed Pebble Mine project. Let me start by saying that I am generally for a cooperative private enterprise/public interest policy. In most cases I would prefer that the federal government stay out of the private sector, unless there is a compelling public interest at stake. For example, I generally support most oil drilling project unless it can be clearly shown that there is likely damage to the environment. I greatly appreciate the natural environment and have enjoyed outdoor recreation most of my life - I believe we must be good steward of the creation with which we have been entrusted. The Pebble Mine project appears to be a clear and imminent catastrophe just waiting to happen. The rare treasure of western Alaska is a jewel to be protected. There appears to be so little benefit from this project compared to the great peril it presents to the environment and the economic welfare of the whole region. I would encourage the federal government to do all that it can to halt the project. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Obama Administration and relevant agencies: Alaska's Bristol Bay is another spectacular example of treasured wilderness that should be protected from large scale degradation. The natural beauty and teeming wildlife of this great region would be forever impacted by the destruction brought by a project such as the Pebble Mine. The traditional fishing patterns of Alaskan native peoples in this area would also be severely affected. Doubtlessly, the area also contains non-renewable archaeological and other historical sites. While impacts to these resources might be somewhat mitigated through careful pre-construction measures, the loss of timeless landscape, old growth forests, and marine environments are not. These effects will last for generations, as they are likely to in the Gulf of Mexico and elsewhere. The need for another ugly and massively destructive project such as the Pebble Mine is difficult to understand. The beauty of the Bristol Bay ecosystem is far more valuable, and the entire watershed should be closed to metallic sulfide mining. We need to protect Bristol Bay and other places like it by prohibiting permits for needless, destructive developments of all types. We also need to strengthen the standards represented in the Clean Water Act, and to enhance the relationship between the federal government and native councils, particularly in matters as damaging to the environment as the proposed Pebble Mine. Please keep the Pebble Mine out of treasured wilderness such as Bristol Bay, and direct them instead to areas that have already been irrevocably marred.

I urge you to stop plans for a mining operation at Bristol Bay. This ecologically sensitive area should not be sacrificed for benefit of mining corporations. They have done enough damage already which we (the taxpayers) are stuck with paying for.

I have never seen Bristol Bay in person but have friends who have and say it is exquisite. I hope that sometime in my life I will be able to travel there, and that my children and grandchildren will also have that opportunity. To lose this cherished place to the profits of a gold mining company for the sake of more monotonous, wasteful jewelry sold throughout the malls of the world seems a very senseless undertaking, and I sincerely hope that we will not let this happen. The beautiful, wild places of our world face so many threats. This seems like a no-brainer; one we can control. -- "There are people in the world so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread." Mahatma Gandhi [Click to give daily at The Hunger Site](#) End World Hunger - Cultivate Peace

Please save the Bristol Bay area from becoming another cesspool of toxic waste. I visited this area about 10 years ago, and it still leaves a strong impression on my mind when I think back to the natural beauty of the area, and the friendly, easy-going ways of its inhabitants. This is a place where many different types of people and animals depend on. From the whales to the salmon, to the fishermen to the native cultures who fish the sea and the rivers. There are too many issues at stake here, way more than just drilling and mining and ravaging a pristine area for some precious minerals. This needs to be rethought, and the Pebble Mining corp. needs to find another area to do their mining. Where so many people and animals aren't dependent on this environment, and so many livelihoods aren't at stake. Mining is not renewable, and once that hole has been dug, it will be very difficult to ever recover what once was... Thanks for listening

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Pebble Mine clearly threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife, and traditional ways of life of the people living along its shores. Please prevent the opening of this mine. Thank you,

Hi! I am writing to express my concern that allowing large-scale metallic sulfide mining at Pebble Mine will threaten Bristol Bay's clean water, wildlife, salmon, and tribal subsistence ways of life. I would like to see the federal government provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process, with tighter standards for mineral development in wetlands, and more stringent Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Otherwise, the cumulative impact of the proposed mining on the Bristol Bay watershed will be devastating. I also think it would be really productive for the federal government to work more closely with the tribal governments in the area to protect Bristol Bay. Thank you for considering my opinion.

From everything I have read, the proposed Pebble Mine presents multiple threats to the environment, the well-being Native American communities in the area, and good national natural resources practice. The Bay is a priceless natural resource and should be protected from exploitation of this kind. I urge officials in the relevant agencies to provide strong oversight of any large-scale interventions of this sort. Sincerely yours,

There are many environmental problems associated with mining, particularly mining sulfide ores. Most of the material mined is not processed for the ore, it is treated as waste and placed in piles that are more than double the volume of the space they occupied prior to mining. This "waste" material contains sulfide ore, just not in high enough concentrations to profitably extract the targeted metal(s). Sulfide ores exposed to the atmosphere, and moisture, rapidly break down giving rise to toxic pollutants that leach into the groundwaters and/or run off into the streams. When those water resources are contaminated by mine wastes, their ability to provide habitat for food fish is reduced or destroyed. Bristol Bay and its tributary streams are critically important for food fish (both for sustenance and commercial purposes), and contamination of them from mining would be disastrous for all who depend the fish. For that reason, any mining development in the Bristol Bay watershed should be rigorous in protecting the environment from the detrimental effects of mining. Note that even the most carefully planned measures to protect the environment are entirely dependent on the mining personnel to ensure that all measures are scrupulously followed. However, the mining company is in the business to make as much money as possible, which is another way of saying that they will tend to put resources into activities that have the highest rate of metal production per dollar invested, and spend as little as possible on activities which don't. Unfortunately, environmental protection is something that costs money, and doesn't produce any metallic benefit. So, unless you leave the fox to guard the hen house, any environmental protection plan needs effective oversight by another party. This oversight should be paid by the permitting agency, using funds supplied by the mine. I think, if the true cost of effectively protecting the Bristol Bay and its tributaries from environmental damage resulting from mining is considered, the owners of the Pebble Mine claims will find it in their best financial interest to seek minerals in other areas where environmental values are considerably less than they are in Bristol Bay. I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want future generations to enjoy America's great outdoors too. I urge leaders in Washington to expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces including forests, national parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, and rivers. We need to find "best practices" to ensure sustainable environments, e.g., forests need to be managed, not just protected. Trees sometimes need to be cut down!

I am writing this note this evening to express how concerned I am over the proposed Pebble Creek Gold mine. I want our Government to take the long view, of the environmental damage, impact to the economy through the destruction of salmon stocks and the fouling of our waters. The history of mining in this country is very clear...the companies make huge profits, and the citizens are left with what remains...generally a damaged environment and an unpaid bill. Government should take the lead to look for sustainable growth, without unpaid environmental bills as the result. Please stop the Pebble Mine project. very respectfully,

Bristol Bay must be kept unspoiled by mining in the area or any form of pollution. It is one of the few remaining areas of its type and must stay as it is.

Gentlemen, I am sending this in support of Bristol Bay, not for mining, but for the environment and population of all life in that area. Kennedy once said "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country". I believe the same applies here. We as a whole have done more to destroy than good. I also believe it is past time to reconcile these acts world wide. We need to show leadership to the world that it is possible to enjoy life much more without having to destroy the land for our energy need.

Dear Sirs, I am writing to you in reference to the proposed Pebble Mine on Bristol Bay, Alaska. As you may know, Trout Unlimited is a nationwide, non-profit organization and the individual chapters are completely volunteer. T.U.'s mission is to conserve, protect and restore our natural cold-water resources. Areas such as Bristol Bay and its eco-system are constantly being threatened by development and big business across our nation. It is important that we preserve unique natural resources such as Bristol Bay and instill stringent legislation to protect these fragile areas. All considered, once this is allowed to happen, there will be no turning back, no restoration. In Connecticut, we once had some of the largest Salmon runs in the world, now we have none. Restoration efforts have been taking place for over thirty years and we still have no return runs of salmon. If the Pebble Mine is allowed, the last large consistent salmon run in the world will be decimated forever. Please do not allow this to occur. I implore you to stop this while it is still stoppable and to instill strong legislation to protect this and other similar unique, fragile eco-systems from destruction due to greed and certainly not by necessity.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mr. President and Mr. Secretary, After reading hundreds of the comments on America's Great Outdoors, it is clear that there is great diversity of opinion and high emotion on both sides of the environment issue. It is also clear to me that if the health of our public lands and wildlife habitat is up to credulous and ill-informed public opinion, there is no hope for our once great natural endowment. As a prime example... who, in possession of his mental faculties, authorized the open pit Pebble Gold Mine in Bristol Bay, Alaska?! The Guns and OHV Crowd is fired up at the "threat of Left Wing radical Environmentalists taking over their country." They are furious at the notion of introducing Environmental Sustainability studies into public education, asserting that it is THEIR job to teach their children environmental values, as if Sustainability were a Belief. And they have been conditioned to accept as gospel that America's greatness is synonymous with our aggressive ethnocentrism, and our unregulated freedom to exploit natural resources, whether on U.S. soil or that of other nations, regardless of the harmful cost to living species and their habitat. The Responsibility to Preserve and Protect the Commonwealth is delegated by The People to elected and appointed government officials, who have taken an oath to do so. Their mandate is to sustainably manage the Commonwealth for the benefit of All Americans, not to give equal weight to the demands of All Claimants, nor to Average the results of public polls, such as America's Great Outdoors, and let that Average dictate public policy. No, to Preserve and Protect the Resources held in Common by the People of this country will necessarily require moderating and regulating those uses that devalue and contravene the quality of the Commonwealth, or restrict responsible and respectful access to it by The People. This responsibility is the mandate of the Secretary of the Interior. And he and the President, and the Congress will be held accountable, at the Polls and in the Courts, for proper implementation of wholesome, sustainable regulatory policies.

You are well aware of the plan to turn the breathtakingly pristine area of the Bristol Bay in Alaska into a very large and wildlife-threatening Pebble Mine. Although it is a fact that some development and mining must happen, to sustain our society, I strongly believe that we must also keep well in mind that we must sustain our most beautiful landscapes as well. Therefore, as someone who deeply cares about the spectacular wilderness areas in our world, I request that this mining plan be heavily reconsidered. The Pebble Mine would pose as a huge threat to the precious waters of the Bay, not to mention the incredible varieties of life within it. These wonderful fish and other fauna could experience a sever drop in population, something not at all desirable to anybody. In addition, the amazing land wildlife living around the area would soon have their homes and lifestyle destroyed, a tragedy all too common in our modern, industrial world. Standards for this type of mineral development in wetlands and other wilderness areas should be more stringent anyway, for the sake of the cleanliness and wondrous beauty of the earth. Limiting or even stopping the Pebble Mine plan would set a huge precedent for wild land conservation, something which is very difficult to disapprove of. This is a great opportunity to begin to make the world a place that balances successful industry with successful conservation. Thank you for taking the time to read these comments, and I hope that you will agree that the time has come to save special places such as these. Ronen Schatsky

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Bristol Bay and also other Alaskan wilderness area, including the arctic ocean, are far too important for the environment, climate and as habitat for endangered species and should not be destroyed by any mining and drilling activities. Besides that, mining activities will destroy livelihood of native Alaskans who depend on salmon fishing. please do what is right for us now and later!

I urge you to do all stop the Pebble Mine Company from mining in Bristol Bay. Nothing can replace the natural beauty and the wildlife of the area that would be harmed. Thank you for our consideration.

Bristol Bay, one of our last great wild ecological areas, is too valuable to destroy by commercial mining! How far do we go in the name of the all mighty dollar?! We have forfeited far too many of our lands and waterways already. Enough is enough!! NO MORE WILDERNESS DEVELOPMENT!

There is nothing I am more passionate about than preserving our natural resources and protecting the environment. I feel strongly about being nature's advocate and voice and am therefore speaking out against the Pebble Mine which threatens Bristol Bay. Large-scale metallic sulfide mining will impact public lands in the Bristol Bay negatively and needs to be offset with tighter Clean Water Act standards and stricter federal government oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process. We, as responsible earth stewards, need to respect Bristol Bay's amazing wildlands and wildlife and contribute to their protection. I urge you to make stopping the Pebble Mine and saving Bristol Bay a priority and, as a result, leave a lasting legacy for future generations so that they might enjoy nature's beauty and inspiration. Sincerely yours

No more mining in Alaska's wilderness. Keep Bristol Bay pristine!

Allowing mining in Bristol Bay makes about as much sense as giving a logging company the rights to cut down the Giant Redwoods in California. The damage to the wildlife and the environment of this area would be so extreme that no dollar amount could ever repair the loss to this world. Our natural resources are being depleted for the GREED of these mining, logging and oil companies...IT HAS TO STOP and BRISTOL BAY and PEBBLE MINE is an excellent place to say NO.....NO MINING...NO LOGGING....NO OIL DRILLING !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! KEEP OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND WILD LIFE SAFE AND PROTECTED....ITS HERE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS AND ITS OUR OBLIGATION TO KEEP THIS PROTECTED AND SAFE FROM THE GREED OF THIS WORLD !!!!!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear sirs/madams: One of our nation's most precious assets are the natural wonders that we have set aside for present and future generations. One of those precious wonders is the Bristol Bay watershed which is now being threatened by the proposal of large-scale mining, notably the Pebble Mine project. The permanent and uncorrectable damage that such a mine would wreak on this resource is incalculable. Not only would it poison the water supplies of the whole area, it would also damage the enormous watershed that is so critical to the health, welfare and survival of the wildlife, trees, and plant life of that area. It would also change forever the traditional subsistence ways of life that are still practiced in that part of our nation. Please do all in your power to stop the Pebble Mine project NOW. At the same time, every effort should be made to strengthen and tighten the standards for mineral development, especially in wetlands such as Bristol Bay. The Clean Water Act also needs to be strengthened, especially its standards related to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Thank you for your time. And Please Help stop the Pebble Mine Project.

Hello!! I would like to be able to take a moment to express my concern on the possibility of a mining adventure to take place near the Bristol Bay in our beautiful state of Alaska. Today with the changing needs of the world. We must start to see that we can preserve the unspoiled areas of nature in the raw (the way it was designed to be forever). We can but all safe guards in place to protect it, but we have seen lately and in the past, that safe guards can fail, with the loss of the area that was to be protected. Once lost it can never be replaced or brought back to the way it was meant to be. Therefore I'am asking that this mining project be omitted in the sake of unspoiled nature. Thanking you for your time.

Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors it is imperative that we continue to provide quiet recreation opportunities for future generations. We need more wilderness areas, more hiking trails and fewer ORVs on our public lands.

Save our open space. Protect our national heritage. Give our children a place to play, learn and explore.

We need clean water and safe fish & wildlife to eat. It doesn't get any more simple than that, does it? Pollution has already cost us dearly when others have not thought ahead. Do not make another mistake that will not only cost us the environment, but the taxpayers will have to pay again when we have to clean up the mess later. Millions of taxpayer dollars are being spent currently in Oregon to clean up old mine areas that are still polluting our rivers. Do the right thing now. Thanks in advance

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions about protecting our treasured natural wildlife and wilderness areas. I am particularly concerned about Bristol Bay and the prospect of the Pebble Mine operation ruining that irreplaceable watershed that is essential to the overall health of a huge area. The mining operation would be massive, destructive and would generate tons of waste. The fact that foreign businesses want to build the mine is also upsetting. What do we get from it? Money?? I think that whatever money we might get in leases, etc. would be eaten up with efforts to reduce the massive pollution and devastation of the other resources in that priceless area. It is imperative that there be a thorough analysis of the impacts of large-scale sulfide mining, and I believe that the conclusion will be that no such operation is acceptable. Finally, the standards of the Clean Water Act must be applied and should be made even more stringent. Again, thank you for accepting my comments.

Please protect Bristol Bay from destruction and degradation from mining. Once it is destroyed or polluted it is too late. We, as represented by our government, have a responsibility to protect habitat, wild lands and beautiful outdoor spaces for subsistence and recreation and for future generations to enjoy. I ask for tighter standards and strong federal oversight of the mining permitting process and impact analysis within the Bristol Bay watershed and for mineral development in wetlands generally. And also for the federal government to work more closely with the tribal governments in this area and in these situations. Thank you.

I'm currently a master's student in environmental studies. I've learned a great deal about the world - not only in school, but from diverse volunteer experiences as well. I know systemic change in our governments, economies, and ideologies are desperately needed for so many reasons. I know it's Congress that needs the pushing, but I'd just like to tell you how much I'd like more protected outdoor spaces.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am tired of hearing of our great, beautiful country being over-ran and destroyed for our own personal comforts, it's time we as human beings step up and realize we are directly affecting millions of life forms everywhere, and we are directly responsible for millions of deaths. If these animals were human, we would all be on trial for genocide, but it is human nature to put ourselves above everything else, all I am asking is for respect. Respect for the world around us that gives us sustenance, without it, there would be...nothing. Pebble Mine is nothing but a nuisance, all the recent global issues involving mines should be all that is needed to show why another mine should not be created, it's time we move on, find less destructive ways to keep our comforts and harvest what we think we need in life, not for us now, but for future generations; no one knows how much time we have before our destruction is irreversible, and I don't think anybody wants to wait until that point. 30 years ago when we realized our Ozone was rapidly depleting, the laws were erected to stop it, but with our current environmental issues, no one is in a hurry to jump, when these issues could be substantially more devastating than any we have ever faced before. I plead for some consideration that all us "green freaks" might have a leg to stand on, that we might be on to something, I am not asking for things to change overnight, I am just asking you to ponder the idea that our world is taking a turn for the worst unless everyone, not just America, steps up to the plate and starts refining the ways we all live. We are all connected more than anyone realizes, we are all neighbors in the grand spectrum of things, please do not add to our problems by creating yet another one, please leave Alaska beautiful, it's the least urbanized area I know of in this country, and it deserves to stay that way! Thanks for hearing me out on this matter,

For a species that has a horrible reputation for despoiling our blue planet, we mustn't go another step further by allowing any development of pristine Bristol Bay. Please arrest any effort to do so.

Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors Initiative and having the federal officials visit Maine to listen to us. You wanted to know what works. Tax incentives, farm bill easement programs, especially LWCF and Forest Legacy programs work. The Woodwise Program was very successful and should be reinstated. Please make the conservation of private farms, ranches and forests a priority.

Dear Friends in Washington D.C., I am writing about the Pebble Mine permit for mineral mining. PLEASE don't let that area be mined. We have very few exuberant salmon runs in the U.S. and they are critical to much more wildlife than we who live in urban and suburban environments can imagine. I just turned 60 y.o. and have strong, fond memories of visiting national parks and monuments. They inspired my patriotism and loyalty and continue to inspire me to vote, to read, to research. Please protect these wild lands. We've seen how wild lands, seas and life have been trashed by poor oil regulation in the Gulf of Mexico. Please don't repeat that mistake and let mining in the Bristol Bay area create pollution on a micro level. Thank you,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please protect Bristol Bay. The Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and threatens subsistence ways of life. Public lands in Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large scale metallic sulfide mining. We should protect habitat. Subsistence and recreational resources should be the top priority. The Federal Government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Relations between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened and standards for mineral development in wetland should be tighter. I believe that the Clean Water Act standards for large scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent as well. If we don't act on behalf of our precious environment, then who will? Yours truly,

stop Pebble Mine save Bristol Bay

On behalf of Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning, a statewide environmental advocacy organization, here are important points to consider in formulating a 21st century agenda to connect Americans with our public lands. Our treasured national parks are a key element of our great outdoors, highlighting our natural and cultural heritage. It is imperative that our parks be maintained adequately, which is not now the case, and that our incomplete parks be made whole. Of particular concern to Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning is the Obed Wild and Scenic River (OWSR). This unique pristine river gorge is lacking about 1/5 of the land in the authorized boundary. As with most special places, the development community sees opportunity for growth. These unacquired lands should be conserved by immediate purchase. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which has been chronically, shortsightedly underfunded, must be fully funded. Every year, \$900 million from federal Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) drilling lease proceeds are supposed to be dedicated to the LWCF. There are critical opportunities to improve resource security and recreational opportunities. A fully funded LWCF would enable successful use of these opportunities. Land managing agencies should be directed to revise policies that hamper or prevent wilderness review. This positive step could be handled by Executive Order. The growing disconnect between America's youth and our natural world cries out for direct, engaging educational materials for agencies and schools. Early familiarity with the importance of our natural world and how it connects with America's quality of life and prosperity would greatly increase public appreciation and use of our public lands for recreation. We urge the administration to apply creative ideas to the issue of dwindling staff resources, including internships, summer work programs, and work/study type programs in our education systems. Finally, our public lands should be widely recognized for and advertised as national treasures that protect our water supply, foster biodiversity, and offer opportunities for physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, My purpose in writing about Bristol Bay is express my grave concerns about its fate should the Pebble Mine be developed. The loss of more public land--particularly public lands of the pristine quality surrounding Bristol Bay--is deeply troubling. More and more of our nation's wild places are being lost to economic development, and once gone they cannot be returned to the public domain. From my point of view, the public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be protected from all mining. The Bay supports diverse terrestrial and aquatic species, providing a space for life forms to co-exist and to support the livelihoods for nearby traditional peoples. Please do not approve any mining permits within the surrounds of Bristol Bay, including the potentially disastrous Pebble Mine. Respectfully submitted,

Dear folks, Pls save the pebble mine & Bristol bay Respectfully submitted:

Dear Sirs, Do not destroy nature, it is so precious. No to a pebble mine. Regards,

Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon,wildlife, and traditional subsistence ways of life. Public lands should remain free of minerals mining. --

Not my full name as a User Name, this is opening people up to abuse via email, facebook, twitter, phone, etc. Unless you change your policy on this I believe you won't receive many comments or good suggestions. There are a ton of bad people out there that can find anything they want on the web. This was a very BAD idea. I would like to add my thoughts but not with my full name exposed to the world. I hope you have good feed back and this works, and I wish I could be a part of it but not at the risk of my well being.

Hello. I am writing to you to urge you to oppose Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay. The cool, shallow waters of Bristol Bay are surrounded by a verdant cushion of tundra, crisscrossed by swift rivers and dotted with lakes large and small. Grizzlies, wolves, seals and whales roam this nearly untouched ecosystem, all drawn by the same lure: tens of millions of thrashing salmon, charging upstream to spawn. Huge salmon runs are the linchpin of this glorious wilderness, supporting valuable commercial fisheries, indigenous people and a vast array of wildlife. Yet the whole system could come crashing down if giant mining interests get their way. A study of mines similar to the proposed Pebble mine showed that 85 percent of them polluted nearby waters. At Pebble, a proposed open-pit mine would be 2 miles wide (enough to line up nine of the world's longest cruise ships end-to-end) and 2,000 feet deep (enough to engulf the Empire State Building). As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams -- all of them taller than China's Three Gorges Dam and located just 20 miles from an active fault line. A single accident here would be disastrous. But even the construction and operation of the mine could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem. It's a risk most local Alaskans are not willing to take -- the true gold of this region, they say, is its fish and wildlife. Please oppose Pebble Mine. Thank you for your time.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am thankful for the current administration's " America's Great Outdoors Initiative". Our natural areas of beauty should be protected.. I don't want to lose them due to expanding population, unwise development or climate change. I would like President Obama to make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President can help federal public land agencies and Congress cooperate more.. The U.S. Forest Service now uses quite restrictive criteria o determine their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness AND the Bureau of Land Management is not allowed to assess wilderness areas. I would like the current administration to lift both of these constraints. Thank you again for protecting US wilderness.

While I may never see the area for myself, it is important to know that wilderness areas so rich in biodiversity as this area, will remain wilderness forever more. You can't bring it back once it has been opened up to mining. These are public lands that belong to the American people. They shouldn't be open to the highest bidder for mining. Mining ruins the watershed, will negatively impact wildlife, and bring destruction to thousands of plants and animals. This isn't the way to use our public lands. Just knowing that it will remain wild and untouched is what I want to see. Bristol Bay area should not be opened to mining ever. It's just corporate greed. Don't let it happened. The water and land should remain clean and sustainable for all wildlife. I am totally against any development in the Bristol Bay watershed.

To Whom It Concerns, please stop the Pebble mine. For the sake of everyone in this world, STOP POLLUTING! Thank-you,

Open space should not have to produce oil, garden products or anything else that can be sold or marketed. The virtue of open space is that it just IS. Leave it alone.

Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children.-Ancient Indian Proverb. I was always taught to make sure anything I borrowed was given back in as good of shape as I received it in or better...If we continue on our current path our children will have little. It seems like a no-brainer to me...short term gain by one of our corporate handlers and long term devastation VS the wonder and beauty forever of an intact ecosystem. The rampant destruction of our planet for our convenience orientation and corporate bottom lines is mind boggling. Please leave Bristol Bays magic for generations to come.

Please save Bristol Bay! Protecting its beautiful habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be our top priority. The Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining, and Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. Standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter and the federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. We should strengthen relationships between federal and tribal governments. Please stop the Pebble Mine and protect this precious natural resource. Regards,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative BUT STOP exploiting OUR PUBLIC LANDS and WILDLIFE. STOP THE HORSE AND BURRO ROUNDUPS. You are destroying herds and it is all totally unnecessary and a burden on tax payers. Your policy in this regard is disgusting and needs to be investigated and challenged. WHERE IS THE TRANSPARENCY. We want answers as to the WHY???? We absolutely KNOW it is not for overpopulation, lack of food or water in MOST cases. These are America's Horses and Burros. These animals walked and worked right beside men and women building this Country. It is on their backs and with their ancestors blood that we have an AMERICA. They deserve to be cared for and PROTECTED UNDER THE LAW. This is just one issue concerning our public lands and while it may not always be easy to find alternate solutions to annihilation of species it is imperative for this Nation that viable solutions are found that enhance our wildlife and OUR PUBLIC LANDS. The special interest have had their way for far too long and it's time that the American citizens have their say.

Dear Important People, Americans have so stupidly allowed our waterways to be contaminated. Please do not allow Pebble Mine to contaminate Bristol Bay. Thank you.

If there were ever the case to say no to big corporate interests and be strong leaders, now is the time. Please please protect Bristol Bay – the harm from Pebble Mine would be unimaginable. I urge you to stop this project.

I'm doing all I can to try to save this vast planet, being only one person. I need your help! I'm most concerned about the mining that threatens our Alaskan wilderness and the waters of Bristol Bay. Please consider what destruction to public lands, water and wildlife can be caused by mining. Our federal government needs to step in to protect Bristol Bay by providing strong monitoring of Pebble Mine, as well as strengthen our relationship between the tribal and federal governments. Please, please take my concerns into consideration. OUR PLANET DEPENDS ON US.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our National Parks. The message you will receive in most of your emails regarding the parks is articulate and professional. I want to send a personal message of how the parks impacted my life. I am a 67 y.o. child of a deceased veteran. My mother was left a single parent when my father was killed in the Battle of the Bulge. She remarried a veteran who had been in a prisoner of war camp. We weren't fortunate enough to have much to live on but we did have the outdoors and I remember many family vacations in National Parks in Washington State. Summer time was a time for family vacations and family vacations meant time outdoors. My husband, a retired teacher, and I raised three children with the same love of nature and the outdoors. Again, we weren't blessed with funds for fancy vacations but summers were long and the National Parks called us to wonderful family vacations. I am saddened when I think of all of the families are not able to avail themselves of the National Parks and hopeful that we will find ways to sustain these treasures for generations to come. Thank you

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's National Parks are beautiful and need to be protected. It is very important that these remain public lands and that conservation efforts are strong. Biodiversity is a top priority and is the key to a healthy environment. We need to ensure that these parks, which serve home to a wide array of majestic wildlife, are protected for many future generations to come. They must be protected from privatization, development, and importantly, gas and oil drilling. Thank you for listening to the public's concern regarding our national parks.

I urge that our precious and beautiful national parks be put to use as a place where young people can work in something like the CCC of the 1930s. Americans are still proud of this program, which gave jobs and training to so many young Americans at a time of high unemployment. We need a similar program today. Also, please put to use \$17 Billion in the Land and Water Conversation Fund for this CCC-type program. Thank you for considering my comments.

Our National Parks are our nation's treasures. Please see that they are protected under YOUR WATCH. I don't need to write paragraphs about why this is important or suggest what you need to do. Just do it. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

America's national park system is a model other countries aspire to. Our parks are a national treasure and truly belong to everyone. Please support them by protecting their integrity (e.g. limit use of ATV's on park land) and by providing appropriate funding.

Dear Barack, I grew up in Illinois between Peoria and Bloomington ... my brother just visited us in Oregon and mentioned how the roads are being improved throughout the State of Illinois. This is fantastic ... however, my wife and I returned this past week from Saguaro National Park in Tucson and were horrified at the conditions of the roads throughout the Park. It's literally a cow-path ... are there improvement plans to pave this park? I wanted to pass along this info for appropriating funds there - I realize you have many areas of more important matters than this but wanted to take the opportunity to make suggestion. Thanks for you personal consideration - Best Regards,

Please ensure our parklands remain for the public, not special interests groups who only seek profit.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I think of my country, I think of our national park system! Whenever I host visitors from other countries, our national parks are one of the first things I mention. National parks play a tremendous role in our great nation's history, and is one of the top reasons why people from around the world come to visit the United States. They are a preservation of our cultural identity, and contribute to our health and education. They also serve as a basis for conservation and recreation for millions of citizens each year. I would like to see the the Obama administration support the following: --Listen to the advise and findings of the National Parks Second Century Commission, as well as those individuals who work within the NPS from rangers to adminitrators. --Forter collborative relationships between the NPS and private institutions to prepare our parks for the 21st century. Individual Americans need to be mobilized with a sense of ownership of these amazing natural resources! --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise!!!!!!! --Use modern social media and communications to develop innovative programs that inspire and educate young people about conservation, environmentalism, renewable resources and technology. The Department of Education should work with the Park Service to develop these programs which would protect our National Parks, and at the same time allow them to participate in America's energy revolution. --Use the NPS's experience and knowledge, like the Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program, to help cities with green space, community environmental rehabilitation, and to develop urban trails and greenways. --The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future. Thank you for considering my comments.

Ever since I was a waitress in Yellowstone National Park, over 50 years ago, I've been a great supporter of one of our nation's treasures. Visiting parks all over the country, from Yosemite to Acadia, I see how they are enjoyed by Americans of every stripe. Please pay attention to the Second Century Commission's advice about preserving our national parks, and make sure that they are adequately funded. Your family's recent trip to Acadia did much to publicize how the parks can be enjoyed and I encourage you to spend additional week-ends in parks near to Washington, such as the Great Smokies and the Civil War battlefields. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I don't expect much, given how much the president talks such a great game, but winds up handing everything over to the corporate "masters." But FWIW, I'll recommend getting guns OUT of the parks ASAP. It's vital that we undo this god-awful law allowing guns in the parks! Thank you for considering my comments.

Please keep our parks "wild!" By wild I mean free of recreational activities that terrorize and kill wildlife such as hunting and snowmobiling and free of water parks and other popular amusement activities that do nothing to foster a greater appreciation for nature and the wonders it holds. The beauty is in nature not in the manmade park destinations we have created. So let's keep them as wild as possible!

National Parks are CRITICAL to any Outdoor Initiative. I go to them, and enjoy them, and when I retire, I want to see more of them. It just isn't like going anywhere else, to go to a National Park. If you want people to go outdoors, you MUST fund the National Parks to the GREATEST extent that you can. Make sure that you follow the advice of the committees that plan for the future of the National Parks. The Parks are celebrating a hundred years - I want them to be there - in FULL glory, when it is time for me to retire and enjoy the outdoors, after years of working hard all my life. Why is there money sitting unused for the purposes of keeping up the Parks? Why don't you use them the way they are meant to be used? To keep the Parks accessible and relevant to everybody? I understand there are many millions of dollars that are not being used - PLEASE start to spend that money on keeping the Parks updated and useful. Every time I go to a Park, especially the battlefields, I learn more about my country and the people who made our country. Please do more to make each visit a classroom lesson that makes people better citizens and visitors. The extremely dedicated people who staff our National Parks are the best and they know more about what is needed to serve the public than ANYONE. Beef up all of the staffs across the country, and put more people to work helping us all to enjoy our fabulous country. They know what they are doing - and they love what they do. Get more of them! By the way - we need MORE Parks - not just the ones we have. Everybody should be able to get on a bus, not have to drive across the country, to get to a National Park. One that is protected and is a learning experience. Protect the wildlife in our Parks - it's THEIR homes, not ours! Make SURE they can travel through their lands unimpeded by man. They NEED us to take care of them by leaving them to their natural patterns of living. Make corridors for them to travel, so we don't interfere with them. Since visiting the National Parks, especially the battlefields, is how I choose to spend my money, it is worth it to generate more Parks, and more Rangers, and more sites. More Parks, more jobs, more money spent by the public. It couldn't make more sense. We, the public, DEPEND on YOU to do these things for us - the next administrations aren't going to do it. They haven't in the past. I depend on you to do this for me and my family and friends, as well as all the rest of the people of the country. Of all the things you have to do - this is the simplest to do - to justify - to improve the quality of life in America. Spend the money, improve the Parks, and follow the recommendations of the Parks commissions who make this their lives' work. Thank you

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family and I have had our very best vacations camping in the National Park System and BLM forests. It is imparative to maintain these places as pristine national treasures. The world is becoming more and more crowded and natural resources are being depleted. We have to take action now to preserve as much space as possible so that my children can take their children camping and have as wonderful expereinces with their families and we have had with ours. I highly recommend making decisions that increase these areas and allow for better maintenance of them.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our National Parks are our heritage. So many are in disrepair from lack of funds spent on them. These are wonderful places for families and outdoor education. Your administration has the ability to put parks back on track. The parks offer a chance to hire young folks to learn skills to repair them, much like the CCC of the Roosevelt administration. Use funds already set aside to pay for this work. So many college grads too are out of work. Many talented young folks could work and learn as well. College academic skills should not be all that is important. Listen to the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. The upcoming Park Service centennial is a perfect start to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. SEVENTEEN BILLION DOLLARS in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. Use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. -We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollar

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please do everything within your power to protect America's wildlife and preserve her national parks and forests. Funding is critical, so please continue to provide adequate Federal funds, especially by permanently funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries. Please protect our ecosystems, and ensure wildlife conservation, working closely with the Dept of Interior and the National Parks Second Century Commission. Please provide funding to create wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners. Thank you for considering my comments.

Regarding America's Great Outdoors, I support the ideas that are advocated by the National Parks Conservation Association; but I also wish to highlight one other idea in particular. This is our need for a large-scale, Great Plains National Park to represent our nation's largest ecosystem, one which was almost completely converted to agricultural uses during the past 150 years. Whether it goes by the name, "Buffalo Commons", or some other name, it should be big enough to accommodate large herds of bison, pronghorn, and elk, as well as the full suite of predators that at one time inhabited the plains, namely wolves, bears and mountain lions. Our National Park system needs a place where our citizens can experience the Great Plains through the same, awe-inspiring, biologically-rich view that greeted Lewis & Clark two hundred years ago. Thank you very much for considering my comments.

My family and I regularly spend time in National Parks. The parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. Your administration needs to: Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The money from gas and oil leasing needs to be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. What is happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to develop a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I hope you and your family enjoyed your recent vacation, and I was very pleased that you chose to spend part of it in one of our country's fabulous National Parks. The stories and pictures of you and your family enjoying our great outdoors and participating in physical activities such as bike riding and hiking, is worth more than just telling people to engage in those activities themselves. Growing up, my family took many road trips and visited several National Parks, including Carlsbad Caverns, the Grand Canyon, and Big Bend. Now with children of our own, my husband and I make it a priority to visit as many National Parks or Monuments or Historic sites as we possibly can on our travels. Living in the beautiful Pacific Northwest, we are so lucky to have several such places nearby, and we in fact visit Olympic National Park, North Cascades National Park, and Mount Ranier National Park every year. One of our favorite vacations was a few years ago when we visited Washington D.C. and all of the monuments there, as well as several historic sites such as Antitem Battlefield and Monticello. We have the National Park Passports and collect stamps for all of the places we visit. As you know and understand, these places are filled with wild, grand beauty that cannot be experienced without going out of the cities and into these back lands. Our emotions of these experiences are difficult to explain, and even pictures don't do them justice. One has to get out and be there, with nature, to feel the awe that this great country holds in its heart. I urge you to help other people have these experiences. With our youth today spending so much time indoors, inactive, it is imperative that you support AND promote legislation that protects these vital national resources and finds ways to introduce these treasures to our youth. Thank you for listening and doing your part.

National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. National parks serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am sure you have been given all the facts and reasons for supporting our National Park system. I can only speak from personal experience. I don't get to go on vacations often now as an adult but I have very fond memories of going as a child to the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and trips through the Smokey's. A few years ago a family member paid for me to join her on a trip to Zion, Utah. Then the next year to Estes Park, CO. Believe me when I tell you, just knowing those places are there is what helps get me through the work week. I dream of going again and visiting all the National Parks. I have never had a desire to go to Europe and I believe our parks help to set our nation apart and their beauty symbolize this country where words fail. I do not have a lot of say so where my tax dollars go but this is one area where I do not complain and I can see the effort of my tax dollars. Please keep supporting our Parks and keeping them accessible. Even the local county and state parks need help and must not close. Thank you for all you do. Thank you for considering my comments.,

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks. Monuments. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. Your administration needs to take the following: Provide Mexican Border Security throughout Organ Pipe National Monument, Arizona. This a facility that rests precisely on the U.S. and Mexico Border which has been largely unavailable to those of us in the United States for several years now, however, our tax dollars are being used to maintain the facility and provide for facility Rangers, including the ultimate payment of the death of a Ranger who was shot in the facility campground immediately adjacent to the Visitor Center. We are largely the only major country in the world with little or no protection, monitoring or maintaining control of those who are crossing our nations borders, which have not been all that safe for many years now under any administration. Why do you not step up to the plate and finally become this nations hero and close the Mexican Border. The Mexicans can find their own hero elsewhere and if it takes the Mexican vote to keep you in office, you should resign.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am so pleased to learn of the "America's Great Outdoors" Initiative that was announced in April. Being in the outdoors is such a significant aspect of a healthy and vigorous lifestyle. The breath-taking beauty of the natural environment throughout the United States has an awe-inspiring and spiritual component that every individual should be able to experience and appreciate. I encourage and support the effort to ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. I also support fully and permanently funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Equally as important is to strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to not only protect our national parks, but to also protect the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. Many of our wildlife species cannot survive simply in isolated pockets of our national parks. Species, particularly the mega-fauna, must be able to migrate and to disperse across regions so that a viable gene pool is maintained. A good example is the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) initiative to preserve wildlife corridors on both public and private lands. Most importantly it is necessary to improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. If our children are not exposed to "America's Great Outdoors" and learn to value the outdoors, there is a real danger that the natural resources, wildlife and natural wonders of the United States will not have a voice of support for the future.

I'm responding to the Obama Administration's request for comments on his America's Great Outdoors initiative, One key aspect, I think, relates to our national parks. National parks help connect people to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation and contributing to the health of our people. We love to visit the parks to enjoy their beauty, stimulate our energy and to learn about our ecology, conservation and history. We urge the administration to heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. It also is important to provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This money should be spent to support our parks, seashores, forests and waterways, Please evaluate and consider new sites to allow the national park system to protect remaining natural areas. A recent study by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people even in difficult economic times. We Americans care about the future of these wonderful places, hoping they will be there for our children and grandchildren. National parks are good investments in our future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

August 29th, 2010 Dear Mr. President, You probably won't ever read this, but just in case you do there is something happening in Alaska you should be deeply concerned about. The Pebble Mine. Sarah Palin turned her back on Bristol Bay and Alaska (after even taking credit for naming her daughter Bristol) just when it (Alaska) needed her most, for it is being threatened by the proposed copper mine near the headwaters of the world's last largest sockeye salmon fishery. The mine is called the Pebble Mine and would be the largest open pit mine in the the world. If developed it would pose a lethal threat to the six or so species of salmon that return to spawn in the rivers that flow into Bristol Bay. I only learned about this threat when my son (who is a fishing guide in Alaska) brought home an award winning environmental documentary called (Red Gold). It tells the whole story and of the fish, the people of the region, and pretty much puts it all in a nutshell as far as priorities go. It would be wise for you to watch it. If I thought you would I would mail you a copy. Maybe you could email me back if you really care enough. The challenges facing what's left of our wild places in the world today are mind boggling and more so when we realize the threats are blindly governed by greed. The gulf BP oil disaster comes to mind most recently. Please look into this matter and do what you can to stop the Pebble Mine before it's too late. I think this fall and winter will be crucial in the decision to dig it or not, so time is of the essence.

More funding needs to be given to national parks. Past republican presidents have gutted our national parks and have let them deteriorate. Do not let the NPS go the way of the dinosaurs. Thank you for considering my comments.

Very simply put, I ask you to put a high priority on the conservation and protection of our National Parks. We need to preserve these precious areas to insure that they are enjoyed by future generations. The National Park system is also a great source of educational opportunities. The rangers do an excellent job of presenting this information. You have the power to influence our lawmakers to take the necessary action to make this happen. Follow in the footsteps of John D, Rockefeller and John Muir as a standardbearer for our National Parks.. Thank you,

The main thing to do is save our wildlife. KILLING LICENSES have funded our state agencies and our state and federal agencies have just been killing brokerages of our wildLIFE for DEATH for the FEW. 95% of United States citizens do not hunt or trap. A trapper can pay a few dollars and kill a hundred animals, but I as an UNEQUAL CITIZEN cannot pay a few dollars and save even ONE animal. This lack of democracy is pervasive and destructive to the web of life. Trophy and thrill recreational killing has replaced survival killing and our natural predators, mid-range predators and specific "game" animals are forfeit to a corrupted system. In Wisconsin 6,000 hunters (one-tenth of one percent of the population) killed 434,000 animals in traps banned in 88 countries for their extreme cruelty. WE NEED DEMOCRACY FOR WILDLIFE WATCHERS in our country for the first time ever. IF YOU DO NOT KILL WILDLIFE IN OUR COUNTRY, you HAVE NO SAY. This is the primary thing that needs to be addressed - DEMOCRACY in our state and federal wildlife management institutions - and with climate change, habitat loss, human over-population, killing violence increasing, and fragmentation of habitat - we need democracy and all of the public involved in our governance of wildlife. ALL SENTIENT BEINGS DESERVE RESPECT.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'll keep this short and sweet. Please do more to save our national parks. They are vital to our ecological, recreational, and spiritual health as a nation. I watched the PBS series on national parks and we need to preserve them for ourselves and future generations. Thank you for caring.

America's Great Outdoors Initiative is a big picture solution to many of our problems. Please support this legislation. A recent trip to Yellowstone reinforced my lifelong love of our great remote wilderness treasures. We need to follow the Iriquois notion that each decision should be made with the next seven generations in mind. Finally, it is time to stop corporations, lobbyists, and profit seekers that exploit our land, laws, and regulations. Please do whatever you can to help protect our wilderness areas, our parks, and the planet. Thank you for considering my comments.

We need to stop killing wildlife to protect a few cows. We need to stop drilling for oil and gas in and around our parks. We need to protect the wolves. We need to protect wild horses. We need to fund the parks with permanent funding. We need to raise the fees especially for seniors (I am a senior and I can afford higher fees as can most of the greedy gazers out there)

The more lands--and waters--in the United States that we set aside in conservation for future generations, the better.

Dear Mr. President: I am writing to offer comments regarding the "America's Great Outdoors" initiative. Take significant steps to complete the National Trails System. 1) fully fund the Land & Water Conservation Fund at the authorized level 2) fully fund the administrative and management needs of the Federal agencies responsible for America's National Scenic Trails. 3) require all Federal Employee's who live within 20 miles of a National Scenic Trail to volunteer 20 hours of service helping build and/or steward a National Scenic Trail in two consecutive fiscal years between now and 2016. SUMMARY: If you act on the above suggestions, you will empower significantly greater citizen engagement economically, physically, emotionally and spiritually with Americas Great Outdoors. With this engagement, hope is possible. With this engagement, lasting change is possible. With this engagement, the people of this nation will grow stronger. In 2008 I was undecided who I would cast my vote for in the Wisconsin Democratic primary election; you or then-senator Clinton. Ultimately I voted for you in the spring and in the fall presidential election(s). You continue to earn my support today. Thank for considering my input.

For the vast majority of my life, the key decisions on making our vacation plans usually are dependent upon visiting National Parks or Historic sites. Just 2 weeks ago, my family enjoyed their first visit to the Everglades, Big Cypress, and Canaveral National Park. These visits always revitalize my soul religiously but also deepen my loyalty as an American. As Ken Burns recent TV series has shown, America desperately needs to maintain our "Greatest Idea" and preserve our natural wonders. The benefits to our society are one of national pride but also provide economic stimulus as we expend our vacation funds to visit these national treasures. For 2011, we are planning to visit Acadia for the 5th time and are also planning to have our first experience visiting the National history of Boston. Please do not consider the support of National Parks an expense. These parks and historic sites are truly an investment in the preservation of the American way of life. Thanks

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our National Parks are a gift from wise Americans who went before us who had foresight and wisdom. Please continue that legacy. There are environmental issues, esthetic points, and just plain common sense that are involved when considering the protection and upkeep of our National Parks. I am sure that others will remark on these very poignantly. I would like to say this. These parks spiritual places for our national family. They are places of wilderness, openness, quiet, and inspiration. These are challenging times. There are so many problems that seem too big to solve--that we have no answers to and/or do not have the resources to meet. I believe it is vital to our national psyche to know that our government can at least preserve this legacy. If our government can not come together on this issue and move forward rightly, successfully, immediately...I believe it will lose the last shred of hope Americans have that democracy works...that our government is capable...that America can't even preserve its own natural resources. Please show us you can keep our National Parks in tact. Thank you for considering my comments.

My husband and I travel through the national parks regularly and really believe there is tremendous value in maintaining the unspoiled beauty of nature. In particular, this important for the less fortunate segment of our society. Thank you for considering my comments.

Simply, Please protect our National and State Parks from those who want to rape and destroy the last of the wilderness. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The National Parks were not a big part of my formative years in Michigan. My family did not have a lot of financial resources for travel and the idea of accessing National Parks was not a priority for my parents. Nor was it a topic of intense focus in my school program. As an adult, I have come to embrace the historically and culturally informative experiences of our National Parks as well as the breathtaking beauty, peace, solitude and deep spiritual connection to our planet that occurs each time I spend a day or a two in our National Parks. It is awe-inspiring and life changing each and every time. I have set my own goals to visit as many National Parks as I can in my remaining lifetime (which should be a lot of park visits!) Going forward, I feel passionate that we must protect the existing spaces and identify key strategic historical, cultural and ecologically sensitive lands that would augment our current National Park system. We owe it to ourselves and the animals we have displaced in our urbanization across our country to set aside green spaces for our health and future. To succeed in this endeavor, the Federal Government must: Initiate outreach to all school-age children about the legacy of the National Parks that has been developed through our Federal Tax program and their rights to access and enjoy the benefits of these great lands. This could be DVDs available to schools for nominal to no-cost for classroom education or a Ranger Visitation program that brings the Ranger to the school (since most schools can't afford bringing kids to a National Park en masse). Initiate outreach to the American public through public service campaigns, government web links and sponsorship days ("fee free admissions by Corporate sponsors") to engage all Americans in this significant recession to enjoy the benefits of our National Parks. Increase promotion of the Passport Program to motivate families to visit multiple National Parks - spending vacation dollars in our own country. Incentivize airlines, rental car companies and tour companies to offer travel packages that include activities within the National Park system. Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. I honestly believe that the rangers and concessionaires at the national parks are doing a great job in maintaining a safe, educational and natural environment for the American people to enjoy. We have many choices in travel, both locally and internationally. We need to focus back on homeland activities that promote economic recovery and ecological responsibility for the American people. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Nature is the greatest teacher of all. If we could just understand that the planet is a living organism, and it needs small places where humans don't tread. Places where other living organisms can live in complete confidence that this is theirs. Why are we continuing to poke holes in the crust and take her life blood? Are we ignorant. The youth already understand this. They are so disheartened at what is happening, they are indoors playing on their computers, Go outside! What a teacher the Earth is,

The national park system is an invaluable legacy that we need to pass on to our children and grandchildren and all future generations. Preserving, maintaining, and improving our parks means saving the essence of America, something all Americans should have a chance to experience. I urge you to restore the park system to the greatness of its past. As a nation, we are determined by our geography and our landmarks as well as our history and actions

Throughout my life National Parks have been a major destination or inclusion on vacations and get-aways. My family was poor when I was a child, but my parents managed to visit national parks where we children learned about geology, biology, glaciation, ecology, photography, bird watching, and countless other subjects. As an adult I came to realize that the national parks are also an essential part of our struggle to preserve natural areas and that they contain some of the most spectacular and most valuable such areas on the continent. Now I see them deteriorating under unsustainable funding; and I watch their educational role shrinking with the reduction in their interpretive staff. As a NPS volunteer who often does interpretation and assists in many other kinds of projects in my local parks and in the headquarters office (where I am essentially the park's librarian as it has no staff librarian). I realize we volunteers are helping to fill the void but in most situations we can't equal a professional, trained and specially educated staff person. PLEASE DON'T CUT BACK ON THE FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL PARKS--IT IS CRUCIAL THAT IT BE SUSTAINED AND EVEN INCREASED IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. Here's the bottom line: The parks and the staff that maintain and interpret them are a crucial part of the childhood and adult life experiences and continuing education of the American people as well as an essential and significant part of our battle to sustain the natural health of our biosphere--which is inextricable from our own health.. Thank you for considering my comments.

I love our national parks. National parks are a great investment for our people and the planet. Please take care of them to the very best of your ability. Thank you for considering my comments.

This petition is great, but as a 60 year old with two adult kids, I can honestly tell you that our family was by far happiest camping in National Parks and Forests, especially those that were not as commercialized as Mt Rushmore Monument, or some others. Outdoor spaces, including local parks, need all the funding, advertising, and support we can come up with. If people can't enjoy those, affordably, what else should they enjoy, politics? Video games? TV?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's National and State Parks are a valuable resource on so many levels; tourism, history, sense of pride and purpose not to mention the health of this ecosystem which sustains all of us. Please make sure that our National Parks are well funded for refurbishing and protections, for educational and tourism promotions and that they remain a source of renewal and enjoyment for many generations to come. Also, please think about enhancing the jobs prospects of Americans by upgrading the power grid nationwide as a means to ensuring efficient effective energy distribution. Integrate wind and solar technologies where appropriate, build desalinization plants and waste recycling technologies. Lets make our nation fit and prosperous with a plan to fix today's problems with tomorrow's vision! Thank you for considering my comments.

First let me suggest that the National parks and their hard won glory should be instilled in every students heart and mind at a young age-and repeatedly... Perhaps best achieved by a program thru which a \$75 donor(or 75 donors of \$1.00) is found for every middle school in America to purchase a copy of Ken Burns' 6 part series "National Parks- America's Best Idea." (At 53 years old I found this series incredibly inspiring on all counts- especially in recognizing that the need to protect from rapacious profiteers has been ever present) Secondly, Let the parks not distract from the mountaintop destruction by coal companies such as the Appalachians. The outdated use of fossil fuels and attendant destruction of our environment is at a boiling point. Parks are fine- and sacred- but if we do not teach each generation how to act to defend our planet against repugnant corporate automatons- what will we have? Little fenced in parks which we arrive at via travel thru a poisoned, barren wasteland? Let's do both. TODAY.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a frequent visitor to our unparalleled National Parks, I speak with authority when I say that true treasure lies not in gold but heritage. Sadly, we sometimes forget the treasures we hold in trust now and for future generations. For many years, our parks -- like our thoroughfares, water routes, and bridges -- lay fallow. More recently, efforts have been made to remedy long-term damage, and everyone I know lauds those responsible for the renewed push to repair and properly maintain our national treasures (and throughways). As a teacher, I believe that our park system is being under-utilized as an educational tool. All too often our educators and administrators -- and our business leaders -- overstress the value of a 4-yr. college degree, even a Masters, to the detriment of practical knowledge and the wisdom found in the great outdoors. Hands-on experience and first-hand involvement in revitalization efforts, renewal projects, and enhancement programs would benefit this country's young people as much as the moon landing did my generation. This is growing ever more true as urban sprawl and the creep of virtual reality spew to cover more of our natural and intellectual landscapes. Getting our kids outdoors again is vital to the health of future generations. Please help ensure that national parks have the funds necessary now AND IN THE FUTURE: -Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. -Preserve more areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. -Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. -Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. The public trusts that you desire to fulfill the will to maintain our most valuable natural wonders. Thank you for considering my comments.

I support your administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative and I request that the Departments of Interior and Agriculture make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem one of the top priorities. Yellowstone, our first national park, is a fountainhead of goodwill and recreation of the American people. Protecting Yellowstone ensures the protection of wildlife migration corridors and watersheds. Global climate change makes these protections more necessary. Communities throughout Greater Yellowstone consistently show committed involvement to protect this wonderful resource. Naturally, protection requires meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund

There is no greater national park at any season than Yellowstone. It has been a treasure to me and to my family. I strongly support the your Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is critical that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative. Protecting Yellowstone means protecting the wildlife migration corridors and watersheds that surround the park and make up the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. As we face global climate change, protecting these connections will only become more important. For America's Great Outdoors to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing to you to voice my support for America's Great Outdoors Initiative. For the initiative to be successful, it is vital that your Administration put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I urge you to make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative. Communities throughout Greater Yellowstone value their access and connection to the great outdoors and have a history of working hard to conserve special places. I am a strong supporter of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition because of their science-based approach to conservation in the lands surrounding our nation's first national park. One of the organization's main missions is to educate the public about the importance of protecting entire ecosystems, as well as migration routes between ecosystems, and not just arbitrary plots of land. As we face global climate change, and as our population continues to grow, taking such a strategic and comprehensive approach to conservation around Yellowstone and ensuring the connectivity with other viable ecosystems will only become more important. I urge you to look to the work of science-based conservation groups such as the Greater Yellowstone Coalition to guide funding decisions within the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, and to help make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a shining example, in our country and beyond, of conservation done right. As always, dear Mr. President, thank you for thoughtful leadership and your outstanding service to our country.

I support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative and believe the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem should be a top priority within the initiative. Please consider the following points: We need to protect the wildlife migration corridors and watersheds that surround Yellowstone. They have an honorable and long history of communities working to preserve these corridors. Meaningful funding must be in place to strengthen important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

I wholeheartedly support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative! Our family has been fortunate to have been able to tent-camp in many of our nation's greatest treasures--our national parks. I am grateful every day to know that they exist and am so thankful that citizens who preceded us had the foresight to establish them. But great treasures require safeguarding! Our government has a solemn duty to care for, maintain, and protect each park, and its surrounding ecosystem, from those who would exploit it and jeopardize its future. Two of the most visited, and therefore the most needy, parks are Yellowstone and Great Smoky Mountain. I believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make these two ecosystems a top priority within this initiative. For America's Great Outdoors to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Care and maintenance requires consistent funding. I strongly encourage you to pursue this initiative to the fullest! The future of our national treasures depends on it.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Having traveled through Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding area for over 30 years we know it is an ecosystem to both enjoy and protect. Having a vacation home 15 miles from the west entrance to the Park we feel privileged to spend several months in the area, including winters. Use of low emission snowmobiles by responsible individual drivers should be allowed. Before the requirement of having to go with a guided group, friends, my wife, and I enjoyed touring the Park three times; staying overnight at the Snow Lodge at Old Faithful. We can not do this under the current regulations unless we pay for the guide to stay overnight. Please do not allow a few careless riders deprive others of enjoying the Park in the winter. While we are supporters of several environmental groups in the area, we are NOT in agreement with banning snowmobiles from Yellowstone. Please, allow responsible visitors to enjoy the wonders and beauty of Yellowstone in the winter without the requirement of being with a guide. Alternate Plan: Individual snowmobilers would complete training workshops, up to four hours, and successfully pass a test. In addition, the individuals would understand and agree to severe penalties and/or fines for violations.

Dear Secretary Salazar and Department of the Interior: I recently spent 3 weeks traveling in Alaska and was overwhelmed by the beauty of the small amount of the state I was able to visit. I was also struck by how fragile the environment in Alaska is. I've lived in Colorado all my life and am aware of how fragile environment is, especially in our mountains. There are scars all over our mountains from metal mining in our past, although it did not threaten wildlife species. Knowing its destruction of fragile environment, I cannot imagine the destruction mining heavy metals and risking contamination by the chemicals involved in mining might cause in Bristol Bay, Alaska, threatening wildlife and Salmon and the traditional Native Subsistence Fishing. Every place I traveled in Alaska I saw bumper stickers on various vehicles to Stop the Pebble Mine. I absolutely agree with that sentiment. I know that Climate Change is causing destruction of habitat, and I don't know how much impact we can truly have on that although we must try. Not mining in Bristol Bay is a positive action that we know can protect vital wildlife habitat. Do we truly need to be mining Gold there and risking destruction? Please give every consideration to blocking Mining in Bristol Bay. Thank you for your consideration.

We need tighter standards for mineral development in wetlands. Protecting habitat and recreation resources should be a top priority and a stronger relationship between federal and tribal governments. We need to keep these wetlands for now and future generations.

I would like to voice my opposition to the proposed pebble mine at Bristol Bay. This type of activity is not what we need, especially in such a sensitive area such as Alaska and on public land, no less. What does it mean any more to have land set aside for the "public," if use of the land will go to a private corporation? There are promises being broken here and this is just one example of why so many people have become disenfranchised from their own government. Please deny this destructive industry's mine and leave the bay to its original inhabitants so that we may protect the quality of the environment there, and all over the planet.

Please do every thing in your power to protect Bristol Bay. Thanks,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please no large scale mining in Bristol Bay

Gentlemen: We beg you to be very careful and mindful when dealing with the beauties of our nature. Thank you. Blessings,

As one of your strongest supporters and a huge advocate of wild places I am asking that you protect Wilderness for future generations. We can help keep America special by protecting more Wilderness and quiet recreation opportunities, preserving more habitat and connectivity for wildlife, and permanent protecting remaining old-growth forests. Here in Oregon, we enjoy some of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring public lands in the nation. But places like the Wild Rogue River, the wildlands surrounding Crater Lake National Park, and the Siskiyou Wild Rivers are at risk from logging, mining, and other harmful development. Oregon has protected only 4% of our land as Wilderness, lagging far behind our neighbors. For the wildlife that call our public lands homes and for the millions who enjoy these places for quiet recreation, it is time to correct this Wilderness imbalance. Thank you for considering my comments.

The generic Pew message is very flattering to your administration, but I think it conveys a very important message. I would say that primarily 'wilderness' means just that. No roads, no mixed use. No humans except possibly hikers. Both on land and in marine environments, untroubled environments are necessary for breeding, birthing, and nurseries. Simply, we should not unleash the mighty engines of exploitation, consumerism, and population growth in areas where animals are vulnerable. Animals will also suffer with climate changes. The pressure of us should be eliminated. This is what the Pew message tries to say. I would add that evolution could come to an end for many species on your watch. Our watch. We simply HAVE to find out what we are doing and, I deeply believe, stop compromising regarding the lives of the wilderness. I wouldn't mind seeing a Native American in the Cabinet, Environmental Secretary, to guide us in our ignorance. over to you

I grew up in the Puget Sound area, have been to Alaska several times, am a long time lover of our northwest Pacific waters from California to Alaska as well as a volunteer watershed restoration activist. I know first hand what it takes to preserve and restore watersheds and particularly the wild salmon runs that are key to both the human fishing industry and the magnificent wild food chains including bald eagles, bears and orcas. We spend millions of dollars and human hours trying to restore deeply degraded streams and rivers in urban and developed areas up and down the west coast when the most powerful thing we could do is prevent the destruction and enhance the well being of already vibrant salmon streams, rivers and estuaries. Bristol Bay and it's watersheds are one of if not the single most vibrant that we still have. The degradation of this bay and watersheds that would happen by allowing the development of the pebble mine makes me shake with fury and fatigue. The loss of salmon and impact on dependent species makes all our other restoration efforts a ridiculous waste of time and resources. Do everything you can to prevent the destruction of this gem. It's a better investment in our people and planet than all our other restoration efforts combined.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think it is a wonderful idea that President Obama would like to encourage a national dialogue about conservation and review recommendations for the future conservation agenda. I would like to submit my comment about the importance of conservation of Bristol Bay in Alaska. Bristol Bay's clean waters and the abundant wildlife that depends on the Bay is threatened by the metallic sulfide mining by Pebble Mine. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to Pebble Mine (and all forms of mining) and the government should provide strong regulations to Pebble Mine permitting. The generations before us have put so much effort and money into preserving such wonderful American Gems as Bristol Bay. It would be a shame to sell our right to this pristine area for the profit of a corporation that is beholden only to their shareholders instead of what is best for our Country. Thank you for your consideration of preserving Bristol Bay

Please help to stop the proposed "Pebble Mine". At this point Oil Companies and Mining interests are no longer to be trusted, they have a record of saying one thing and doing another. Bristol Bay should not be considered for this Russian Roulette of the environment. There are too many endangered species and very critical and sensitive habitat for a variety of animals. Alaskan Natives depend on this area in a variety of ways. Should the Salmon population be affected it would be yet one more disaster for native culture. The beauty and sanctity of this place is spiritual and religious in nature as well as a biological treasure. Lets please protect this extremely rare and diverse area. Its important on every level of our world, society, and culture. Its also shame that these money hungry companies are dividing tribal people from their own, even brother against brother. Thank you,

It is time for boldness on the environment. It is time for the designation of new National Monuments. Please start with an Otero Mesa National Monument! New Mexico is last in the amount of protected public land in the West. So we need lands protected. I would also suggest a Stewart Udall National Monument near Santa Fe and also a dramatic expansion of the Gila into a large National Monument that will protect the endangered Mexican Wolf.

To Whom It May Concern (everyone?): I'm all for economic development and the 'greater good' - when such a thing actually exists. We've been raping and polluting the earth long enough, don't you think? It's like stealing from the rest of humanity both now, while the 5% of us in the US have been using 50% of the world's resources, and all future generations. There are clearly better ways to produce energy, without rampant destruction. With all the pollutants in our air, water and food, most of which have never been tested individually for biologic effects - never mind in combination - the whole ecology of the planet is slowly changing. Do we really need to go on ripping up large sections of the surface as well. Please let Bristol Bay be. I just recently returned from Alaska, and it is truly one of the last wild pristine (well, almost.....as much as anywhere left on Earth is pristine anymore) places of incredible beauty on the home planet.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Is a mine more important than pristine land with a clean watershed that supports valuable commercial fisheries, indigenous people, and an array of wildlife? Bristol Bay's watershed area known as Pebble is just that, but foreign mining companies are trying to move in so they can mine low-grade gold and copper deposits. There is no easy way to do the mining required, it will be very destructive and polluting. In studying, the impact of similar mines one would learn that nearby water is polluted 85% of the time. The proposed mine is to be an open-pit: 2 miles wide, 2,000 feet deep. This is wide enough to hold 9 cruise ships end-to-end and deep enough to hold the Empire State Building. Can you imagine the amount of waste, 9 billion tons held behind eathern dams? Also with an active fault line within 20 miles, can you imagine what could happen if things go wrong, the lost of a clean watershed, fisheries, a way of life for the indigenous people, and the total value of this pristine area. Please work stop the mining and destruction of Bristol Bay and its watershed are Pebble. Thank you

Hello, I believe clean water, natural habitat and care for our planet are of the utmost importance. In particular I ask you to take these into consideration while determining the fate of Bristol Bay. I know raw materials are an important part of our society but if there is someway to open Pebble Mine with tight restrictions as to the environmental damage that would be preferred. Thank You

As a taypayer and a citizen who adores America's most scenic and resource valuable places, please heed the call of this citizen and the majority of the citizenry and do not allow the Pebble Mine to go forward. The Pebble Mine will despoil some of the most valuable and abundant fishing areas in the world, areas that are rightfully deemed a national treasure both in the scenic and economic sense. The Pebble Mine would become Alaska's equivalent of the Deepwater Horizon. Let us preserve what we have got so that we can pass it on to future generations. Thank you.

We must not pollute this pristine bay.

Pebble Mine can not be allowed to disturb the place the wildlife need to live and raise their families. The animals need a safe and good place to live. They deserve this and we need to do all we can to make sure they are protected and live happy. Pebble Mine needs to go somewhere else and leave this area to the animals as they definitely deserve to live free and happy. This needs to be taken care of now and no more delays!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

To whom it may concern I oppose the Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay. Alaska is one of the last wilderness areas in the US because of its isolation and climate. Increased resource extraction - particularly mines with toxic waste - threatens wildlife, habitat and other resource industries, such as salmon fisheries. If the mine is permitted to proceed, then stringent environmental conditions and monitoring should be imposed at the cost of the mining company - miners should be compelled to pay the true cost of the resources they extract. Yours sincerely

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Everytime I hear about plans to start a new copper or gold mine I literally cringe. These mines are toxic to the area where they are and often to a wider area due to the chemicals used in dissolving the minerals. The mining companies always claim that they can do this while protecting the environment but so far I don't think that they have been able to....usually effluent leaks into underground aquifers and spreads across the land and into the surrounding lakes and bays etc. AND like the oil mine in the Gulf of Mexico there isn't any proven method of clean up afterwards.....Then the Federal government and the taxpayers end up paying for some kind of remediation....after the fish, birds and mammals have been killed off. This area is an important recreation and tourist area in Alaska where not only can you go fishing for trophy salmon but you can also fly in and watch the brown bears catch the salmon for themselves. This to me is a very rare opportunity...not found in more than one or two other places in Alaska and nowhere else in the world. Why would we want to destroy this unique place for any amount of gold--which after all is not in short supply or necessary to maintain our lives.

Dear Sir/madam: I am writing you today regarding my concerns over the potentially disastrous mining in Bristol Bay. As you are probably aware, Bristol Bay is an important ecological and environmental location. While I typically feel strongly about protecting our natural resources, I also understand the need for advancement of industry in our ever changing world. I support advances in technology that keep the United States on the cutting edge and competitive with other nations. However, the possible advances in this case do not outweigh the potential hazards. The mining for minerals in this aquatic environment put marine life in danger, and as such, place us in danger. I hear Michelle Obama speaking out for healthier food options for families in children, yet I wonder if the Obama Administration considers such issues as this when it comes to the health of the citizens of this great nation, and particularly small children. The release of such minerals, in potentially hazardous volumes, puts us at risk as such food items such as salmon will be absorbing these harmful chemicals, and in turn they become ingested by unknowing and innocent people. As I said earlier, I am cognizent of the need to advance our industry and technology in this country. But we cannot do so at the cost of our own health and the endagerment and possible depletion of our natural resources. Please block any mining in Bristol Bay and keep this resource pure and healthy for the benefit of our people.

I believe that we need to save more habitat for wildlife, to protect our old-growth forest, and to conserve Wilderness and quiet recreational spots. I live in Oregon and enjoy the tallest forest and beautiful public lands. But unfortunately, places like the Wild Rogue River, the wildlands surrounding Crater Lake National Park, and the Siskiyou Wild Rivers are at risk from logging, mining, and other harmful development. Oregon has protected only 4% of our land as Wilderness. We need to protect more. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I lived in Alaska for 20 years and came there knowing that there was a delicate balance between using and keeping resources so that all could benefit. I think a perfect example of this is how the tribal governments keep in mind traditional uses of the land while also staying open to some advantages of using monies made available through other resource uses. I feel that stronger federal ties to these tribes would help to keep a good checks and balances system as a deterrent to overzealous mining and oil exploration in the Bristol Bay area. Protection, subsistence, habitat and recreational use should all have higher priority than commercial mining interests, especially those mines (like Pebble Mine) that are a large-scale metallic sulfide mining operation. I think that very tight standards should be upheld in these cases, using the Clean Water Act. Alaska has a more delicate ecosystem than most and any kind of large-scale pollution could take a terrible toll on both wildlife and people who rely on subsistence use of salmon and other wild foods. Please consider closing the Bristol Bay area to large-scale metallic sulfide mining and keep this area pristine for future generations who will feel as I did about Alaska's wilderness. Thank you for giving us the time to comment on this matter.

Bristol Bay in Alaska desperately needs to be protected from tampering with its natural beauty and wholesome watershed in the Pebble area. A study of mines similar to the proposed Pebble mine showed that 85 percent of them polluted nearby waters. At Pebble, a proposed open-pit mine would be 2 miles wide (enough to line up nine of the world's longest cruise ships end-to-end) and 2,000 feet deep (enough to engulf the Empire State Building). As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams -- all of them taller than China's Three Gorges Dam and located just 20 miles from an active fault line. A single accident here would be disastrous. But even the construction and operation of the mine could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem. It's a risk most local Alaskans are not willing to take -- the true gold of this region, they say, is its fish and wildlife. Please help protect this area from such disasters!

I am writing to comment on the proposed Pebble Mine project in Bristol Bay Alaska. This is an area of untold richness in the form of clean water, wild salmon, other wildlife like seals and whales, and the subsistence of tribal of peoples. As a grandmother and physician, I hope that we as Americans can count on our federal government to protect the natural wealth of an ecosystem like this. We, as a people, cannot have a safe and healthy future without clean water, well functioning wetlands and respect for the indigenous people who have lived for centuries in harmony with their environment. I hope I can count on my government to close public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed to large scale metallic sulfide mining. My husband is a history professor at Yale University. When the students there learn about what happened to the people living in our New World when it was invaded by fortune seekers from Europe, they are shocked and disillusioned. Let us not promote cynicism in these young people. They need to see relationships between our federal government and tribal governments strengthened to protect the sustainability of our ecosystems. There has been enough plundering and pillaging in the past. Now it is time to do something different. Thank you for your attention.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello- I live in the Pacific Northwest and have visited Alaska numerous times. The threats posed by the future Pebble Mine development are immense and preventable. While you can write tight oversight and regulations and allow this environmental disaster to proceed, I want to speak as a person who lives closer to this area than most Americans.....and "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This IS the project to stop in it's tracks--we WILL lose the salmon, wildlife, water resources, and human resources that depend on this vibrant and living bay! Please take to heart the reality that wildlife and natural areas are truly priceless! Do not allow corporate profits to denigrate this beautiful area. Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts--this is my backyard you are talking about!

Please save Bristol Bay....do it for your children, do it for mine and do it for all of the children who need to see it one day. THX,

I cannot imagine why you would allow any mining in this area! The wild salmon alone is such a concern for it's safety and continued specie protection. Is there NO PLACE that is safe from being developed??? When we have polluted all the waters, poisoning the fish and wildlife, what will be left?? please stop the pebble mine!

We need to save our natural resources to save ourselves. Just look at China and the mess they're making of that beautiful country. Do we really want Alaska to look like that? Why have so many people forgotten that human beings are part of nature and that by dooming other species we're sealing our own fate?

Dear America's Great Outdoors: I am probably one of the few Marylanders who will write to you about Bristol Bay who has actually spent time there, eaten salmon there, and knows people who depend on its resources for their survival; one of my best friends from high school (in Pittsburgh) lived there for many years, married to a Native fisherman. As a result, I have been aware of the Pebble Mine plans for longer than most environmentally- interested people in the Eastern United States. I am gratified that this risky plan is getting attention, and pleased to add my voice to the debate. It is essential that the Federal government work to protect subsistence for Native people, and salmon fisheries for us all. Pebble Mine is a threat to both. I urge you to tighten standards for mining near wetlands; metallic sulfide mining especially should be restricted on public lands.

Through the NRDC, I've learned of the proposed Pebble Mine, which, it seems, would disrupt the ecosystem of Bristol Bay. I would like to see mining that damages ecosystems, whether in Alaska or Appalachia or anywhere else, prohibited. Practicing energy efficiency, using non-polluting energy sources, recycling — even mining landfills — would be better alternatives to more extraction and destruction of dwindling natural resources. As the real costs of doing what's been done on an ever-increasing scale become more and more apparent, the economic incentives for doing otherwise should also come clear. I would like to see any industry that extracts and/or pollutes be obliged to do thorough environmental impact assessments and employ triple bottom line accounting (people, planet, profit) to hasten that moment of revelation. In the meantime, I applaud the President's Initiative to rally support for preserving America's Great Outdoors and in particular, for seeking to reconnect young people with nature

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Sir or Madam, Our Earth is in trouble. Please do not destroy it anymore. Please do not create the Pebble Mine. Thank you for your time! Aloha

The Pebble Mine would create an vast eyesore in the pristine Bristol Bay. The clean water would be fouled, killing the salmon and other aquatic life. Wildlife would be poisoned and their habitat destroyed. People who depend on the land and water for their simple existence would have their way of life taken from them. I can't fathom such destruction in such a beautiful place that is so full of life. The rape of the earth is bad enough, but these huge corporations always attack and then leave the dying to suffer, never to make restitution, never to be sorry, never to be responsible. The only thing that matters is the big bucks. I hope that this tragedy will never come to pass.

I would like future generations to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too. I urge leaders in Washington to at least protect our existing shared outdoor spaces including parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, rivers and monuments and to conserve our farms and forests. Many of our national conservation organizations have identified additional critical areas in need of help. Even if we could just protect one or two of these critical areas every year, we could slowly expand protected areas that are beneficial for things like clean drinking water for our cities, natural pollinators and insect control for our farmlands, and erosion prevention of our wetlands and shorelines. Please let President Obama know that, although I may not agree with all his decisions, I think that overall he has done a wonderful job at an incredibly challenging point in time. I hope he can continue to find the strength to fight the good fight! Thanks--

Please stop the closure of public lands. And please stop the wildlands project

Protecting Bristol Bay and the surrounding watershed should be a top priority in order to protect its world class fishery as well as the rights of the indigenous peoples who live there. We know from past experience what the ecological consequences will be and should out right forbid mining in the area. Why sacrifice a whole ecosystem for the benefit of a few!

Dear Friends and protectors of our shared earth, We believe that public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed need to be closed to big metallic sulfide mining projects. This is an area that we believe should be kept clean and conducive to unspoiled wildlife, wild salmon (all too rare these days), and clean waters. We believe that the tribes who live there must be brought into the discussion and their views honored. And we believe that the standards for mineral development in wetlands needs to be much more stringent and then should have strong oversight. Our earth and environment are becoming more and more fragile. The huge population push is trying to force mines and development where there should be none. We must please safeguard against this. Thank you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership, as embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by the pressures of expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We need leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness-quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among federal public land agencies and Congress, to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President: I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Again, thanks to the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

Dear members of the administration, Please stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay. When is enough enough? Wh have so few places left here in America where there is clean water, wildlife, and natural habitat. The tribal people who depend on the watershed to maintain there traditions and traditional way of life should be a basic and profound consideration in your decisions. Their day to day lives have nothing to do with mine and yet, I find I care. I care about land I may never see or experience first hand. But my child might...and my children's children. There is nothing so important that we can't stop this destruction. Why not take it upon yourselves to just say no and stop the destruction of not only Bristol Bay, but all of the other pieces of America still left in a (somewhat) natural state? Take a stand for future generations as well as for us today. Increase oversight. Have more stringent standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Heck, why not all mining while you're at it? Put people first...not profits...not companies....people. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please start to do the right thing.

Aloha Please take into consideration the following: It is important for the long term health of our planet as well as the immediate health of Bristol Bay that we do allow mining at 'Pebble Mine'. Pebble Mine directly threatens the health of Bristol Bay (including the land, wildlife, and natives to the area). We must as a global community take responsibility for our actions. How they impact the natural world and at what cost. Once an area is mined it will NEVER be the same. We know this from experience. Even if we simply look at the situation economically, the natural world is exponentially more valuable in pristine condition than mined. Mining is a limited resource. An example of this is the rainforest. The plants that grow in the rainforest when consciously harvested can provide on-going sustainable income for many many people. This is in contrast to de-forestation - which is a quick fix bringing \$ and work to only a few and causes many long-term problems. It is our duty to care for the planet and leave her in excellent health for future generations. peace

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To whom it may concern, I am strongly against the proposed pebble mine at Bristol Bay. I feel that as Americans, we have the responsibility to protect such places of life and beauty. Such a place can not EVER be replaced once it is destroyed, which is exactly what the pebble mine would do. The cost of such a mine is incomprehensible and demoralizing. I have seen the long abandoned and no longer profitable mines which sit in waste. Is our land, our home, to be made only of such wreckage, that our future generations might know what shallow, savage and greedy people we were? I would like to think not. Please, find it in your hearts to do what is right for America, for Earth and for our children.

Dear Sirs, I am strongly opposed to the Pebble Mine. It will endanger the salmon, clean water and indigenous cultures and the PEOPLE who live there do NOT WANT IT! We cannot recreate these special places. Do not throw them away.

The government needs to stand up for a clean environment and stop letting big energy rape the land, killing everything in their wake. How about that BP disaster? The Pebble Mine is just as ridiculous. Big profit for a few, and untold pollution and misery left behind. Humans are really foolish and greedy to propose these types of projects in the last remaining wild, clean areas on the planet. I will vote against anyone that supports this stupid venture. Thank you.

Dear Sir or Madam: The Pebble Mine may adversely impact the clean waters of Bristol Bay and the salmon. It threatens the Native Americans way of life. All public lands should be in this watershed should be off limits to mining. Please protect habitat first. There should be strong oversight of the Pebble Mine process and clean water standards should be stronger. Thanks!

Dear decision maker, I have traveled to Alaska on four separate occasions and am a practicing field biologist, I would like to submit comments on the proposed mining in the Bristol Bay watershed. As a Colorado resident I am all too aware of mining's impacts on native species and natural communities. In the case of Bristol Bay, the Pebble Mine has the potential to wreak havoc on one of the richest habitats in our nation. In addition, the mine would seriously threaten the viability of subsistence peoples whose livelihood depend upon healthy lands and waters. I have been closely watching the specter of this plan develop over the years and am horrified at its momentum and potential for harm. Whatever riches may be gleaned from the relatively short lifetime of this development is not worth the damage that will remain behind in perpetuity. The pristine nature of the Bristol Bay watershed will never be the same if the mine is approved. The federal government must honor its responsibilities and provide strong oversight of the process, closely regulate air and water standards, keep a special eye on wetlands, and honor the rights of traditional people. Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments ...

I oppose the Pebble Mine project as I believe it threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters and the region's wildlife. In all such large projects there need to be more stringent guidelines regarding the allowance of permits and then intense oversight on the projects at different levels to make sure that environmental guidelines are adhered to and exceptions cannot be bought. As well, the indigenous peoples whose livelihoods are affected by such projects should have a strong voice/influence regarding ongoing execution of the project.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. We are asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and we urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. We need more wilderness areas in the east, south, and midwest - wilderness should not be thought of as only a western thing. Again, we thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors; we provided comments and votes on a number of items. We look forward to seeing the President use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency. Thank you for considering our views.

Please protect our wonderous natural habitats from mining. Do not destroy any more of nature's bounty in Alaska because of MONEY, the cost is permanent damage to a wonderous place

I haven't had the pleasure of visiting Bristol Bay in person to experience the beauty and majesty of the lakes, rivers, mountains and all the wildlife that calls it home, but I have seen the amazing photographs. Not only is this area breathtakingly beautiful, but it also supports the world's largest sockeye run and Alaska's largest Chinook run, which provide food for bears and seals in the region, as well as an economically potent commercial fishing industry. I hope this pristine wilderness survives the upcoming threat posed by Mitsubishi, Rio Tinto, and Anglo American, who seek to open more than 1 million acres of public land to mining. This proposed open-pit mine would be 2 miles wide and 2,000 feet deep, exposing the surrounding lands and wildlife to potentially dangerous and deadly conditions. This mine, once constructed, would generate more than 9 BILLION tons of waste! A study of similar mines showed that 85 percent of them polluted nearby waters. Whatever these companies hope to mine out of the ground cannot be worth more than the clean water, precious landscapes, unspoiled wilderness, and healthy ecosystem of the Bristol Bay area. Please, do what you can to promote awareness of this potentially devastating mine and prevent it from happening! Please do the right thing and stop the mine.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I support the use of bicycles on trails, especially "trails" that were originally built as "roads", within federal Wilderness Areas. Please do away with the blanket ban on bicycling within Wilderness Areas so that up and coming generations of non-motorized Wilderness users will have that much more reason to support and care for our nation's wilderness legacy.

Hello, Please do everything in your power to stop development of the Pebble Mine. Regardless of whatever safeguards are guaranteed, there are no real guarantees for a project this large and destructive. The world's largest wild salmon habitat and salmon runs are greatly endangered by this proposed mine. This is not only a threat to the livelihoods of thousands of people in Alaska's fishing industry, to native populations and their lives, and to a significant source of uncontaminated fish in the world's diet, but a great threat to one of largest and most pristine parts of the world's biological diversity. It is not enough that this threat is real, but also that it is caused by a proposal to mine primarily gold, a substance of no intrinsic worth to the development in the global economy. Thank you for considering these comments.

I have been visiting Alaska's Bristol Bay area for over 25 years. I am a avid fly-fisherman and hiker who appreciates the pristine beauty of Alaska and Bristol Bay in particular. It would be a crime to allow the mining corporations to spoil this part of the world and threaten one of the most important fisheries on our Planet. Look at their past record of broken promises and ravaged environments. Please do not allow this to happen to us.

please support National Monument status for Montana Glaciated Plains and Bitter Creek in Montana. this is a great opportunity for Bison restoration. Thanks

We can not afford to allow Pebble Mine to destroy the pristine waters of Bristol Bay, its wildlife inhabitants and traditional ways of life for tribal groups. Public lands in this watershed must be safeguarded from any metallic sulfide mining. Clean water Act standards must be more stringent when involving large-scale metallic sulfide mining. As stewards of these national gems, we must preserve subsistence, habitat and recreation resources for now and for future generations with strong governmental oversight at the federal level. Tribal governments need to be involved in the decision making process with the federal government. It is imperative that we preserve our wetlands by tightening standards for mineral development within these areas.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Bristol Bay watershed is one of the world's most productive wild Chinook salmon fisheries, and is critical to the survival of Alaska's eagles, brown bears (Alaska's grizzlies), and seals, as well as native Alaskan communities. For more than 30 years this vital watershed, which is surrounded by protected areas, has been closed to mineral extraction. But last year the Bureau of Land Management, under direction of the Bush administration, proposed a Resource Management Plan that would open up 1.1 million acres of this unspoiled wilderness to hard rock mining, putting subsistence and commercial fishing activities, as well as wildlife, at risk. The Management Plan is particularly problematic because the land is adjacent to the proposed site of the controversial Pebble Mine which, as one of the world's largest gold and copper mines generating over 9 billions tons of waste, would pose a risk to the entire Bristol Bay ecosystem. Hard rock mining has a dismal record. A survey over 40 years shows nearby water resources are polluted 85 percent of the time. Earlier this year the State of the Salmon conference concluded that Bristol Bay's salmon fishery was a globally significant resource and top conservation priority. Yet the region is now at risk of being permanently transformed if hard rock mining resource extraction commences here with potentially devastating impacts on the fishery. I urge you to consider that a plan that favors short-term mineral development over long-term land management is a bad plan. The BLM must prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement that reflects the exceptional value of the lands and waters of Bristol Bay. Working to maintain the current withdrawal of public land from federal appropriation until adequate safeguards are put in place. BLM must fulfill its obligation to this public land.

To The Department of the Interior, During our short 63 years of life we have witnessed the ravages of river mining and mountain mining in Colorado, the devastation of DDT on particularly venerable bird wildlife and human children, the lead poisoning of waterfowl about which we performed an high school chemistry project and a plethora of industrial contamination of land, sea and air worldwide, but especially within our borders. Bristol Bay is a pristine, virgin water rich with life and giving life through it's watershed tidelands and abundant ecosystem. Mining of any sort will bring a devastating blow to Bristol Bay life. All mining has bred dreadful destruction to the area and waters within it's reach. Decades after mining the area does not return to it's prior life and beauty; it remains scarred 'til the earth shifts it's crust. "You cannot un-ring a bell.!" We fear that should mining occur, the area will not and cannot be protected. Regulations are too lax, companies too quick to ask permission they instead seek forgiveness and workers shortsightedly take risks and cause killing events without thought or knowledge of their ignorance. The state and federal governments have problems communicating or agreeing. Please uphold the God given beauty and life resources of Bristol Bay; save it from the ravages of mining. Respectfully,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Of all the outrageous proposals I have heard in my 69 years on this earth, the Pebble Mine is, perhaps, the worst ever. If this mine were to ever become operational, it would wreak ecological mayhem on Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon and other forms of wildlife, and in particular on a way of life the natives of the area have enjoyed and treasured for hundreds of years. This absolutely cannot be allowed to happen. The mine must be stopped at all costs. Massive corporations like Mitsubishi are not the least concerned with protection of our planetary environment. They worship the singular god of profit, and will do whatever is necessary to make as much money as humanly possible, to the exclusion of all else. If they, and others like them, are not stopped in their tracks, our environment may well be damaged so severely that the lives of every individual on earth may be threatened with extinction. Perhaps not in the immediate future, but soon enough. For ourselves, our children and our grandchildren we must take action to halt the Pebble Mine and any other project anywhere in the world that threatens our ability to survive on this earth today, tomorrow and all the tomorrows to come.

Dear Sirs: As a Christian, I believe that God has given us the world in which we live. I also believe that God wants us to care for the earth and all its inhabitants, and to use those resources wisely. Therefore, I oppose the Pebble Mine because of its threat to the clean water of Bristol Bay.

It is not an unknown fact that mining causes polluted and undrinkable water, not to mention the havoc it wreaks on all fish, wildlife, plant and tree life that border the whole water source. Furthermore, Bristol Bay public lands should be closed down to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Habitat and recreation are highly valuable and these two things should be heavily considered when determining the priorities of Bristol Bay. The Federal Government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of the cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Wetland standards are already weak enough in the area and need to be made tighter as wetlands are the sole source for water filtration. The standards for large-scale mining should be more stringent. It would be great to see government and tribal governments working together for the best interest and protection of Bristol Bay. Thanks,

Please do not open our PUBLIC lands in the Bristol Bay watershed to development. The land belongs to all of us and to the creatures that live there. A mining operation would contaminate and destroy that beautiful ecosystem, so that a few could make a profit. Nature is returning a bounty of salmon that will support many for years to come. Please make it "off limits" to development. Thank you,

Hello AGO, I don't see a link on the AGO webpage to post info about the AGO on Facebook. Also I don't see a way to post an idea onto Facebook. I think this would be a valuable tool to add to the AGO website. Why? - I'd be able to tell my friends about this grass roots efforts easily via facebook. - I'd be able to share some interesting ideas to my friends on Facebook. - adding connection to facebook opens up the discussion to a potentially greater audience I know there isn't much time left in this campaign to collect ideas and thoughts. This addition would be simple to add to the web pages. Thank you,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Sir, I ask you to stop the Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bay. This bay is one of the nation's most cherished wildlands. It is one of America's treasures ! We are living a extreme ecologic crisis, and we must preserve every ecosystem. Future generations will thank you !

We have a lot of questions for the Interior Department. Okay, haven't we learned that we can't blindly trust "Industry's" reassurances that they can prevent devastation from occurring because of the latest, greatest technologies?? Worked well for B.P., Transocean, and Halibuton, didn't it?? I mean, really!! An open-pit mine at the headwaters of the largest salmon fishery left in the U.S.A.?? You do know there was a regime change in D.C. in '08, don't you?? Are you really considering granting permits for the largest open-pit mine in North America?? To companies that have already had 45+ water-use violations, IN JUST THEIR EXPLORATORY PHASE?!? When the fish are gone, they're gone-- do you remember assurances from the power companies how fish ladders were going to save the salmon on the Columbia River?? Lot's of questions....here's one more: Besides writing you, is there anything else we can do to prevent this from happenning??

Leaders of America, Bristol is not just the name of Sarah Palin's daughter, it signifies something that will outlast both of them and the rest of us: Bristol Bay. But via the proposed Pebble Mine, Bristol Bay could become just one more sign of the cancerous infection of resource exploitation. This kind of dig-and-grab, or drill-and-suck up, belongs to a savage age of snatching whatever seems to be lying around unprotected. For over a century such crude methods, accompanied by rapacious investors, have led to the current crisis in how to obtain resources, and how to use them. The Pebble Mine is not the answer. Crude methods are not the answer. Ignoring the crisis and letting investors continue as before is not the answer. America needs help. You are its leaders. Apply your wisdom.

Please, please stop Pebble Mine!

I believe in a strong economy but not at the expense of the temple we live in. Bristol Bay is a sacred area that should be protected from mining. I don't believe this industry can coexist with this ecologically sensitive area in a constructive manner. The risks are too great. I also believe one of the missions of the DOI is to protect our lands and waters from invasive development; not protect or encourage industry to destroy our resources.

Please save Bristol Bay! Stop the disastrous Pebble Mine and protect our nation's precious wildlands and other outdoor spaces. The public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to such metallic sulfide mining. Our government should have as its top priority protecting

Bristol Bay should not be contaminatd by mining. Mining would destroy the marine environment and the jobs that depend on it.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are many priorities in our country that need attention, but the one that speaks the most to our long term health and survival is to preserve the natural assets that the United States possesses. I urge our leaders in Washington to place conservation as a priority in their work as we move forward.

To whom it may concern, I would like to register my opposition to the opening of the Pebble Mine. Not only because of all of the sensible reasons listed by NRDC on their website or the ones I have read on the Wikipedia page devoted to this mine. I have personal experiences that make me feel that opening this mine is unnecessary. When pondering things like whether or not this mine should exist I always try to see if I have any first hand experience that would relate to it. And I find that one of the things that will come out of this mine I have personal experiences with, namely copper. I work in automotive and one of the things I do is help start up new product lines. Electrical drops and connections have to be made whenever we do this and the old ones removed. The old wire and cut ends from the new invariably will be thrown in the trash by the electricians doing this work. Hundreds of pounds of copper wire thrown in the trash because it is easier than collecting it and hauling it a few blocks to a recycler. We use in house electricians as well as outside contractors. These men and women are all certified trained professionals and know very well that this copper is recyclable. So why don't they? I don't know for sure but my guess is because they are Americans and they have been trained to believe that recycling and frugality are bad but consuming and waste are good. They have been trained to believe that by the same type of corporate entities that want to open this mine in this wonderful place. I think it is wrong to desecrate a wilderness just so people can continue to be lazy and sloppy. It is Un-American.

I am writing to voice my strong objections to the proposed pebble mine project. I truly believe that allowing this project to proceed would pose a serious threat of irreparable harm to Bristol Bay, Alaska. Therefore, I call upon federal government agencies evaluating this project to disallow it. The irreplaceable and fragile natural resources of the Bristol Bay area, including several North American wildlife species, should not be exposed to the destructive risks inherent to this project.

Bristle Bay is one of the last untouched, most beautiful places on earth. It's worth is much greater that of the temporary benefit of the minerals that would be extracted. The disruption of wildlife, depredation to the environment and pollution of the water supply would be too great a cost. We need to think long-term and realize that the health and beauty of this ecologically diverse land is worth more than the price of copper.

our survival depends on the protection of our beautiful planet and i dont like the idea of a cement jungle half my time is spent wandering through the beauty that this earth has to offer i am all for the protection of the earth and will do anything i can to help

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors and recognizing the work of America's 1,600 land trusts protecting natural areas, forests, important wildlife habitat and other special places, and keeping agricultural lands in use growing local food. Tax incentives, farm bill easement programs, the federal LWCF and Forest Legacy programs have helped land trusts conserve millions of acres. Please make the conservation of private forestland, natural areas, wildlife habitat, farms and ranches a centerpiece of your initiative.

No open pit mining in Alaska, please! Government should not be supporting private enterprise, thanks. Regards,

Hello, I respectfully request that you block the Pebble Mine from going forward. This mine constitutes a dire threat to Bristol Bay -- its pristine waters, its wild salmon, and other wildlife. I believe public lands in this watershed should be closed to large scale metallic sulfide mine. The priority should be to protect habitat and recreation resources. Local indigenous tribes use these resources for their traditional subsistence way of life, and their lifestyle should be safeguarded as well. For the benefit of all long-term stakeholders, especially the land's owner, the American public, please provide rigid oversight of the Bristol Bay watershed. Thank you,

As the release of the Administration's final report on the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative nears, I am writing as chairman of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC) to call your attention to key areas that SFBPC members feel warrant emphasis by you and the rest of the Administration as you move forward with implementation: make access a policy priority, work through existing successful programs, maintain or increase funding for access programs, work with other federal agencies on cross-programmatic opportunities and emphasize the fun aspects of nature-based recreation.

Given the close link between access and participation, the SFBPC recommends that you and other agencies pay particular attention when making policy decisions that may unduly restrict or limit access to public resources. As noted in the April 16, 2010, memorandum from President Obama, AGO is premised on getting more Americans outside and increasing outdoor recreation. Participation in outdoor recreation is closely linked to access to resources, lands and waters that support recreational activities; this is particularly the case for boaters and anglers. The Council fully supports access limitations to public resources where scientific evidence calls for restrictions. However, we feel that nature-based recreation is unique amongst other uses of public resources due to its relationship to conservation funding in the United States, and its function as a positive tool in managing and conserving sustainable fish and wildlife populations. Given this uniqueness, access to public resources for nature-based recreation should be a policy priority where sustainable resources allow.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We also urge you to explore ways for the DOI and the FWS to work more closely with other federal agencies, including the Departments of Education, Defense and Health and Human Services to integrate programs aimed at increasing participation and conservation education more broadly throughout the Executive Branch. The SFBPC would be willing to facilitate this effort by requesting a meeting with staff from these various agencies to scope out programmatic opportunities to expand the reach of participation and conservation education programs. We would report findings on prospective areas for working together with these agencies back to you and FWS staff.

Your responsibility to keeping the Earth at Bristol Bay pristine and unspoiled is much greater than it is to your richer constituents and to commerce. We all, including the local wildlife, can do without it the pollution this Pebble mine will cause.

Please stop the proposed Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay. Our marine life suffers throughout the seven seas. Whales and dolphins are under attack for frivolous entertainment and cheap food sources. We are the last generation that will regularly eat a wild caught food. AND NOW another threat to our marine life: Pebble Mine in pristine Bristol Bay. Shame on you for killing off more animals and fish in the name of GREED. Penalties for violating the Clean Water Act should be devastatingly high.

I would like to comment on the proposed Pebble Mine in Alaska's Bristol Bay. My step-son is a fly fishing guide in the Bristol Bay area, so I have seen and heard much about this area. It is truly one of the finest places on earth, home to many thriving species of fish and wildlife. Its pristine landscapes are not only stunning, but a national treasure. The natural landscape and incredible wildlife habitat are also the basis for a local industry based on fishing and recreation. The damage from a mining operation like that proposed by the Pebble Mine would be too horrible to imagine. I work for a natural resources consulting company and have seen the damage that even minor disturbances to wetlands can cause. Also, I want this mine proposal to be taken off the table. Because I don't think that is a likely outcome politically, then I want to urge the federal government to provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and the most stringent analysis possible of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Anything less is unacceptable. As we have seen in the Gulf of Mexico, assurances by large corporations that nothing will go wrong and that measures are in place to prevent damage are clearly unfounded and an insult to all the citizens of the United States who care about the environment. for the opportunity to comment. Please protect Bristol Bay!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Greetings, It is my belief that our national wilderness, wild areas, wildlife, open spaces, vistas, farmland and marine resources are a priceless legacy that must be preserved intact for future generations at any cost. Development of all kinds threatens America's best treasure - our landscape. Bristol Bay in Alaska is one such treasure that is currently threatened by the pebble mine. It is very important to strengthen relationships between federal and tribal governments as the tribal people have a vested interest in seeing these lands protected and preserved. Please don't let the hunger for short term corporate profits permanently destroy the beauty of our country.

Although my family hikes, camps and fishes in wilderness areas of the nearby Rockies, I would like to draw attention to a place I've never visited. In Alaska, where my children were born, a proposed mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Hard rock mining has a terrible record. Water resources are polluted 85 percent of the time. I'm lucky to live near beautiful places that are protected, and hope to help protect more in the future. Please help draw attention to the threat to the wonderful Bristol Bay. E.

In my opinion, , which is the most destructive form of surface mining since the use of hydraulic nozzles destroyed much of central California's Sierra foothills environment. in this matter, with strong oversight by the federal government of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed.

Decision Maker: This This Pebble Mine is not needed and will hurt the local economy. This area has always been dependent upon its pristine natural environment.

I may never actually visit the Bristol Bay area but I know people who have and if I do or my children do, or anyone else for that matter, I hope that the integrity of the beauty and wilderness and respect for the ecological health of this area as well as the tribal historical and spiritual relationships are intact.

I have serious concerns about the Pebble Mine: Please - don't ruin this great natural resource! .

I am emailing you today to request that you SAVE BRISTO BAY. Regards

The human population is very high, and our activities have major consequences. We cannot afford to make more poor decisions which lead to catastrophic consequences. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, the wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Therefore, . Protecting habitat and traditional subsistence should be the top priority. The federal government needs to provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. With this in mind, for considering my comments,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One clear way we can do this is to protect the Bristol Bay watershed. To me it is vital that Pebble Mine is not allowed to proceed in Bristol Bay because it will threaten Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life.

To Whom This May Concern: As I look at our country's natural resources that not only feed our mouths but also our souls, I zero in on Bristol Bay as number one. Now there is talk of opening the area to mining. This is a terrible idea which we will come to endlessly regret if implemented. This mine would threaten the Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional ways of life. Other points are that public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large scale metallic sulfide mining. Opening this mine would be a great disaster. The United States need to be the leader in reevaluating its policies concerning the environment and be the leader it is meant to be in this respect.

! One suggestion I have is to protect the Bristol Bay, in Alaska. The Pebble Mine project threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life.. Doing so ensures protection for the habitat, subsistence and recreation resources there. It's unconscionable that Native American well fare is still largely unconsidered in this day and age. There are times it is not worth the long-term impact. Corporations focus on short-term monetary goals and care little to nothing for long-term impacts of their greed.

President Obama and I strongly urge to stop the disastrous Pebble Mine which threatens Bristol Bay in Alaska. Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life are all in danger if the Pebble Mine is allowed to proceed. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should simply be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. These lands are too rare and cherished to risk. . Additionally and in the future, Instead of putting our government's efforts into sanctioning the destruction of our natural resources, we should be putting our effort into preserving the environmental treasures that still remain.

. : Each action that Humanity takes for has consequences. We are a Chain of Life and Consciousness. The Human Being is the eldest brother to the sub-human kingdoms. We should be responsible for what happens in the environment for they are the environment. We will not survive as a species if we do not take care of them. Air, Water, Earth, is shared by all. Even if you do wrong in one part of the Planet as we are One Life, one Humanity, one World, it affects the whole. The individualistic man that is greedy because he has not group consciousness yet is wanting to make money by buying and selling what is common to all. As top priority, we need to protect the habitat, this is our responsibility, and public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large scale metallic sulfide mining. We will run out of species very soon if we continue with this poisoning process that is affecting worldwide for we share all the elements. Poisons run throughout all water, air, and earth. Correct clean Water Act standards should be fixed thinking in next generations to come. Correct Human Relations should be strengthened between Federal and Tribal Governments. Tribes know this Earth is one Life. We cannot stand loose standards in the greedy mineral development. We should share all natural resources, they do not belong to one rich company. We are attempting to the health of the Planet and it is not reversible.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Although I have never been to Bristol Bay, I have traveled in an RV on almost every major road in Alaska and thoroughly enjoyed the wildlife and scenery. Please do not allow the Pebble Mine to destroy Bristol Bay.

i am writing to express my deep concern about the proposed Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay.

We need to protect and preserve wonderful areas like Bristol Bay. We do not need more environmentally destructive mining. The buck is NOT the bottom line. A healthy environment is the bottom line.

Please protect Bristol Bay in all its natural beauty.

i am in agreement with the following talking points re bristol bay: honestly, i can't believe i even have to point this stuff out. unless this whole "national dialogue" is yet another smoke screen/stall while another piece of the wild gets trashed. anyway i will hope for the best.

Please stop PEBBLE MINE.....Please protect what we have. We can't buy more or create more natural beauty. GMO salmon doesn't count.

I am writing to express my concern over the Pebble Mine and the preservation of Bristol Bay. The Federal Government should give priority to the protection of the environment that each one of us needs in order to live a healthy life. Large-scale metallic sulfide mining permitting and Clean Water Act standards should be more stringent in order to help accomplish this goal. If we do not protect our most precious asset, our natural environment, not only are we hurting ourselves, but future generations as well. Please consider carefully what you will leave to your grandchildren and theirs as well.

Please stop this terrible project . . .

I'm writing you about the Pebble Mine project. I am deeply concerned about this project threatening Bristol Bay's clean waters, salmon and wildlife as well as traditional ways of life held by tribe of those who already live in the area. I ask that public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. It's very imperative to strengthen the relationships between federal and tribal governments as well so that all work together harmoniously. We need to have greater standards for mineral development in wetland areas and standards for a Clean Water Act for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be stronger as well.

I am writing to you because I oppose the development of Pebble Mine, and would like to see the protection of Bristol Bay as a high environmental priority.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The American people will welcome strong and inspired leadership towards solid long term goals, one of which should be the preservation of our environment. The permitting process for the Pebble Mine offers an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that our government has a clear view of the likely project impacts, will provide definitive oversight of the process and the analysis of cumulative impacts on the Bristol Bay watershed, and will not allow the mine to proceed without sufficient safeguards and restrictions. This project clearly poses major long term threats to water quality, fisheries, and wildlife as well as traditional ways of life, in what is currently a relatively pristine environment. Large scale metallic sulfide mining should not be allowed on our public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed. Standards for mineral development in wetlands and Clean Water must be made as stringent as possible. The pressures to facilitate short term profits must be resisted. As in all of these cases, "Once gone, gone forever" We need to do better, particularly on projects as significant as the Pebble Mine.

Pebble Mine is a great threat to Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. We need to preserve all of wild America that remains!

I am writing to you to ask that your administration take strong, effective measures with respect to the Bristol Bay Pebble Mine permitting application process. The relationships between federal and tribal governments should be enhanced and and tougher. And for this administration and the future of our children.

Do we really need another pebble mine! Is this Sulfide mine so important, that the waters at Bristol Bay are polluted, the wild life poisoned from debris. Our "Clean Water Act" standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent! Public lands in this Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. We need to protect this habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permit process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed.

We need to have higher standards for protecting the environment as we churn through the 21st century as we are no longer neophytes in the matter of ecological concerns. Please keep the following points in mind:

Sir/Madame: Please protect Pebble Bay from the threat of nearby mining.

In 1956, I was a naval aviator stationed at Kodiak, Alaska. I flew over the Aleutians and the southeast coast of Alaska. I was awestruck with the beauty and integrity of the landscape and its wildlife.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

,I have taken previous action online to try to block the creation of Pebble Mine because of the ways in which it will negatively affect Bristol Bay. It is now time to personally address an email to help stop the passing of any bill or law that would permit this disastrous mine to become a reality. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. It is also urgent that Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining be more stringent. I feel very strongly about this and other developments that endanger our lands, water and food sources, and the conservation of our wild-lands. I hope you will take the time to read this message and note my vote.

It is the function of the federal government to provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Such impacts, in their entirety, should never accumulate to the point that they alter or compromise the current level of life in Bristol Bay. In addition, , as well as the standards for mineral development in wetlands.I would ask that their advance for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

My comments today are regarding the Bristol Bay watershed in Alaska. These clean waters and surrounding tundra make up excellent habitat for countless species of wildlife, not to mention the water quality benefits of an in-tact watershed. But this entire area is threatened by the proposed Pebble Mine.

I am writing to ask you to protect Bristol Bay.

, When I visited Alaska in 2005 I was absolutely floored by its beauty, grandeur, and stunning landscapes. It hurts me to think that the Pebble Mine project will actually happen. This will DEVASTATE the ecosystems of Bristol Bay.

I am writing to add my comments concerning America's Great Outdoors program. I want to strongly state that the Pebble Mine in Alaska threatens Bristol Bay and its clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. If we are going to protect we must start with this mine which threatens a whole ecosystem..for government agencies in this area.If this project goes ahead, and it shouldn't, the federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analyze the cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. From what I understand, standards for mineral development in wetlands are weak and should be tighter and Please add my comments to the official record.

The Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and rational subsistence ways of life. The federal government should provide oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and an analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Please consider our natural resource as our most precious commodity. ,

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Greetings Government Official- Some places on earth need our protection as they are exceptionally beautiful, are important habitat for declining wilderness species, and provide incredible recreational opportunities; Bristol Bay is one of these locations. Here are some important considerations in addition to keeping this place protected as a important natural asset to this nation. These lands belong to us for our long term use, not for the short term gain of mineral extraction, as the damage done can never be mitigated.

I used to live in Alaska. It is a very special place, please help keep it that way.

I am writing to ask that you stop the Pebble Mine. Proceeding with this project threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. If not, the region will never recover from the effects of toxic mining. It's time to prioritize the environment over profits. Loopholes and "free passes" should be eliminated and oversight strengthened so that future disasters like the BP oil spill don't happen again. with the emphasis placed on preservation of fragile areas rather than maximum extraction for maximum profits. The Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should also be more stringent. and native peoples given a say in how the land is protected and used. A renewed focus should be given to alternatives to some of the materials we have come to depend on in order to replace slash and burn tactics with sustainable practices.

We should strengthen standards for mineral development in wetlands

Please protect Alaska's Bristol Bay. The I am not in favor of the Pebble Mine.

Please stop the mine! Nan Stevenson "To love a person is to know the song that is in their heart, and to sing it to them when they have forgotten." "Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle, so live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly!" Anonymous "When the poor ones, who have nothing are still giving; when the thirsty pass the cup with water to share; When the wounded offer others their strength and healing: We see God, here by our side, walking our way..." Jose Antonio Olivar

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I spent 6 years of my life at the university of montana with my major thesis advisor, former chief of the forest service under clinton ... I am appalled at the lack of science being applied in general to our nations land management practices ... this is yet another example of the wrong extraction in the wrong environment ...I have grave concerns about the Pebble mine for the following reasons and I have added some ancillary thoughts as well. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large- scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened. Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. -

This disastrous mine would endanger Bristol Bay's spectacular wildlands, world-class salmon runs and other outstanding wildlife and it must be stopped.

AND IT'S TIME TO STOP FOOLING AROUND AND BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION!

As a photographer and environmentalist who has worked extensively in Alaska, this issue matters to me personally. Do the right thing and preserve this fragile Alaskan locale for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

To Department of the Interior:Please use all your powers to stop another environmental disaster. The Pebble Bay mine is a disaster waiting to happen and you can prevent it. Pebble Bay is too important environmentally to risk with an ill conceived mining project. The mine cannot operate without causing irreparable damage to the environment. Please put a stop to it now before we have another accident like the BP mine in the gulf that the project sponsors told us could not happen. They lied then, and the Pebble Mine sponsors are lying now. Don't believe them. Stop the mine NOW.

These talking points make perfect sense! Do what you can, Please.. I've been to Alaska and understand the importance of keeping it pristine.

Humans do not have the right to wipe out entire habitats and ecological systems, as has happened recently in the Gulf of Mexico. All kinds of mining cause these catastrophes. It is no longer worth it to get these resources. Instead, we should work hard to reduce the invasive human population to decrease our need for the resources.. Protecting habitat should be the top priority.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Administration I am writing as a citizen of our beautiful country asking that we protect our wild natural resources for the long term rather than giving into short term corporate interests yielding limited results and with enormous long-term destruction as the cost. The situation with the proposed Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay is an example of just what I am very concerned about... Please review the situation and my comments with great care. We are talking about our national future and the world that we leave to our children and our true care for the planet.

Why more destruction of our planet just for the financial benefit of one or two already obscenely rich people? Clean Water Act standards for metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. The benefits the Pebble Mine could bring to a few corporations are not worth the wholesale destruction this mine will wreck on Bristol Bay and its inhabitants. Although it is not located in a populated area like Louisiana the destruction will be much more severe and longer lasting than the Deepwater Horizon explosion. And despite the industry's lies there will be major accidents and constant pollution from that mine. Create a few hundred jobs for a few dozen years by destroying the thousands of years old way of life and existence of several thousand people? Please do not allow Bristol Bay to be polluted.

My reason for writing is to beg you to stop Pebble Mine! It is a travesty that this potential project is even being discussed. It's been well documented that the mine would threaten Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. The mine, planned by companies Northern Dynasty and Anglo American, would be the biggest mine in North America, with an estimated footprint of 30 square miles. Based on current projections, the mine would generate 7-8 billion tons of mine waste. The tailings waste would be stored in a seismically active area behind earthen dams. Any project supported by Sarah Palin can only spell disaster for the environment! The following are more reasons for stopping this mine: since they will bear the brunt of this disaster, if it's allowed to proceed. For the reasons stated above, this project should be stopped immediately. Leading jewelry retailers have also expressed their opposition to the mine, recognizing that the Bristol Bay watershed is an ecosystem of international significance and that much of the area is designated a Fishery Reserve. Many have now signed the Bristol Bay Pledge to show their support for protection of the Bristol Bay watershed. These include: Tiffany & Co. Ben Bridge Jeweler Helzberg Diamonds Leber Jeweler Caro Jewellery Fortunoff Brilliant Earth Blakes Fine Jewelry Goldsmiths Beaverbrooks Mappin & Webb Watches of Switzerland Fifi Bijoux April Doubleday JewelMak Commemorative Brands Hacker Jewelers Herff Jones Birks and Mayors McTeigue & McClelland Jostens Blair Lauren Brown Toby Pomeroy Reflective Images Michaels Jewelers Open Source Minerals CRED Jewellery Real Jewels Fair Trade in Gems and Jewelry Alberto Parada Ingle & Rhode Security Jewelers Zale Corporation For the reasons stated above Pebble Mine must be stopped!

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Nature is never out of balance. The question is will the balance of nature include man if we destroy beyond repair, the environment that has allowed us to thrive up to this point in time. Modern science is still in its relative infancy. Nobody really knows what the outcome of man's modifications to the earth's surface will be. Destroying or endangering the balance of nature in the few remaining wild places could leave us without the resources to go back to a balance of nature that includes man. Block this disastrous mine. The Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife, and traditional subsistence ways of life.

I am a citizen, voter and taxpayer, and I am writing to demand that you stop the Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay, Alaska.altogether. , not mining. And Please stop this mine.

I write to add my voice and vote to stop Pebble Mine. As a physician and mother of 2 young children, I am deeply concerned about the threats to further degrade our natural environment. The large swaths of protected land in this country are one of its most precious assets, to preserve as a sanctuary for endangered wildlife such as the salmon, and as a place for all of us to visit to cherish what is so beautiful and unique about our planet. We have seen too many large-scale environmental disasters within the past year to continue with business as usual. Please take my voice and those of our future generations into account in supporting action to protect Bristol Bay from mining.

My governmental representatives, for your good efforts to manage our public lands for the benefit of all Americans, those living now and those in the future. I would like for you to please consider the best use of the area around Bristol Bay.We Americans have so little of the vast lands left for preservation for future generations, that we had when our ancestors first arrived in the 15th and 16th centuries. If we allow our public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed to be used for large-scale metallic sulfide mining, there will certainly be short-term gain; but that environment will be changed irreparably for perhaps thousands of years to come. Protecting our animal and plant habitats, and providing for subsistence and recreation resources should be as much of a concern for us as a nation as gaining some temporary wealth through extracting non-renewable resources from the land. In my humble opinion, our federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. In particular, with thoughtfulness about the long-term benefits to local people, not just immediate opportunities for wealth for big corporations, so as to protect our wildlife, whose home territories are shrinking. I might never get to visit these wild places, but I consider the animals and plants living there to be as much fellow citizens of our great country as my next-door neighbors, here in Dallas, Texas. Furthermore, our , since it is becoming more and more apparent that this country's most precious resource, water, is now something of an endangered species. If we continue to allow big companies to cause irreversible harm to our nation's water supply, through pollution of the soil and the water reservoirs, should we also expect them to supply our drinking water in the future? Folks, the actions you take today are going to affect our way of life for generations and generations to come. Please do the right thing for our children and grandchildren, and for all our non-human co-habitants. Please bring a halt to the mindless development of our pristine wilderness areas for short-term profits.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing today to implore the powers that be to stop the Pebble Mine and, in turn, save the Bristol Bay. .

I am writing to express my deep concern that impact on the environment, the wildlife and the local population that make their livelihood in the area are not being fully considered in the Pebble Mine project

Metallic sulfide mining should not be allowed by Pebble Mine.

I am participating in President Obama's invitation to have a national dialogue about conservation and how to protect our nation's most cherished wild lands and other outdoor spaces. Having just returned from two glorious weeks in Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, I am reminded of the irreplaceable value of connecting with our wild lands and natural treasures. The public lands in Bristol Bay should be closed to large scale metallic sulfide mining which threatens the area's clean water, wild salmon, wildlife and the Natives' traditional, subsistence way of life. Standards for mineral development in wetlands throughout our nation should be tighter.

To the Department of the Interior: The Obama administration can lead the United States forward by closing Bristol Bay and other natural lands to disastrous interventions such as the Pebble Mine metallic sulfide mine. For those of us who live in urban areas, it is important to know that open wilderness can still be shared by all, for now and in the future. But this can only happen through strong federal protection of these lands. "Use" does not have to mean depleting natural resources and upsetting the balance of wildlife. It can mean the contemplation of nature, which renews our spirits and reminds us of the bond between all species and environments. I urge the Department of the Interior to take a forceful preservationist stance with regard to all ecologically fragile lands in its portfolio. . .

:I am writing regarding the proposed pebble mine that will, if allowed, . To protect both the natural and cultural resources of the area, .For too long has the US government ignored the rights and wishes of Native Americans/First Peoples, and instead followed corporate interests. and on a more general level, -- wetlands are important habitats and highly sensitive. Therefore, and thoroughly applied.

There are a million different reasons to protect the pristine natural landscape in Bristol Bay, but below are some specifics on why the Pebble Mine needs to be stopped:Natural beauty is quickly fading from our planet, and we need to take every opportunity to keep what we have left as clean and natural as possible. --

I would like to comment on the proposed Pebble Mine and urge you to block any mining activity in such a rich and sensitive environment. In light of the recent oil spills and the far reaching damage they have caused, it is prudent to be cautious, conservative and thoughtful. Don't discount the value of this. I think Public lands are just that – Public and every citizens. Not lands that a small few get too ruin and at the same time, benefit monetarily. One disaster could be disastrous. Please don't let corporate \$ win yet again in influencing your decision.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Pebble Mine is a project that should not happen. The pristine Bristol Bay's is too valuable- for tourism, for fishing, and for its unique wildlife to be sacrificed for a mine. It should also not be the home of a metallic sulfide mine for the same reasons. Cumulative impact effects need to be evaluated for this watershed.

Please protect Bristol Bay in Alaska's wilderness. The Pebble mine is a horrible short term solution to a long term need for metals. Hard-rock mining would be a disaster in this area. I vote. Do not allow the Pebble mine in Bristol Bay to ruin this beautiful wilderness.

Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life.

I am concerned about a recent plan to open a pebble mine in Bristol Bay. I believe that environmental conservation is not an option but an imperative. As a society, the time is now to act to preserve the health and well-being of our nation's wealth which is based on our ability to breathe fresh air and drink clean water. Sacrificing the last of our wild places which help to maintain our environmental balance is not in our best interests.

, Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened. Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent.

Good Morning... I am writing to you to let you know how important our wildlands, parks and outdoor spaces are to our family. There are many areas in the US that are under attack by development, mining and drilling. I am hoping that by letting you know how essential these areas are for families in the US you might reconsider the short sided need to ruin these areas and instead give them the protection and care they need. Families love to go camping and explore the beauty of the US, teaching our kids about our heritage and ways to be kind stewards to the earth. One specific area under attack right now is Bristol Bay. Please ensure our generation and the generations of kids to come that we have pristine wildlands and parks for them to explore and be stewards of. It's the right thing to do!

Standards for mineral development in wetlands must be tighter and

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To those this should concern, Please stop any and all forward motion concerning Pebble Mine. This mine will be a disastrous move against the ecosystem in that important and pristine area. Too many creatures, some of them already struggling to survive to ever constricting habitat, would be severely impacted and possibly devastated by the large-scale metallic sulfide mining that Pebble Mine would implement. Regardless of what the mining company and its experts will tell you, there is no way this mine can exist without poisoning and degrading the ecosystem it would exist in. No unbiased scientist can tell you truthfully that this mine can co-exist in such a pristine habitat without leaking dangerous chemicals into the environment. Not to mention there is no possibility of denying the severe impact that a massive pit mine will have on the area. Even if the mining of the gold that this mine would seek to rip from the earth did not require the use of dangerous chemicals, the very process of mining itself is essentially a rape of the environment, There is no way to successfully mine on a large-scale like this without seriously impacting the habitat geologically. This kind of mining will disfigure the very face of the land where it operates. Mining typically has a severe impact on things like erosion and thus the loss of crucial topsoil in areas effected by the erosion. Not to mention, I don't see how any human being with an appreciation of natural beauty could look at this region and want to erect a large-scale metallic sulfide mine or any mine at all. Mines destroy the area they are in and it takes decades and even centuries for the area to recover. And what is this all for? Gold? A precious metal used primarily to make jewelry. A metal that is largely about image, prestige and materialism. I'm not sure there could be a worse justification for the damage this mine will cause to the Bristol Bay area. This mine is for the purpose of making money for the sake of money. It's greed. The ore taken from the ground isn't a necessity, it's almost solely for the purpose of vanity. And for this the Pebble Mine will possibly eradicate species already walking a tightrope to other man-made pressures? Please, no. Furthermore, in general and in all cases concerning mining: The federal government should provide strong oversight of the mining permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the habitat that the mine would be located in and/or around. And in the Bristol Bay case, In closing, I am pleading with those with the power to halt this mine, to do so. Please do not let this pristine and vital habitat be decimated by a mine that will do nothing but rape the land and pollute its wetlands. A large reason for myself and many others voting for the Obama administration was its stance on environmental issues. Please show us that we were justified in that trust and do the right thing.

Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be Enough destruction for the sake of pure unadulterated greed has occurred. It's time we started saving those resources we have left. You could be a leader and innovator in these efforts. Please do it.

To Whom This May Concern: Pebble Mine is clearly threatening Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. It seems obvious that public lands in this watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. . Strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process must be provided, as well as analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Moreover, , and the Please keep this kind of commercial mining away from our shrinking resources.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want my legacy to the next generation to be one of thoughtful, respectful, protective consideration of our natural places. I hope you will agree that greed, exploitation, and pollution are not the values we choose to pass on to our children.

STOPPING Pebble Mine. And the government also needs stricter standards to regulate large scale metallic-sulfide mining. This is a dangerous business and we cannot afford to pollute another healthy water body, We have done enough damage already.

TO ALL CONCERNED: Keep Bristol Bay (a nearly untouched ecosystem rich with interdependent life, that includes us in the tapestry) safe from mining. Why? Bristol Bay is a working ecosystem of clean waters, supporting both HUMANS already there (both traditional subsistence, and commercial fisheries), and wildlife such as salmon, whales, seals, grizzlies, wolves. Consider just the SALMON! Bristol Bay supports tens of millions of them arriving there to spawn. The Threat: 1) foreign mining companies after gold/copper on our pristine land, Pebble. Hard-rock mining tears up the million acres/plus to get at it. 2) studies show that 85% of previous such mines polluted the surrounding waters. 3) the WASTE (formerly pristine, fecund landscape) would come to 9 billion tons, held back by massive earthen dams -- 20 miles from an active earthquake fault. THINK ABOUT THIS!!! We live in an Eco-SYSTEM, and our lives are dependent on the Whole. You destroy our environment, our literal home, and you'll find out "you can't eat money." The fish and wildlife cannot withstand such a huge development throughout. ONE ACCIDENT (and just think "Gulf" and "BP" before you deny such a possibility) would compound the destruction beyond calculation.

There are so few pristine places left in the world, if any, really when you stop and think about it. Places that aren't covered over in cement or dug up or blown up or toxic. What a shame! Please don't let this happen to Bristol Bay!

Just say no and save some of our best natural resources for the next generation,

I am writing to your administration officials in order to express concern for Bristol Bay and to stop Pebble Mine. A great deal of harm is done by this mine and mining procedures. The environmental impact is at stake, along with many other important issues.

I urge you to reconsider mining at Bristol Bay.

Bristol Bay is currently a largely pristine and beautiful part of Alaska. But a large mine is being proposed that would completely change the landscape from one of beauty to, well, a gaping wound in the wilderness. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay in many ways - its clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. . Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priorities.

Please do all you can to protect the vitality and health of Bristol Bay.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To the Department of the Interior: I am writing in favor of protecting the Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. The Pebble Mine threatens this pristine sanctuary, which should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Our top priority as good stewards of our environment should be protecting habitat, honoring subsistence resources and allowing recreation resources to remain unpolluted and vital. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and careful analysis of the cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Also, standards for mineral development in all our precious wetlands should be tighter. We live on a small, fragile planet that is being increasingly assaulted by development projects like the Pebble Mine. It's time to step up to our responsibility as citizens of the earth and say "no" to the bottom line mentality that threatens our ecological wonders and our well-being as a human race.

I believe that protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be your top priority. In addition, please ask the EPA to assess this and propose meaningful standards. Lastly, and such lands should be given all protections possible.

The decision to go ahead with the Pebble Mine project is misguided and unsustainable.

After seeing the destruction of the gulf I don't see how we could possibly continue to be so careless with our environment. Our wilderness needs to be protected. It cannot be allowed! Please consider that there are many people such as myself who oppose this mine. The benefits do not outweigh the risks. In this matter.

Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed.

Why isn't it obvious to everyone that we need to stop ruining our earth for a greedy few. We have enough of everything already. - - - - - Please be aware of the horrifying waste it would generate. As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams -- all of them taller than China's Three Gorges Dam and located just 20 miles from an active fault line. -A single accident here would be disastrous. The construction and operation of the mine could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem. It's a risk Americans and especially Alaskans are not willing to take -- the true gold of this region, they say, is its fish and wildlife. Please stop the mining and the drilling!!!!!!!!!!

Please think and act globally.

I am writing to seek a permanent stop to any future mining efforts at the Pebble Mine and Bristol Bay. There is just too much to lose and quite honestly we as a society do not have a very good track record in conservation of valuable resources. Losing this run of salmon and all of the goods and services they provide to the ecosystem and society is unacceptable.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Greetings,I am writing to request your action to save the pristine Bristol Bay, AK and thoroughly review and revise the permits for the Pebble Mine.

Please do everything to preserve America's wild places and environment.

Please stop the disastrous Pebble Mine from ruining more critical wildlife habitat and creating more environmental strife. Regards,

I would like to comment on the Pebble Mine at Bristol Bay. I believe I believe .I believe .I believe I believe I believe the I believe

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing to you to implore you to from a mining disaster. We have already ruined our Gulf Coast line with a massive oil spill. We cannot afford to leave our children a ruined country. The destruction that will occur is unthinkable. As you know Bristol Bay area is a treasure drawing many forms of wildlife, that require our protection to their habitat such as: grizzlies, wolves, seals and whales spawning salmon which are the linchpin of this glorious wilderness, supporting valuable commercial fisheries, indigenous people and a vast array of wildlife. Yet the whole system could come crashing down if giant mining interests get their way. The only way these foreign mining companies can get at the rich gold and copper deposits located in this pristine area that we the United State people have preserved, is to extract this ore through destructive and pollution-producing hard-rock mining. At risk is over 1 million acres of public land. This land should be preserved for our children and grandchildren. What kind of a legacy are we leaving exchanging dollars for natural resources that once gone will never come back? I tell you this beautiful piece of natural beauty must remain in its natural glory. It is our duty as human beings protecting the earth to be excellent sheppard's of this treasure. I implore you to use your conscience and protect this natural wonder that we the people of the United States have inherited. Think about it, do we want pristine areas with animals in their natural habitat roaming free? Or an open-pit mine that would be 2 miles wide (enough to line up nine of the world's longest cruise ships end-to-end) and 2,000 feet deep (enough to engulf the Empire State Building)? As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams -- all of them taller than China's Three Gorges Dam and located just 20 miles from an active fault line. A proposed a single accident here would be disastrous. But even the construction and operation of the mine could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem. It's a risk most local Alaskans and United States citizens all over the country are not willing to take -- the true gold of this region, they say, is its fish and wildlife. I live in New England and feel strongly we need to protect this area. It is our duty. A study of mines similar to the proposed Pebble mine showed that 85 percent of them polluted nearby waters. The Pebble Mine proposal threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. The government should enact the following guidelines immediately to protect this area: Can the Obama administration really afford to leave a legacy of destruction of our natural resources? Or will the administration take the right course to saving our beautiful land by protecting Bristol Bay from ruin. I implore you to act on behalf of our children and all the living creatures of Bristol Bay to stop the Pebble Mine development.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please do not allow the Pebble Mine to come into existence. A study of mines similar to the proposed Pebble mine showed that 85 percent of them polluted nearby waters. At Pebble, a proposed open-pit mine would be 2 miles wide (enough to line up nine of the world's longest cruise ships end-to-end) and 2,000 feet deep (enough to engulf the Empire State Building). As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams -- all of them taller than China's Three Gorges Dam and located just 20 miles from an active fault line. A single accident here would be disastrous. But even the construction and operation of the mine could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem. It's a risk most local Alaskans are not willing to take -- the true gold of this region, they say, is its fish and wildlife. We have seen the effects of lax permitting processes and the disasters that have ensued. Please take these items into account when the Pebble Mine is discussed.

STOP PEBBLE MINE. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life.

,We have finite Natural Resources and diminishing areas of undeveloped land on this planet. We cannot and in good conscience should not continue to cave to business interests. Once gone our wild places are never to return. I know of nowhere on this planet or in mankind's history where business or government has taken what it wants and not left destruction in its wake. As a species we are incapable of using only what we need and allowing nature to keep our ecosystems in balance. We are the only species on our planet that takes more than we need because of greed or a hunger for power. If we do not apply some self control we will destroy this world. One of our government leader's roles is to create and enforce this type of control., and any connections between those making the rules and those benefiting in any way from allowing business to spread onto our remaining undeveloped lands should be forbidden. We cannot trust industry to police itself.Please think globally and look to repercussions at least three generations into the future when deciding to allow drilling, mining, excavating, or any other ventures that create natural disturbances. Our world is not renewable and must be protected from us.

The Pebble Mine must not be allowed clearance. The govt should block it.In fact, Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to all large-scale metallic sulfide mining, and protecting habitat should be the top government priority. That being said, to work together for the good of Bristol Bay.Block Pebble Mine. Even the best jewelers are saying no to Pebble Mine. So should you.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To Whom it May Concern: I am writing to you today to try to dissuade you from making a huge mistake. This type of mining is a disaster for the wildlife and the ecosystem and we should be protecting habitat - not destroying it. The people that live in and around the Bristol Bay watershed are threatened - not only their health but the health of the ecosystem that provides for them. How many wetlands need to be destroyed before the standards for mineral development are deemed inappropriate? For once, can we not let \$\$ be the deciding factor in a project? Could you be concerned with the health and welfare of a nation and a planet? I hope that you can do so today when making decisions about this man-made catastrophe. There is bound to be much suffering if you go through with this project.

Please protect Alaska's Bristol Bay from a Bush-era mining proposal, which would expose 1.1 million acres of Alaska's wilderness to the devastating effects of hard rock mining and drilling.

I am writing to urge you to stop Pebble Mine from destroying the wildlife Eden of Bristol Bay. I am originally from Alaska, and the destruction that could fall upon my home if Pebble Mine is allowed to happen could be catastrophic. There are not many wildlife refuges left, and it is our job to protect them from such hazards. If the salmon are negatively impacted by this mine, what is to come of the grizzlies, wolves, seals and whales who roam this nearly untouched ecosystem, all drawn by those very salmon? And what of the native people whose lively hood also depend on them? Huge salmon runs are the linchpin of this glorious wilderness, supporting valuable commercial fisheries, indigenous people and a vast array of wildlife. The construction and operation of the mine itself could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem, let alone what could happen if there were an accident. Plus a study of mines similar to the proposed Pebble mine showed that 85 percent of them polluted nearby waters. At Pebble, a proposed open-pit mine would be 2 miles wide (enough to line up nine of the world's longest cruise ships end-to-end) and 2,000 feet deep (enough to engulf the Empire State Building). Does that sound like something that belongs in a wildlife refuge? And as proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste. For all those reasons. Our planet deserves better than that. Dr. Seuss once wrote, "UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." Well I am that someone. And I urge you to be that someone as well.

I am writing to ask you to provide strong federal oversight of Pebble Mine in order to protect Bristol Bay.

Bristol Bay is a unique and pristine area which has supported sustainable lifestyles for generations. The Pebble Mine would wreak havoc on this fragile ecosystem. Please consider the following points: Mining interests and the corporations that control them need stringent oversight by the government, for their only priorities are exploitation and profit. It is becoming increasingly evident that the protection and preservation of our environment is the most essential, the most vital, priority.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would first like to say I'm not from the US, but it is my duty to protest against anything that I know is done destructively, therefore, I write to you to tell you about this important issue, regarding the Pebble Mine. Here are the main things I consider important not to overlook, and on the contrary, that should really be looked after extremely carefully to make the right decisions: I hope you take the right path, and preserve our natural resources, as well as anything related to people's wellbeing.

Please consider carefully before you help commit to ruining Briston Bay and its watershed!
Hoping you will do the right thing!

I would like to comment on our nation's need to protect Alaska's Bristol Bay from strip mining. I've been to Alaska with my family, and we were impressed with its natural beauty, abundant wildlife, and also the fragility of its Arctic ecosystems. Alaska's natural environment is already threatened by climate change more dramatic than what we're experiencing in my home state of PA. Though I've never been to Bristol Bay, I feel strongly that it must be protected for future generations of Alaskans and Americans to enjoy and appreciate. As the permitting process proceeds, the federal government should provide strong oversight of the cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed, so that the decision-makers can weigh the costs and benefits of mining vs. protecting this gem long-term.

No question then that our government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed, tightening , making more stringent rules governing clean water standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining and development and forging stronger relationships between federal and tribal governments.

The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process. The cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed should be analyzed in exacting detail Let's keep the wild in wilderness and pass it on to those who will come after us.

: As a member of NRDC and as a citizen concerned about the environment, let me say at the outset that I strongly object to the proposed Pebble Mine at Bristol Bay. This mine is a threat to these pristine waters, wild salmon, wildlife and the natives' traditional subsistence way of life. It is my belief that: The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble mine permitting process and cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. It is short sighted and selfish for those with the power to do so to ravage a pristine area for short term gain. I hope you can be convinced to reconsider.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

, I am writing to oppose the Pebble Mine and express my concern for the damage it will cause to Bristol Bay. I am an avid fly fisher with a great love of the outdoors, and also have a degree in anthropology and archaeology. Our wild places are slowly but surely being destroyed, and once gone can never be recovered. Similarly, traditional ways of life and cultural diversity is being lost at an alarming rate. I believe allowing the Pebble Mine would be both an environmental and cultural disaster – it will negatively impact the health of the Bay and its wildlife, as well as destroy the ability of the local people to carry on their current way of life. Mining is not only damaging to the ecosystem, but mines are an eyesore that will prevent tourists and other visitors from wanting to visit what is now a spectacularly beautiful, scenic, pristine, vibrant and living place. The Mine will have a negative impact on the salmon, who are already under threat throughout their range. This impact will also harm the other wildlife around the Bay that relies on the salmon for sustenance. All of these actions will serve to protect this rare and beautiful place for future generations. It will also send a message that we care about the environment and things beyond financial gain. Wild places are necessary, both for the health of our planet and for the mental health of our citizens. Please do the right thing and protect the wild places we still have left, including Bristol Bay.

Please do not allow mining in a sensitive environmental area like Bristol Bay. There are very few unspoiled landscapes left in this country or even on this planet. Please consider the needs of our ecosystem and our future generations of Americans who will never be able to erase the damage done by a mining operation. .

Please consider the dire impacts that allowing a disastrous mine in Bristol Bay... Now is the time for Relationships between federal and tribal governments to be strengthened & to improve both the standards for mineral development in wetlands & Clean Water for large-scale metallic sulfide mining. After all protecting this now, with benefit the local community & wildlife now for generations to come, whereas allowing it will leave a legacy of destruction & pollution for many more generations. While the local community & wildlife suffers, a few rich distant shareholders will benefit without having to live with the consequences of their actions.

. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. a.. The Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. a.. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. a.. a.. Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

, The following are reasons why Pebble Mine would have a disastrous impact on the Bristol Bay ecosystem and what should be done about it. 1.) Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. 2.) Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. 3.) The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. 6.) Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent.

Please do NOT allow the Pebble Mine Project to move forward:

America's Great Outdoors, Bristol Bay is a national and environmental treasure. I can't believe the Pebble Mine has gotten as far along as it has. You cannot have "safe" metallic sulfide mining any more than you can have safe cyanide mining or safe deep water drilling or safe nuclear power plants. Every one of these disastrous types of projects is a ticking time bomb. Just look at the history of various giant conglomerates which care only about corporate profits and nothing about indigenous human and wild populations. We cannot allow metallic sulfide mining at Pebble to kill more of our precious ocean environment than BP and assorted criminal organizations have already done. Our poor earth has sustained incredible damage from unprincipled, environmentally destructive practices. At a minimum: Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to metallic sulfide mining. It is unconscionable to allow big corporations to stomp on indigenous rights, placing environmental protection above corporate profits. Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be vastly more stringent or better, prohibit it.

Please do all that you can to save and protect Bristol Bay.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am an American citizen who loves our country and its treasured wildlands and wildlife resources. As I read the news, too often I am left with the feeling that our Government Agencies are more on the side of business and developers than they are intent on protecting our natural resources from destruction. The mandate of our Government Agencies should as a priority be the preservation of our land, seas and the wildlife that live there for future generations. - Specifically, just now the Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence way of life. - Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic sulfide mining. - The federal government should provide strong oversight of the process which might permit such a venture as the Pebble Mine. The federal government should be much more stringent before considering permits and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. - The relationship between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened. - The federal government should strengthen the standards for mineral development in wetlands and should make them tighter. - - The federal government should also be much less generous in issuing permits to special interest groups, such as ranchers or all-terrain-vehicles, which lets them use our public lands. The American Voter voted for change. The change should be for the protection of the interests of the American Citizen and future generations

Watershed of Bristol Bay is NOT a safe place for mining or other industrial activity. Key reason why the Pebble Mine must NOT be allowed include: The federal government has to provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permit review process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Relationships between federal and tribal governments need to be strengthened. Standards for mineral development in wetlands, and Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining must be applied at their most stringent level, considering the sensitivity of the Bristol Bay eco-system, including its wild salmon.

These should be the top priorities of North American governments:- -There should be tighter standards for mineral development in wetlands. - The same should apply for the Clean Water Act. - Regarding Bristol Bay:- this area should not have large scale sulphide mining at all. - There should be closer ties between federal and tribal governments.

I am writing regarding the threat to Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life if the Pebble Mine is allowed. I have visited the great state of Alaska twice now and it truly is a beautiful place and America's last frontier. I have not had the opportunity to visit Bristol Bay but I bet it's as beautiful as the Glacier Bay, Denali, and the Brooks Range areas. Strong federal government oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to this watershed must be provided and To impact this natural wonder will not only affect wildlife but the First Nation people who depend on its pure waters for their way of life. Alaska's tourist industry will also be impacted and for all of the above reasons, I request that the permit for the Pebble Mine not be allowed.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am appealing to you to curb the mining and other development interests in Alaska that threaten its environment and wildlife. I have been fortunate enough to visit some of the beautiful spaces in this great state and hope it can be preserved for the enjoyment of my grandchildren. The Pebble Mine threatens that future. It also threatens the well-being of tribal interests in the Bristol Bay area. As a resident of our most densely-populated state I know first hand how uncurbed development can wreak havoc on an environment and how difficult it is to repair what has been damaged. The time for prevention is before the damage is done.

This disastrous mine would endanger Bristol Bays spectacular wildlands, world-class salmon runs and other outstanding wildlife. We need to protect our nations most cherished wildlands and other outdoor spaces. . .

Alaska is home to some of our country's most spectacular wild places, and we need to protect them for the enjoyment of all Americans. Once such place is Bristol Bay. Commercial interests such as the proposed Pebble Mine threaten to do irreparable damage to Bristol Bay.

– Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, and wildlife. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large scale metallic sulfide mining. . Relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened. I implore you all to protect our diminishing natural treasures – the wildlife are counting on us.

I believe that the continued protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge should be of the highest priority for the Administration and this country. It's majesty is unsurpassed, it's sensitivity well known, and it's importance as a wild place to be protected is underestimated by many including many of my fellow Alaskans. In addition, I live in Juneau located in the middle of the Tongass National Forest. I believe that protection of the Tongass should be a high priority, including the so-called "roadless rule." Our old growth forests are a gem to be treasured and preserved. Thank you for your time and attention.

We support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative.

I believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make the Northern Rockies and Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative. 1) 2) NREPA (Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act) is also a vitally important piece of legislation and a job creator in our struggling economy, please support this wilderness creation along the spine of our nation's rocky mountains. thank you for your time and considering our opinions,

Our parks, especially Yellowstone, are one our most precious resources and must be protected for our future generations. Thank you for taking this action.

As a part of keeping Yellowstone special, outrageous uses such as snowmobile recreation should not be permitted.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We visit the Park twice a year and sometimes 3 trips a year. We value the wildlife, so dependent on watersheds and open spaces, and the very special nature of Yellowstone. Please do all that you can to protect and provide financially for this very special place/space. Thank you

As someone who has visited Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon National Parks and has the Bear Mountain State Park in my county in New York I am telling President Obama, that America must do more to protect our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and rivers. As you know, the Yellowstone National Park, the world's first national park, is a focal area for protection of our public lands. The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, with Yellowstone at its core, is one of the last, largely intact ecosystems left on earth. As Americans, we must ensure it's long-term protection today, tomorrow, and for future generations.

Native people have always known that we must live in harmony with our surroundings. they are not there for our abuse and destruction please stop this action now

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Obama Administration, It is a shame that the modern primary environmental statutory legacy of the U.S. lies with the republican administration of Richard Nixon. Historically, Teddy Roosevelt was the father of our National Park System. Even George W. Bush established the world's largest marine sanctuary. When will the democrats make history? It is important that we don't waste any time finding ways to protect our wild lands and wildlife. We have so many beautiful lands that need our help. Once they're damaged by abuse it is very hard if not impossible to fix them. A good example is the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf Coast after the oil spill this year. Much of the marsh has died and will continue to die. The habitat for the wildlife and the protection for cities like New Orleans will be gone. The economic impact could be devastating. Once the land disappears into the Gulf there is no way to bring it back. Any additional drilling should be halted and strict oversight of the present drilling should be a top priority. Another area that demands immediate attention is the Bristol Bay in Alaska. At this time many people are fighting to keep out the Pebble Mine, proposed to be the the world's largest gold and copper mine. Opening up this unspoiled wilderness to hard rock mining would generate 9 billions tons of waste and pose a risk to the entire Bristol Bay ecosystem. This mine will harm the clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife, recreation and traditional subsistence ways of life of the native people. The and the The government must do a thorough environmental impact study which will reveal the devastation this mine will cause. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge should never be used to drill for oil or gas. There must be somewhere on earth that is left alone for the wildlife and free from the footprint of the oil and gas industry. The Ivory-billed woodpecker, America's largest woodpecker, is probably gone forever because of the practice of over-logging their habitat. In the Sept. 2010 issue of the Smithsonian magazine: James Tanner an ornithologist who studied and recorded photographs of the Ivory-bill in 1938 in a large virgin forest in northeast Louisiana called the Singer Tract wrote in a 1942 article in The Wilson Bulletin, " 'there is little doubt but that complete logging of the {Singer} tract will cause the end of the Ivorybills there'. The tract was indeed completely logged, and an ivory-bill sighting there in 1944 remains the last uncontested observation anywhere in the United States." The practice of fracking by the gas industry must be given a complete evaluation by the EPA. According to many people the water in their wells was polluted by gas and other chemicals used in the fracking process after the gas companies started extracting gas on their land or nearby. It has the possibility of polluting the water and killing wildlife in streams and rivers all over the United States not to mention polluting the drinking water of millions of people. More Americans die each year from coal ash pollution related diseases than died on 9/11, but where is the equivalent outrage? The mercury from coal ash pollutes many of our lake and streams. The mountain top removal common in West Virginia must be stopped. It not only harms the beauty of the mountain, it pollutes the streams and rivers nearby. If you can't drink the water and you can't breathe the air, there is no way to live a decent life. There must be someone telling the companies responsible for all this pollution that they can't have it all, that there are limits to what they can take from the environment and what pollution they can produce. The only one with the ability to do that is our Federal Government. We are asking you to help to save our wild lands, wildlife and ourselves.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To those of you in charge of the Mine Project: Do you “get” it now? for giving me this opportunity to voice my opinion against the Mine. Now get busy and get outta there. There is probably something else you can do today right?

The destruction of the Bristol Bay fisheries would occur if the Pebble Mine was developed. You already know that. The public would not benefit from this private destruction of their public resource. The public does not support the Pebble Mine. Stop the Pebble Mine. .

Green energy and resources are the future. There is no bridge that needs to be built between now and the future – the future is NOW. If it isn't renewable – why do it? Just to ruin another area so a tiny few can make Millions/Billions with the Excuse that it creates a miniscule amount of jobs. Look forward – forget the rhetoric.

I write to ask you to fully consider the environmental and cultural impacts of allowing the Pebble Mine project to go forward in Bristol Bay, Alaska. Clean Water Act standards for large scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent, and The entire Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to this kind of development. This project could eventually destroy the traditional subsistence culture of native peoples in the area. The federal government should strengthen it's relationship with tribal governments and give utmost respect to their position on this mine project. Please do not let this project go forward.

All of these -- and the the culture of devastation of our natural treasure that has steadily been taking place in the last twenty years, which has undone the culture of preservation our pioneer forefathers began, several giving their entire careers to the projects, is beyond me. There is no need. Every day scientists discover new ways from what we didn't know before. I talked with a fellow fifteen years ago whose company has a method for mining, leaving the ground above virgin and useable. Wonders are possible. We will learn soon we'd better stop denuding the land or else. As for using space, don't get me started! So wrong headed. Empire is what that is about. In the meantime, our own government is willing to blindly proceed in Bristol Bay, eradicating its wildlife, cruelly, disrupting the human inhabitants' culture and livelihoods once again. Where have we come? No where. I'm seventy eight and I weary. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources, should be top priority. Federal and tribal governments relationships must be strengthened and Native welfare must be prime. Standards for mineral development in wetlands must be stringent. In fact, we need all wetlands preserved in perpetuity. If not, we imperil ourselves. Is anyone listening to the scientists? If you go ahead despite us, the Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining must be totally stringent. I believe we don't need mining. We are sophisticated. We have gone beyond it, Yet, in a rush as always, we want the simple way so we may rush ahead to the next mistakes, the cheaper ways, to our loss..

I am writing to strenuously object to allowing foreign mining companies access to the public lands around Bristol Bay, especially that area referred to as Pebble Mine. It is time for the Obama administration to stand up to those corporations that would damage the public lands which belong to all Americans.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please know that I oppose the Pebble Mine and urge you to take action to protect Bristol Bay by opposing the mine as well.

: I hope that you will be able to understand: Pebble mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and Traditional subsistence ways of life. Further- I hope you will be able to understand that: Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large-scale metallic Sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should Be the top priority. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine Permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay water- Shed. Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be More stringent. Please use your influence to bring about good solutions for the above areas of concern.

You have a last chance to - please don't blow it!

I seek your courage and support in opposing the foreign corporation based Pebble Mine project. There are so few wilderness jewels left in the world. These places have a value all their own, and yet we persist in destroying them. We attempt to put safeguards in place to prevent ecological disasters, but history has shown us that they fail again and again. Their failures result in destruction to the environment, death to wildlife, financial disasters, and a toll on human welfare. Consider that the Pebble Mine will be at the head waters that feed Bristol Bay, one of the largest fisheries in the world. Besides the destruction that will be done to the area just to get to the mine site and build the mine, consider that the failure of the retention pools will destroy the rivers that feed Bristol Bay. This will result in the loss of a billion dollar fishing industry and destroy a subsistence way of life to the native people. Mr. President do what is right and stop this project.

Generally, I would like for our government to strengthen environmental protections across the board. We should stop clear cutting our forests. We should stop mountain top removal coal mining. We should dramatically increase fuel efficiency standards, and dramatically increase research and development of solar, wind, and other renewable energy resources. We should stop subsidizing the nuclear, oil, and coal industries. We should move away from nuclear power, oil and gas development, and coal mining, period. If we continue to destroy our natural world, we are going to run out of clean air and water and we are all going to die. Preservation of our natural world should be our top priority. Destroying and polluting these very special places, like this Pebble Mine would do, should not even be considered...

I am writing today to urge against Pebble Mine being allowed to operate in Bristol Bay. Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large scale metallic sulfide mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence, and recreation resources should be the top priority. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts of the Bristol Bay watershed. I also believe Clean Water Act standards for large scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing to express my concern with the Pebble Mine project and to support the preservation of Bristol Bay. Mining is inherently dangerous and destructive, and Mining companies wreak destruction on public land and leave the taxpayers to clean up and pay for the mess they leave behind. We depend on government agencies to look after our interests when Big Energy tries to harm our public resources, and this is a time when your help is essential. In order to protect Bristol Bay and similar natural resources, , and Big Energy cannot be trusted to carry out its operations unsupervised on public land. The public interest must be protected I am counting on you to do just that.

This is really a no-brainer as a final effort to give Americans the little that is left in America that they can possibly still call their own. For America's Great Outdoors to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

I believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make the protection of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative.

Please make the protection the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a priority with no compromises that could endanger this premier national, natural treasure in any way. It is our obligation for future generations

I also believe that all stakeholders must have input to the programs, regulations and legislation affecting the National Parks and the areas surrounding the Parks. Environmentalists, hunters, fishermen, ranchers, miners, farmers, and tourists must have their opinions sought out and their opinions heard, but sound technical knowledge should guide the effort to preserve our national heritages.

Preserving the natural environment gives us spiritual and physical health, and it provides a reason for living and working to make our nation the best that it can be. Please consider the following four points as the Administration works to conserve our country's special places: (1) Yellowstone, as the world's first national park, should be a priority area as the Administration develops strategies to reconnect people to nature and conserve our treasured landscapes. (2) Protecting Yellowstone means protecting the wildlife migration corridors and watersheds that surround the park and make up the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. As we face global climate change, protecting these connections will become increasingly important. (3) Communities throughout Greater Yellowstone value their access and connection to the great outdoors, and have a history of working hard to conserve special places. (4) If America's Great Outdoors is to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Please preserve more of our nation's natural resources. We are so close to losing them forever.

Saving iconic Yellowstone is a must do.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Howdy President Obama, I would like to begin by saying Thank You for all you're administration has done for the natural places in this country. I was born and raised in Bar Harbor, Maine and can not express the myriad of ways that living in such an area in an around Acadia National Park has molded my life. Beyond that, and most definitely a result of my living in such a beautiful and protected region, I have traveled to and gladly immersed myself in many other natural areas including national, state and local parks, natural and conservation areas, wildlife preserves and wildlife management areas. These areas are the green backbone of our country and with the development continuing in this country, most specifically urban sprawl and the use of non-renewable resources, I personally am begging you to put in place related legislation and support all natural areas. Not because it is a popular decision or what your advisors say will garner you votes, but because this is our country, and the natural areas we have at the moment are here only because of continued support throughout the last century and are without a doubt a source of envy from many other countries. You have a young family and I will soon be starting mine, and I hope that I will be able to take my children to places like Yellowstone and Acadia and not have to say things like "well, a few years ago you could see buffalo walking around and even crossing the road!" Thank you very much for your time, and I sincerely hope you and your family enjoyed your trip to Acadia.

America must commit itself, its people and enroll the carbon resource companies in moving to renewable sources of energy.

Yellowstone Park was first, and it continues to be the richest example of a temperate-forest ecosystem. Enlarging the area for animal migration, and protecting these corridors from pollution and hunting are the highest priority. After a dozen visits to Yellowstone in all seasons I still find it the nation's most remarkable place to see wildlife. I vote, I happily pay my taxes because of benefits like Yellowstone, I spend good money visiting Yellowstone, and I am not alone. I support leaving our children a legacy besides a huge national debt. To maintain the Yellowstone legacy the Administration must put meaningful funding into programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have been taking my family to our National parks for 35 years and now my children are doing the same with their children. Just this past summer we visited Yellowstone with all of our grandkids for 10 days. The fascination we seen on their faces was worth every penny we spent. There is very few things left in this world that excites me more. I have been all over the world and it amazes me to see the amount of visitors from other countries. We had lunch with a family from China one day and they stated how wonderful our National Parks are. They were in awe over how well they are maintained and the number of them we have. They were in the US mainly to visit our parks and had so far been to 3 and were working their way east. We have something that we need to treasure and save for the future generations to come. Not allowing mining and drilling in our parks is one of the most important things we need to protect them from. With all the oil that we have in North Dakota I just have a hard time finding any reason to soil the beauty of our National Parks. Recently, we heard that they are seeking permission to drill in Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota. If that happens anywhere in the park it will be a tragedy. There are so few things in this country that we can guarantee will be there for future generations and our untouched National Parks should be safe by law.

Yellowstone is a spectacular place. We need to preserve it for future generations. This initiative would ensure that happens.

The National Park Service is supposed to be the agency that protects and preserves the national parks, but Congress won't fund the agency. And hence, we have volunteer groups that work in the parks to maintain trails and help with many other tasks. I believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should evaluate the parks that have the most to lose, ecologically and make those a priority. Yellowstone National Park has some of the most unique features of any place in the world, including the wildlife.

Not allowing the BLM/ State of WY to sell off valuable land to Oil & Gas Companies. As we face global climate change, protecting these connections will only become more important, in keeping the emissions from the gas wells on a stricter regulation.-There definitely should be an Air Quality Fund as well. It all goes hand in hand in protecting the beautiful landscape of Yellowstone, the quality of life for both humans and the wildlife. Especially the wildlife, as this was their home first.

If we want to save our environment we must engage the man on the street in the awareness and love of the Great American Outdoors. He/she must know and be aware of it. Unfortunately too many Americans aren't. The Outdoors beyond the walk to the car is a blank, an unknown hostile place that has nothing of any use to their lives.

I am a supporter of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and a regular visitor to the park, (as well as others of our wonderful National Parks). Yellowstone Park is my favorite, however, I have been visiting it since my youth and am planning another visit this November near my 70th birthday. I especially support the concept of protecting the entire ecosystem around the park, not just the park itself within a certain arbitrary political boundary. Wouldn't it be great if this concept could be applied to many more of our National Parks?

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Pres. Obama, I live in Wyoming, the state that has coal, uranium, oil, coalbed methane, natural gas---you name it and a state that supports you very little..sorry to say but we all know why....the Democratic Party used to behalf of our state legislature, but not now...Sen. Alan Simpson will attest to that...I recall him supporting early protection of the environment with Land Use Planning, The Siting Act and strengthening the state Environmental Quality Act (late 60's and 70's) Yellowstone is of course one of the most precious places on the planet...there must be more stress to protect it and the larger surrounding large region of GYNP. Kids of today are missing way to much by using their computers for everything...especially texting...they will not learn to communicate thoughtful, critical observations because they are not forced to put the damn things away and look at nature. I am an artist, and former art teacher and know that nature's beauty is not appreciated, protected, and used for thoughtful and visual comtemplations as it should be. Moving from Kansas to Wyoming in 1960 (to teach art) I later developed into an environmentalist/political activist. My 41 year old daughter in CO is the same. A rock climber, skier, backpacker etc but at this time forced to return to college because of losing an excellent job in Paonia, Co. We all must work to get off the gross diets that are bringing this country's health to its knees. We must stop taking kids everywhere...they must walk, observe, see, smell, feel, and learn independence without texting every second of their spare time. There is one place that must be protected more completely and that is the Red Desert in Wy. and Co. I encourage you to contact Biodiversity Conservation Alliance and arrange a tour with _____, Laramie, Wy. Thanks for reading this environmental sermon. support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

As a proud environmentalist and a true believer that our national parks were "America's Best Idea."I urge you to do what ever possible to support these amazing places. We travel to Yellowstone twice a year and find beauty, peace, and the most wonderful people who love this place as we do.

Please emphasize wilderness protection and non-motorized recreation in America's Great Outdoors! As I am a person who lives in Montana, not too far from Yellowstone National Park, I would like you to- Please protect these last wild places from the habitat destruction, speed, air pollution, and noise pollution of off-road motorized vehicles

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem should be a top priority within the initiative. Yellowstone & Teton NP's, the 7 national forests and two wildlife refuges make up one of the largest unfragmented wildlands left in the temperate zone in the world. This is a world heritage site that deserves special protection. Thank you for your consideration.

I voted for you Mr. President because I believed you would do the right thing. Beyond the November midterms I will continue to support you because I believe you to be a man of integrity. Preserving our pristine lands from unregulated mining and drilling is essential to our sense of pride as Americans. Thank you.

America's Pristine Environment must be protected and preserved so Future Generations may enjoy them !

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My wife and I have visited Yellowstone National Park during winter about 8 times in the past 20 years. We wish to see it and the whole ecosystem protected. The greater Yellowstone ecosystem is one of the few relatively intact ecosystems in the lower 48 states. We live in Colorado - a fantastic place - but the ecosystem is sliced and diced. Please do not let this happen to the Yellowstone ecosystem Therefore,

I DO NOT support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. I believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should leave the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem as is. - As the world's first national park, Yellowstone should be a priority area to be left alone by the Administration. Efforts to develop strategies to reconnect people to nature and conserve our treasured landscapes should not be a priority of the government. We do not face global climate change and the efforts to protect these connections will only become more lies to the American people. - For America's Great Outdoors to be successful, the Administration must listen to all people and not just the GYC and Sierra Club.

The present administration has the chance to continue to set a high standard for the environment. I hope to see this standard continue.

This isn't a time of great appreciation for the outdoors in our country. There will be a time when we have more appreciation for nature, and we need to act now so that when we finally appreciate what we have it isn't too late.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO YELLOWSTONE??

Save our parks wildlife and country so our future generations will be able to enjoy the great out of doors!

This is a very important issue and I hope that it is realized, before it is too late.

As our world populations grow it is important that we save our national parks as refuges where wildlife can exist and thrive and where people can rejuvenate themselves. It is also vital to provide wildlife corridors for animals that must migrate via land to escape harsh seasons, breed, and raise their young. I believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative, as it is the largest ecosystem in the lower 48.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am an Alaskan, and I am writing to you today to express my opinion of the proposed Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay in Alaska. I do not support the establishment of a mine of any kind in the area around Bristol Bay and I am asking you today to, please not allow the plans for the Pebble Mine to continue. As an American it is one of my top priorities to protect ecosystems and natural resources that we are so lucky to have across our nation. Growing up in Alaska I have been blessed to be surrounded by pristine wildlife areas and undeveloped land. These areas are important for our enjoyment, the livelihood of Alaskans, and most importantly for the functioning of global ecosystems. I have fished, both commercially and for recreation since I was a child and I have family who commercial fish currently in Bristol Bay. I am asking you today, to protect Bristol Bay and to refuse to allow the building of the Pebble Mine. I do not believe that there is any clean way to do this type of mining. This project has no public benefit for Alaskans or for Americans. The project will benefit a few already rich executives, and no matter what they say, it means that many (including many Alaska Natives) will lose their livelihood. I also would like to protect the salmon populations for the sake of the salmon. They are an important species in the ecosystem there and deserve to remain. of the US government and especially the EPA. This is a chance to strengthen the relationship between the Alaskan Native Tribal corporations and the Government. This is a chance to take the write stance on environmental policy and reverse some of the damage done by the Bush Administration. Please increase the standards for mineral development in wetlands. Please do this for me, everyone my age and younger, for our children.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'm writing to you today to express my opinion of the proposed Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay in Alaska. I do not support the establishment of a mine of any kind in the area around Bristol Bay and I am asking you today to not allow the plans for the Pebble Mine to continue. As an American it is one of my top priorities to protect ecosystems and natural resources that we are so lucky to have across our nation. These include, but are not limited to, Bristol Bay, the Tongass National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. I have been happy to see over the past years that Alaska can successfully manage a fishing industry in a place like Bristol Bay that doesn't overwhelm the Salmon population, but also supports the jobs of many, including many Alaska Natives. As a Minnesotan, I have been lucky enough to eat a great deal of Salmon fished in Bristol Bay. I love to have a source of food that is ecologically sustainable, incredibly healthy and delicious. I like supporting friends who fish there and send me frozen fish to Minnesota. As a visiting resident of Alaska for the past 5 months, I was able to witness firsthand the beauty of that area and also of the challenges for many Alaska Natives. I would like to live in Alaska again and I someday hope to spend summers fishing for salmon in Bristol Bay. I am asking you today, to protect Bristol Bay and to refuse to allow the building of the Pebble Mine. I do not believe that there is any clean way to do this type of mining. This project has no public benefit for Alaskans for Americans. It is so a few people can get rich, and no matter what they say, it means that many (including many Alaska Natives) will lose their livelihood. I also would like to protect the salmon populations for the sake of the salmon. They are an important species in the ecosystem there and deserve to remain. of the US government and especially the EPA. This is a chance to strengthen the relationship between the Alaskan Native Tribal corporations and the Government. This is a chance to take the write stance on environmental policy and reverse some of the damage done by the Bush Administration. Please increase the standards for mineral development in wetlands. Please do this for me, everyone my age and younger, for our children.

We recently spent several days in Yellowstone. It is an extraordinary place and we must do all we can to assure the future of the park and its wildlife. Please consider the following points as the Administration works to conserve that part of the west: - As the world's first national park, Yellowstone must be a priority area as the Administration develops strategies to reconnect people to nature and conserve our treasured landscapes. - Protecting Yellowstone means protecting the wildlife migration corridors and watersheds that surround the park which make up the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.-

I work in the Greater Yellowstone area as an interpreter of the landscape for visitors to Yellowstone National Park and as a ski instructor. In both of my jobs clients comment over and over again about the wild landscape we have here in Montana. As you know from visiting here, it is a special place that can not be replaced. Including a protective designation of the Gallatin River. Reduce, or eliminate the trucking through this scenic corridor. Note how many people visited YNP this year alone.

Please stop the killing of wolves and buffalo.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I attended the first meeting in Bozeman and gave the representative our document The Migration Highways. A follow up call and email from The President's office was made to us regarding our plan to make Mt. Hwy 87 and US Hwy 287 a Migration Highway for animals going into and out of YNP. We in the Madison Valley want to stop the unnecessary slaughter of these animals on our highways. We would greatly appreciate your help in making this happen. The document is with Jim Lynch, Director of Mt. Dept. of Transportation right now. Please email or call us with an update on the status of our suggestion.

Our precious lands are disappearing at alarming rates and pristine areas such as Yellowstone must be given top priority.

I believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem as well as Yosemite National Park top priorities within the initiative. As one of the other premier parks, Yosemite should also be a priority area. - Protecting Yellowstone and Yosemite means protecting the wildlife migration corridors and watersheds that surround the parks and make up their ecosystems.- Communities throughout the Greater Yellowstone and Greater Yosemite areas value their access and connection to the great outdoors and have a history of working hard to conserve special places.

Protecting Yellowstone means ending the slaughter of the parks bison herd when they migrate out of the park for food in the winter and early spring.

I believe that the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem should be managed for the good of the ecosystem and not driven by commercial interests. - For America's Great Outdoors to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful enforcement if the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act and promote clean and renewable energy usage. There are those of us how enjoy the beauty of the outdoors, who have volunteered for the betterment of the outdoors, and who see the need to get all Americans to understand and respect the outdoors. Please continue to use us to promote true change in this area.

I support your administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative and believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

. I truly hope you will do the right thing...for ALL of us.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Environmental Education courses are not part of the US Public School Curriculums by and large now. Funding would have to come from Progressive School Boards who see the benefits and value of these types of courses and replace existing courses like Global Technology Curriculum that are so watered down they have little value. The value of a strong science based curriculum that would be part of an Environmental Education course would be significant. Private Foundations exist that would fund the development of these curriculum. I know because I am working with a Private Foundation and a local school board to develop a Renewable Energy Curriculum which has environmental education elements in it.

There is a demand that far exceeds the financial resources available to voluntarily enhance and permanently preserve private working ranches. A fundamental goal of the Initiative should be to increase the funding available for voluntary conservation easements held by third-parties. There are ranchers across the west who have placed their ranch under a conservation easement, preventing development and fragmentation of vast open spaces in perpetuity. The ecological and economic values of these ranches today are ensured for future generations, while the long term stewardship remains the responsibility of the rancher, who also continues to pay property and other relevant taxes. There is a long list of ranchers who are willing to permanently preserve their ranches and we urge that the Initiative provide additional funding for the voluntary acquisition of conservation easements on private working ranches in strategic places.

In addition, this initiative should place a significant focus on voluntary natural resource stewardship enhancement opportunities on private working lands. Both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Partners Program and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are key examples of successful programs that cost-share voluntarily with private individuals to improve natural resources. Presently, both programs lack adequate funding to meet the demand. This initiative should bolster programs that have proven to be successful and where landowner demand outstrips program availability, in order to improve the nation's natural resources.

A long-standing challenge to our partnership's overall mission is the estate tax. The Rangeland Coalition supports permanent, targeted reform of the estate tax in ways that both preserve private working ranches and reward commitments to lasting rangeland conservation. We believe an important means of helping meet the goals of this Initiative would be to support permanent and targeted reform of the estate tax, assisting in the preservation of large intact ranches that support a diversity of native plant and wildlife species. In California, the estate tax is one of the leading causes of the breakup and loss of family-owned ranching operations. California ranching families faced with estate tax debts are often left with no choice but to liquidate assets or sell significant portions of their property.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is imperative that this initiative highlight the importance of collaborative partnerships that include land owners in the decision making process and inter-agency communication. We believe our partnership is a good illustration of how ranchers, environmentalists, and agencies can establish common ground and work together to address mutual priorities. To date over 100 organizations have signed the California Rangeland Resolution to express their support for the work of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition.

The Rangeland Coalition has come a long way because of the dedication of nongovernmental organizations and support of agency partners. Therefore, the Initiative should support the participation of agency staff and financial support of collaborative conservation efforts that pull together landowners, agencies and interested stakeholders.

A long standing challenge to implementing voluntary conservation on the ground is the need to obtain permits from various local, state and federal agencies to complete the projects. The Initiative should support interagency collaboration to improve the regulatory atmosphere for voluntary conservation projects. For example, efforts to create programmatic permits and streamlined permitting amongst agencies for voluntary restoration and enhancement projects should continue in the future. Partners in the Rangeland Coalition are aware that ranchers seeking to implement voluntary habitat restoration projects face a complex regulatory process. Our partnership supports opportunities to help ranchers complete environmentally beneficial projects on an expedited process, while still preserving the integrity of the environmental regulatory program.

Another area of potential improvement is enhancement of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to allow for funding of conservation easements to be purchased and held by third parties in order to achieve national conservation goals in priority landscapes. Ranches and other working lands play a vital role in maintaining ecological processes and connectivity across large areas. Preventing the fragmentation or conversion of large working lands to other uses can be essential to the long-term ecological health of federal conservation lands and the survival of the plants and animals that depend on them.

The clear purpose of the new program would be to maintain ecological processes and habitat connectivity between and around federal conservation lands in strategic landscapes. Federal and state partnerships with non-governmental entities and landowners can be the most cost-effective way to achieve this goal. Strategic targeting of Farm Bill easement and stewardship funding to priority landscapes can be part of the solution. However, the demand for such programs already far exceeds the available resources. Federal land management agencies also need enhanced ability to advance national conservation goals in priority landscapes through strategic grants to nonfederal partners.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In short, our partnership sees financial constraints and particular program requirements that hinder additional on the ground voluntary enhancement and preservation on private working ranches. We encourage the Initiative to solicit and support stakeholder input in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of current programs and the allocation of additional funding to voluntary conservation programs. In addition, outreach and education about the outdoors and agriculture--in particular the public benefits produced by private working lands--is an important element to include in the Initiative, targeting the general public, agency staff and elected officials.

Specifically, I wish to reiterate the Colville Tribes' recommendations and respond and respond to Mr. Shafroth's request for examples where co-management between Indian tribes and the federal government has been successful.

Encourage Co-Management Opportunities for Indian Tribes on Federal Lands within Tribes' Aboriginal or Reserved Rights Areas: As noted during the AGO consultation, Indian tribes have demonstrated that they can manage natural resources as good as, or in many cases better than, federal land managers. Tribes also have a particular incentive to manage lands on which the tribes possess reserved rights or share some other historical connection. The Colville Tribes strongly recommends that the AGO report to President Obama specifically mention this issue.

Provide a Set Aside in the Land and Water Conservation Fund for Acquisitions or Management Activities Involving Indian Tribes: Without some source of funding, it seems unlikely that Indian tribes will be able to meaningfully participate in the AGO, especially where acquisition of land is contemplated. The Colville Tribes, therefore, supports a set aside from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for activities under the AGO involving Indian tribes,

Streamline and Make Uniform Agencies' ProRelty Disposal and Acquisition Authority: As noted during the AGO consultation, the authority of the various land management agencies to donate, sell, lease, or otherwise convey real property varies wildly from agency to agency. Some agencies have broad authority while others, like the U.S. Forest Service, have very limited authority to convey interests in federal land. Existing conveyance authority in most cases does not contemplate transfers to Indian tribes. Federal land managers have consequently been reluctant to use what authority they do possess for transactions involving Indian tribes.

Prohibit the Use of the Forest Service Facility Realignment and Enhancement Act ("FSFREA") in Areas of Historical Interest to Tribes: Several commentators have noted that the FSFREA, which allows forest supervisors to sell Forest Service real property at public auction and keep the proceeds of the sales, should not be used in areas where Indian tribes have reserved rights or other cultural or historic connections to the land. In the 2008, the Colville Tribes unsuccessfully sued the Forest Service to prevent the Okanogan National Forest from auctioning a property under the FSFREA within the Colville Tribes' traditional territories. Instead, the AGO should provide a mechanism for these unneeded Forest Service properties to be transferred to Indian tribes without cost to the tribes.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The LRMA has enabled both the Colville Tribes and the Spokane Tribe to employ law enforcement officers to patrol Lake Roosevelt and its shoreline to enforce federal laws (through cross-deputization arrangements) and tribal health and safety laws. Lake Roosevelt is the 151-mile reservoir of the Grand Coulee Dam, the largest hydroelectric power plant in the United States and the third largest in the world.

The 2008 Fish Accords create a 10 year partnership between the Colville Tribes and the federal government for the recovery of endangered Upper Columbia River salmon and steel head and the fulfillment of the Colville Tribes' fishing rights.

The 2008 Fish Accords provide the Colville Tribes with a stable, long-term funding source for fish and wildlife enhancement projects, programs, and activities.

We appreciate the tremendous work done by you and members of your administration to solicit input from thousands of citizens on the best ways to strengthen our connection to nature and our shared history, bolster the health of our communities and economies, and protect our natural heritage and clean water supplies.

In particular, we commend your administration for underscoring the value of urban parks, green spaces, and rivers to families across America, and for ensuring that these vital, "close-to-home" components of our Great Outdoors are an integral part of your Initiative. Many of our cities had the honor of hosting AGO listening sessions this past summer, and we heard first-hand from kids, parents, educators, and others how much open space matters to them - and alternately, how a shortage of parks, recreational opportunities, and access to shared greenspaces harms the health of our residents and our communities.

As you and the First Lady have noted, skyrocketing rates of childhood obesity and associated health problems are directly linked to this shortage of places to run and play. Too many American cities and towns lack adequate outdoor spaces to serve their populations, rendering many communities "exercise deserts." Similarly, several of our towns have world-class public lands, rivers, and outdoor recreation opportunities nearby, but are missing the infrastructure necessary to help citizens reach and enjoy these remarkable places. These same public lands are also often home to watersheds that provide our cities with clean drinking water, a resource increasingly at risk from threats to forests and wildlands.

Further, we know that natural amenities like parks, green spaces, and rivers contribute to a higher quality of life and are critical to attracting and retaining the workforce necessary to encourage economic investment and make our metropolitan regions more vibrant and globally competitive. We also know that these shared outdoor spaces enhance surrounding property values, contributing to higher tax revenues. They are a smart investment of public funds, yet cities around the nation continue to experience a deficit of parks and protected open space.

Increasing opportunities to connect Americans - especially our children - to the Great Outdoors through innovative outdoor education programs, such as the Junior Rangers Program of the First Lady's Let's Move Outside campaign.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Providing full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This crucial source of support can help to conserve open space and water resources, while also funding new parks, trails, and recreational facilities.

Investing in land and water protection that supports local economies. Safeguarding our nearby public lands and rivers, and the scenic and recreational amenities they provide, bolsters many of our cities' economies by generating billions in revenue and providing thousands of good jobs.

It also protects critical drinking water supplies through watershed, forest, and wetland conservation.

Including parks in urban redevelopment strategies. Abandoned land, vacant lots, and distressed properties can be an opportunity for redevelopment - not just for housing and transit, but also for the multiplicative value of parkland and open space creation.

Encouraging the kinds of public-private partnerships that have proven so effective around the country. Communities like ours have developed homegrown, collaborative solutions to conservation and outdoor recreation challenges that can serve as national models. These innovative, locally-driven approaches help to protect and restore natural areas while connecting our citizens to special landscapes, and they need the federal government as a partner to leverage local financial support - both public and private - and ensure their longterm success.

By working together to protect our natural heritage and leveraging resources to provide children and families with access and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, we know we can make our cities and towns healthier, more sustainable, and more economically competitive.

. Our forefathers had a great idea, to protect the precious revered areas in America and we should keep it that way. For the same reasons they had we need them now.

. PLEASE KEEP OUR WILDERNESS ALIVE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION! IT'S A REMINDER OF HOW INTERCONNECTED ALL LIFE IS...AND IT'S ALL THAT IS LEFT OF BEAUTIFUL AMERICA.

. We need to insure that what we enjoy today is here for generations to come.

For nearly a quarter century, conservationists have been advocating for dedicated funding for all species, particularly those that are at-risk. Five years ago, each state and territorial fish and wildlife agency in collaboration with their partners and the public developed a State Wildlife Action Plan that identified thousands of conservation actions that are needed to prevent future endangered species listings and keep common species common. Although the plans are being implemented nationwide, current federal funding, averaging "bout \$1.2 million per state/territory, is insufficient to meet the needs of the 12,000 species that state's determined to be at-risk.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As part of your report to the President, we recommend you articulate the need for dedicated funding to support fish and wildlife conservation. This funding need has the support of the Teaming With Wildlife coalition whose organizations and businesses represent millions of wildlife enthusiasts including each state and territorial fish and wildlife agency.

We understand the difficulty in picking the right priorities that will ensure a sustainable future for our outdoors and we know in these difficult economic times it will not be easy to secure new funding. However, we feel that an investment in State Wildlife Action Plans will result in conservation outcomes that will help meet the broader goal of conserving the outdoors. The full list of the Teaming With Wildlife coalition members is available at www.teaming.com.

Therefore, I am forwarding a copy of my prepared remarks directly to you. The purpose for doing so is to once again bring to your attention that there is opposition in Maine to the environmental lobby that is attempting to shut down our forest products industry through various "conservation" schemes and some who are still trying to create a federally-funded Maine Woods National Park that will take the core of Maine's working forests out of production and kill jobs. You have been contacted before in a March 18, 2010 letter regarding a Maine-based effort called the Great Maine Forest Initiative and its proposed tie-in to the federal Treasured Landscapes Initiative (Interior) and the All Lands Initiative (Agriculture).

Conservation easements have become a trendy growth industry for those who seek further control over privately owned land. These easements end economic growth, block or restrict public access, and cost taxpayers huge sums of money for no public benefit or gain. These easements are in perpetuity. No one has a crystal ball to know what our needs will be in 25, 50, or 100 years. Easements placed today could have terrible impacts in the future as times and priorities change. The Town of Millinocket is not willing to support such efforts that could bring such great hardship to our State, our major industry, and our people based on the shallow promises of certain environmentalists that they are here to help us. History clearly demonstrates that they are not.

My personal concerns are in regard to our Great Salt Lake and surrounding wetlands. While the Lake and more specifically certain areas such as the Bear River Bay are currently threatened I believe it is important to manage the Lake and surrounding wetlands in a way that will preserve and protect this international and local treasure for the enjoyment of both humans and the water birds that live there.

Wildlife does not observe political or land ownership boundaries. Conservation of wild life corridors and crucial habitat must therefore be coordinated across government, including the federal land management agencies (BLM & Forest Service); federal agencies responsible for water delivery and flood control (Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers); federal wild life agencies (Fish & Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries); tribal governments; states: and local governments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As discussed above under the topic of "Challenges," close coordination with and resources from federal agencies are critical to both state and federal efforts to develop, make accessible and maintain landscape-scale wildlife data. Western Governors and their Wildlife Council are hopeful that this cooperation can be increased and expanded.

Finally, the Obama administration should support expansion of the national park system. National parks are widely recognized by the American public and readily accessible to most people. They constitute a wonderful resource for introducing the general public, which is increasingly urban and removed from nature, to the wonders and challenges of the outdoors. They also provide excellent recreational opportunities, which could help address childhood obesity and other fitness challenges. And unlike the other public lands, the national parks have an educational component through the National Park Service's highly regarded interpretive programs, which can help visitors to learn about the natural world and to gain a new appreciation for nature conservation. By combining an educational and recreational mission, the national parks are a setting where diverse segments of this nation's population can be connected with the natural world around them and provided an opportunity to become directly engaged in conservation and restoration work. In this vein, consideration should be given to expanding the Park Service's "national significance" criteria for assessing whether an area might qualify for national park designation; one additional factor that should be included in the criteria is the possibility of restoring damaged sites for future inclusion in the national park system.

To make our lands and wildlife more resilient in the face of climate change, "America's Great Outdoors" must focus on reducing resource stressors such as mineral development, logging, and overgrazing; protect core areas and corridors to allow species to migrate and adapt; and insist that all federal agencies with these responsibilities coordinate with state counterparts to develop and implement ecosystem wide climate management programs.

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Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

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All Americans deserve to enjoy our great outdoors, but far too many individuals do not have adequate access to clean, safe parks and natural spaces. A federal commitment is needed to provide access to new constituencies who have a need and desire to experience the outdoors on their hometown rivers, which are most often the natural asset nearest to their community. The great opportunity here is that not only are rivers and streams desirable places to recreate, but establishing urban parks and restoring riverfronts also provides direct economic, public health and community safety benefits.

Connecting Communities, Landscapes, and Wildlife In order to protect our nation's river heritage and special places for the enjoyment of future generations, we need to establish and maintain river corridors for recreation and wildlife. Trail designations, like Blue Trails or Blueways, help to make the river a more inviting place for both people and wildlife. By including in their recommendations a National Blueways Initiative and the restoration and protection of wildlife corridors, the administration will provide numerous ways to connect people with rivers.

Protecting Our River Heritage Pristine, iconic rivers are a fundamental part of the very fabric and history of America. We have a responsibility to keep these rivers healthy and pass on this legacy to our children and grandchildren. The America's Great Outdoors Initiative must protect and restore these important natural treasures. With so many rivers in our nation, their potential to connect communities to America's treasured landscapes is limitless. By protecting America's rivers through new Wild and Scenic River, Wilderness, National Wildlife Refuge and Outstanding Natural Resource Waters designations in priority watersheds, we can create a valuable legacy that honors the past, enriches the present, and provides a precious gift to the future.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Charleston listening session focused primarily on forest issues but one river related conservation example stood out as a model worth replicating elsewhere in the country. The Congaree River Blue Trail, or Blueway, is the result of a partnership among federal, state, and local agencies, non-profit organizations, land trusts and private landowners. Starting near Columbia, South Carolina, this 50-mile water trail offers opportunities to experience the area's rich natural resources and wildlife through canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and other family friendly activities. The Congaree was designated by the Department of the Interior as a part of the National Trails System. The trail connects an urban center through private lands to the Congaree National Park, the largest protected wilderness in South Carolina and home to the largest tract of old growth bottomland hardwood forest in the U.S. (<http://congareriverbluetrail.blogspot.com>). As discussed below, we urge the Administration to build on the success of the Congaree River Blue Trail as a public, private partnership that has tangible conservation and recreation benefits by creating a national Blueways Initiative.

Much of the buzz around the Los Angeles listening session was the announcement by U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson the day before that her agency recognized the entire length of the Los Angeles River as "navigable water", a determination crucial to applying federal Clean Water Act protections throughout its watershed. For years the Los Angeles office of the Army Corps of Engineers has treated the river as nothing more than a drainage ditch and have prevented public access to what can and should be a tremendous public resource. Community members attending the listening session applauded EPA's decision and highlighted the many benefits a healthy and accessible Los Angeles River could be to the diverse populations along its course. They urged increased federal assistance to restore the river on its long journey back to health – particularly given the federal governments overwhelming responsibility for leaving it in its current degraded and segregated state. The session also focused heavily on the designation of the San Gabriel Mountains as wilderness to protect its clean water, outstanding habitat and quality recreation.

In Ashville rivers and river-related recreation were a major focus. Many organizations have done an excellent job working to revitalize the French Broad, as part of a demonstration project for the whole watershed. So much progress has been made, but there is still work to do. Recently, the City of Rockingham, NC has been working to remove old dams, re-establish a robust downtown focused on the river, and create a 10-mile Blue Trail on Hitchcock Creek. Projects like these continue to connect individuals and communities to rivers and the outdoors. The vision of a clean and healthy river connected to parks, trails and other community amenities could become a reality with help from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Approximately 500 people attended the session in Denver and heard Secretary Salazar express his desire to pass a second chapter of an omnibus open lands package. He highlighted the success of the first package, specifically mentioning the 1000 miles of wild and scenic rivers that were protected. He spoke of the importance of protecting our most valuable water resources, stating that "never again will we turn our back on rivers". This was a line that was repeated several times by Kevin Patterson, Manager of the Denver Parks and Recreation Department who spoke during the panel discussion.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When asked, “what is working locally to protect special places and to reconnect people to the outdoors and what should the administration focus on for AGO,” Mr. Patterson answered by talking about the restoration of the South Platte in Denver and how it has improved quality of life, served as an economic driver for the city and stands as a great example of how to reconnect people to the outdoors. When asked what the administration should prioritize for AGO, he answered that the administration should “focus efforts on restoring and protecting rivers” because of all the community benefits they provide. Secretary Salazar then asked the audience of 500 if they agreed and they responded with a resounding ‘yes!’

Grand Junction was an appropriate location for a listening session as it lies at the confluence of the Colorado and the Gunnison Rivers, two of the state’s finest, and is home to one of the country’s best success stories for how a community transformed itself through river conservation. In our report, *Natural Security: How Sustainable Water Strategies are Preparing Communities for a Changing Climate*, we highlight the work done by Grand Junction and seven other forward-looking communities that have become more resilient to the impacts of climate change by embracing green infrastructure. More information on river restoration occurring in Grand Junction is available on the American Rivers website, (<http://www.americanrivers.org/ourwork/global-warming-and-rivers/infrastructure/natural-security-grand-junction.html>).

At the listening session Coloradoans highlighted the river restoration efforts that Grand Junction has embraced which have revitalized the local economy, strengthened ecosystems, and greatly improved the quality of life for area residents. The expansion of trails and parks around Grand Junction has reconnected the community with valuable natural resources – its rivers – that had previously been neglected and ignored. Residents have embraced the results of the river restoration activities. Success has stemmed from partnerships amongst city, county, state, and federal agencies, and the creation of a vision for an extended riverfront system of parks and trails throughout the Grand Mesa Valley, an area that includes three cities and over 100,000 people. Grand Junction’s river restoration activities have also benefited wildlife and local ecosystems by removing contaminants, improving fish passage, increasing riparian habitat. Much of the restoration activity was carried out by volunteers, and the ongoing efforts to remove invasive species and improve access to the river demonstrate the level of pride and dedication the community has for its riverfront area. The need for further investments in river restoration and protection was highlighted in a number of news articles and opinion pieces in the Boulder and Grand Junction newspapers.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Taking place at the annual Outdoor Retailer Show, conservation minded Utahans and leaders from the nation's outdoor recreation companies alike highlighted the importance of rivers and the need to make them a focal point of America's Great Outdoors. Local rivers like the Colorado, the Green, and the Escalante offer world class boating and fishing, and are gateways to explore the state's unmatched national parks, wilderness, and other public lands. They are closely tied to the state's economy, educational programs and recreation for both residents and tourists alike. With the designation of the Virgin River as the state's first Wild and Scenic River in 2009, the people of Utah made an important first step in protecting its extraordinary natural heritage. Building on this success, Utahans at the session called for more Wild and Scenic designations for the state's rivers which would enhance recreation and boost the tourism economy. They also called for protections for the Green River, which is threatened by a proposal to divert 250,000 acre feet of water to Colorado. The Green River is a world-renown river and one of the West's most pristine river ecosystems and it deserves to be saved for the benefit of future generations.

The listening sessions in New York were the first to hold breakout sessions specifically to discuss the efforts of local communities to build Blueways which reconnect people to the outdoors and to recreation. Blueways such as the Hudson River Watertrail and the New York City Watertrail were highlighted emphasizing the importance of not only connecting citizens to the outdoors, but also reestablishing a healthy river. The Hudson River Watertrail, established in 1992, strives to preserve the Hudson River and create a trail from the mouth of the Hudson River to the St. Lawrence Seaway, passing through the Great Lakes. The Watertrail, located in New York City is an excellent way to connect all people to the river. There are 160 square miles of water to paddle through in all five boroughs. The incorporation of Blueways into states such as New York, will only increase the connection citizens have with the outdoors even in the most densely populated area in the United States.

Partly due to grassroots organizing and session planning, and partly due to the multitude of initiatives already underway in the region, rivers were the center of attention at the Minneapolis session. Total attendance was about 400 for the plenary session, about 100 river voices. Participants stressed the point that while the Mississippi borders 10 different states there is little coordination among them. A federal role is needed to fill that niche and to establish and advance a comprehensive restoration plan.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In St. Louis, the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers are at the center of the community as well as the heart of the outdoors so it wasn't surprising that rivers were the focal point of the listening session. Over 250 youth participated in the session hosted by Assistant Secretary of the Army, Jo Ellen Darcy on the banks of Mississippi River. Attendees highlighted the Lewis and Clark Water Trail and the Mississippi River Water Trail as wonderful community assets. They clamored for the Administration to do more to connect people to rivers like the Meramec – one of Missouri's longest free-flowing rivers, a tremendous conservation success story, and a popular destination for canoeists and hikers. They also called for the administration to promote natural flood protection, helping communities implement 21st century solutions like floodplain and wetland restoration. Local restoration projects at Columbia Bottom Conservation Area and Cora Island are good examples. On Cora Island, wetlands will be restored to help manage floodwaters, and the public will enjoy bird watching, fishing and hiking.

River protection and restoration was a major focus in Florida, because the state has arguably the most extensive and popular water trail system in the nation and an ever growing need for sustainable flows of cleanwater for fish, wildlife and people. Florida is defined by water and is home to some of our nation's premier water trails and was the perfect place to highlight the economic, recreation and conservation benefits of water trails and blueways. Local groups called for the establishment of a National Blueways Initiative, as featured in an opinion piece in the Orlando Sentinel.

At the homegrown listening session in Phoenix roughly sixty Arizonans came together and identified the lack of funding for conservation programs such as the LWCF, including a lack of agency staff positions, as well as a general lack of education and awareness programs that involve youth, families, and diverse constituencies, as the major challenges and obstacles to achieving conservation goals and reconnecting people with nature. Attendees felt programs to get people out into nature – volunteering, doing service projects, and enjoying outings – are the most effective ways to reconnect people to the outdoors and encourage their stewardship. Programs such as Sierra Club's Inner City Outings were specifically called out.

Increase funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Established in 1964 the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides much-needed dollars to federal land management and state and local conservation agencies for purchasing ecologically and recreationally important lands. LWCF has proven highly successful, enabling the nation to protect millions of acres, including national seashores, rivers, trails, and lakeshores. LWCF projects have helped states and localities purchase some 2.6 million acres of land and advanced river restoration through acquisition of riverside lands to serve as buffer zones. The annual need for riverside conservation funding far outstrips the resources available to realize the demand. The Administration should support and advocate for full and dedicated funding for the LWCF, \$900 million annually to allow communities to realize the full potential of riverside land and park conservation nationwide.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund – CWSRF programs provided more than \$5 billion annually in recent years to fund water quality protection projects for wastewater treatment, nonpoint source pollution control, and watershed and estuary management. Funding for this program needs to be leveraged and used for the development of natural landscapes and parks that will provide adequate clean water supply.

FEMA Mitigation Grant Program – FEMA’s mission is to reduce the loss of life and property and protect communities nationwide from all hazards, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters. FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery and mitigation. FEMA's Mitigation Grant programs allow communities to become more resilient through buyouts, relocation, and elevation among other activities and include the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the Flood Mitigation Assistance program, the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program, and the Repetitive Flood Claims and the Severe Repetitive Loss programs. Funding for these programs needs to be leveraged and invested in the development of natural landscapes and green space to help manage floods and other disasters.

HUD Disaster Recovery Enhancement Fund – HUD’s mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes. HUD’s Disaster Recovery Enhancement Fund (DREF) purpose is to reward states that invested in its Community Development Block Grant disaster recovery funding in activities that reduce risks from future disasters and to assist with the additional cost of mitigating future risk for such projects as buyouts, relocation, improving homes and building codes and land use planning. DREF program funding needs to be leveraged and put towards the restoration of natural landscapes that provide protection from disasters, parks development, and improvement to water quantity and quality.

EPA Brownfields – EPA's Brownfields Program is designed to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Funding of the Brownfield program needs to be leveraged and allocated to the development of parks, restored natural landscapes and places for outdoor recreation.

NOAA Community Based Restoration Program The NOAA Restoration Center’s Community-based Restoration Program invests funding and technical expertise in high priority habitat restoration projects that instill strong conservation values and engage citizens in hands-on activities. Through the program, NOAA, its partners, and thousands of volunteers are actively restoring coastal, marine, and migratory fish habitat across the nation.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Four federal agencies share responsibility for administering designated rivers, conducting studies to determine if rivers qualify for wild and scenic river designation, and developing wild and scenic river management plans: the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Currently over 3,400 streams totaling 84,500 stream miles are potentially eligible for designation and these streams offer an untapped opportunity for river protection. The Administration should identify and prioritize a new round of designations and direct each agency to develop new guidance for how these eligible rivers are managed in the mean time, to assure compliance with the WSRA. Strong guidance would administratively protect tens of thousands of the highest quality miles of rivers nationwide. Since rivers do not stop at administrative boundaries, federal agencies should direct resources to help communities protect and enhance portions of rivers adjacent to designated segments creating a more comprehensive approach to managing the national treasures while improving public outreach.

Americans are proud of these great rivers but once designated their continued protection and enhancement relies on high quality, well coordinated and sustained management by federal and some state agencies responsible for the day to day management of Wild and Scenic Rivers. Dedicated agency staff are working on the ground around the country to protect the natural heritage of our Wild and Scenic Rivers, but their work is increasingly challenging mainly due to lack of coordination, staffing and funding. There is a backlog of incomplete or out of date Wild and Scenic River management plans which has left Wild and Scenic Rivers unprotected exposing the federal government to conflicts over use and costly litigation. With increased staffing funding, these agencies could complete and update management plans and studies to identify additional rivers that qualify for designation. Additional funding would also allow them to better manage and protect designated rivers and promote their values to the public.

Wilderness – Designation of Wilderness protects the landscapes around some of our most precious and important rivers and streams. There are hundreds of thousands of eligible acres containing thousands of river miles, worthy of protection by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture.

Outstanding Natural Resource Waters – Finally, the Clean Water Act presents an important opportunity to protect our best water resources for future generations. Federal antidegradation policy requires states to maintain and protect waters that constitute “an outstanding National resource” including “waters of exceptional recreational or ecological significance.” 40 CFR 131.12. These so-called Outstanding Natural Resource Waters are administered by States but the EPA can and should do more to provide direction and encouragement for additional designations throughout the country.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In a time of climate change and with increasing pressure on our remaining wildlife corridors and winter ranges, it is time for a new and sustained investment in protecting key private lands. The Madison River Valley in Southwest Montana provides a shining example of what can be accomplished when funds are available to support conservation easements and acquisitions. Today, more than 50% of the private lands in the valley are permanently protected through the use of conservation easements. Healthy populations of elk, deer, pronghorn antelope, avian species and many others successfully migrate across this watershed. As our climate continues to warm and wildlife is forced to adapt, move or perish, the federal government can play a critical role in providing the financial resources to protect and sustain key private lands and wildlife connectivity in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and create a permanent, annual appropriation specifically for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Utilize these funds to protect and acquire key private lands that facilitate wildlife migration or other important habitats such as wetlands, winter range and river corridors.

Facing a future of warmer temperatures, declining snowpack and increased drought, both the human and natural communities of Greater Yellowstone stand in need of a new, more robust and comprehensive approach to watershed restoration. Efforts to restore degraded riparian areas, dwindling trout populations, drying wetlands and floodplains, and dilapidated irrigation structures would provide substantial economic and recreational benefits to communities throughout the region. A substantial new federal investment in the watersheds of Greater Yellowstone would connect communities to their home watersheds and help prepare these irreplaceable resources for a warmer world.

Establish and fund a new, large-scale watershed restoration program in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Focus the funding and engagement around communities in the region in a way that creates local economic opportunities and involves youth in high school and college programs.

In a time of climate change, it is essential to effectively manage species and habitats across jurisdictional boundaries. Greater Yellowstone has set precedents throughout its history and is now positioned to lead the way in realizing the potential of coordinated and well-managed federal lands. The key federal land management agencies that operate within this ecosystem should be networked and integrated such that species, habitats and natural process are managed in a coordinated manner that focuses on resiliency to climate change. In order to achieve this, the federal government must also dedicate resources toward the science of climate change and understanding what measures are necessary to sustain Greater Yellowstone. These actions would demonstrate to the world the United States' long-term commitment to protecting and sustaining Yellowstone. America's Great Outdoors provides an opportunity to pilot this new standard at the world's first national park and to preserve and protect our country's natural heritage through the next century.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Create a new, integrated management scheme for managing the federal lands of Greater Yellowstone. Develop new mandates and guiding principles for the federal land management agencies to operate under that focus on coordinated management and climate change adaptation, such as: Reduce existing stressors; Protect water quality and quantity; Protect and enable natural movement and migration; Improve capacity to predict; Employ cautious and well-informed interventions/treatments Provide increased funding and staff capacity that allows agencies to implement projects and programs across multiple jurisdictions. Require annual reports that show measurable progress toward the goal of ecosystem management for the benefit of the species, habitats and communities of Greater Yellowstone.

One of the Paper's suggested means of protecting these landscapes was for the President to establish National Monuments. Two areas in Utah - the San Rafael Swell and Cedar Mesa regions - were recommended for consideration. Both of these areas are among those which easily meet the criteria of the Antiquities Act for national monument designation and would be worthy of action by President Obama.

An additional means of protecting wild lands in Utah and elsewhere would be the authority granted by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to establish Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). The BLM has not made use of this authority since the establishment of the "no more wilderness" policy by President Bush. Sec. Salazar should revoke this policy, reinstate the WSAs in Utah and in other states proposed under President Clinton, and begin granting WSA status to the many other worthy areas in BLM lands.

The administration should prioritize rivers as part of America's Great Outdoors so that everyone has access to healthy rivers. To help realize this vision, the administration should launch a National Blueways Initiative to help local communities establish blueways, also known as blue trails or water trails.

I also urge you to keep the promise to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund which helps protect river health and clean water nationwide.

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Dedicate a portion of those funds to a public-private Chesapeake Treasured Landscapes Fund for acquiring lands identified by new Federal-State GIS-based conservation planning tools. Applying the Treasured Landscapes idea to the Bay's tributaries, particularly its largest tributary the Susquehanna, is just as important as applying this designation to the Bay itself.

Fully funding the Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Program and designate the Susquehanna River as a connector trail to the Historic John Smith Trail. These programs are critical for assisting local partners in making necessary improvements that foster stewardship, conservation and help to expand heritage tourism.

Establish a new 21st Century Chesapeake Bay National Park, as recommended in the Chesapeake Executive Order and the Special Resources Study submitted to Congress in January, including important sites along the Susquehanna River, the Bay's largest tributary.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide more funding and technical assistance through the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.

Create a new unit of the National Park Service via a "Susquehanna River National Greenway Act" with the following purposes: (a) to recognize the importance of water, forest, agricultural, wildlife, recreational, and cultural resources of the Susquehanna River region, and the national significance of the Susquehanna River watershed region of the United States; (b) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service to provide financial and technical assistance to the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, River States, county and local units of government to implement high priority greenway, trail, conservation and interpretation projects in the Susquehanna River region, and increasing recreational access opportunities to the river.

Provide more current data on the economic impacts of protecting rivers, trails, parks and greenway corridors. Develop models for use by local groups to assess the economic impact of trail and park projects.

The notice for this meeting indicated that these listening sessions were being conducted to find grassroots solutions to conserving our lands and waters and reconnecting Americans to the Outdoors. Even the best of local grassroots efforts often need the support and dollars of federal assistance programs, and for this reason, I will focus my comments today on the full funding of the Land and Water Conservation (LWCF), especially the state-side assistance program.

The LWCF state assistance program has helped to develop thousands of trails, recreation fields, and other park facilities for Americans to use in their daily lives, as well as acquire new parks and recreation lands in every state in the nation. It was created by Congress in 1965 and is authorized to receive \$900 million annually from a portion of the federal revenues from oil and gas leasing of the Outer Continental Shelf. This amount was to be divided equally between federal funding and state-side projects. Unfortunately, the program has been woefully underfunded in recent decades. As a result, all the states report a huge unmet need for local parks and recreation resources totaling more than \$27 billion in eligible projects.

Just last Friday, the latest opportunity to provide substantial, dedicated funding for the state side portion of this program was again lost. The Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic Resources Act, or CLEAR Act was passed by the House, including language on dedicated funding to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. That's the good news. A proposed amendment to this Act would have provided a guarantee of no less than 40% of funds for the stateside program. The day before the vote, this amendment was withdrawn by its sponsor, Representative McGovern of Massachusetts. Coincidentally, in a July 29 letter from Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to Rep. McGovern, he indicated that the Obama administration was committed to full funding of the LWCF by 2014 through the budget process, but there was no assurance that the stateside program would be guaranteed funding. Based on this letter, it appears that the withdrawal of the amendment was based at least in part on the administration's lack of support for dedicated state-side funding for this program. That's the bad news

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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In the same letter, Secretary Salazar refers to the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative, saying "we are hearing from state and local governments, recreation advocates, non profit organizations and other supporters about ways to enhance the State-side grant program". If you are indeed listening, this is my strong message to you today-Fund the State-side portion of the LWCF, fund it fully and fund it consistently. As a professional in the field for 26 years and a member of the National Recreation and Park Association, I have gone to Washington annually with my peers and have listened to lip service to fully fund this program going back many administrations, and in all candor I find it frustrating when an opportunity such as the one I just described comes up and is not supported by the administration.

The attached selection of opinion pieces and letters to the editor published in the Denver Post, the Grand Junction Sentinel and the Pueblo Chieftain demonstrate broad and diverse support for the program from Colorado anglers, outfitters, birders and youth organizations. LWCF helps fund many of Colorado's recreation areas, including the Platte River trail system, Castlewood Canyon State Park, and Garden of the Gods.

As Coloradans well know, protecting our public lands provides numerous benefits to our state. Protecting these open spaces helps create a vibrant recreation milieu that leads to economic activity and jobs, and helps Colorado attract new residents and businesses. In fact, outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing, camping, climbing, hiking, paddling, backcountry skiing, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, and other activities contributes \$730 billion annually to the economy. Outdoor recreation is responsible for eight percent of all consumer spending nationwide according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation. Here in Colorado, spending on outdoor activities translates into nearly \$500 million in annual state tax revenue and supports 107,000 jobs across the state.

Additionally, in a recent national bipartisan poll conducted by Public Opinion Strategies and FM3, 85 percent of Americans view the LWCF as more important today in light of the British Petroleum oil spill. Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund also preserves our natural heritage and provides close-to-home recreational opportunities for every American. I hope that the following media clips from media sources in Colorado demonstrate how the LWCF has provided a continuum of conservation that has touched us all.

Instead of using taxpayers' money, LWCF protects federal lands and provides grants to communities for local parks and trails using a small portion of royalties paid by companies conducting offshore drilling. This common-sense approach to land conservation benefits anglers and hunters because conservation creates opportunity. The opportunity to hunt, fish, hike, bike and ski in these wild places is increasingly at risk from an array of land-use threats, and must be protected as a part of our national heritage.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The president's new budget asks that more than \$2.5 million be allocated for expansion of Canyon of the Ancients National Monument in southwest Colorado. In previous years, \$1.5 million in LWCF funds went to the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area and another \$440,000 to the Colorado National Monument. More than \$9 million has been allocated to the White River National Forest and in excess of \$6 million has helped preserve critical habitat in Gunnison County and assisted programs in the Black Canyon National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area.

The support of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and our elected officials in Congress for critical programs that protect our land and water, such as full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, is vital to the health of our families, communities, and tourism-based economies. A national conversation about the value of our public lands and waterways, such as that being proposed by the new America's Great Outdoors initiative, could help to sustain our outdoors heritage.

Efforts are underway, supported by groups across Colorado and the nation, to insure the long overdue full funding for LWCF. Recently on July 30, the issue to fully fund LWCF passed in the U.S House of Representatives. We applaud our Colorado delegates heartily for their efforts and role in this success. Congresswoman Betsy Markey, 4th District Colorado, cast her affirmative vote that day joining Jared Polis and Diana DeGette, and Colorado U.S. Senators Mark Udall and Michael Bennet were instrumental by cosponsoring legislation in the Senate that would ensure a dedicated source for permanent full funding of LWCF.

But the fight to make things right is not over. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has tabled the Senate's discussion and vote on the L WCF until after the August recess, fearing he would not have enough votes to pass the issue. We must ensure that full and permanent funding for L WCF remains a priority in September.

Collaborative Resource Management: Not only are America's working landscapes the places that can produce multiple values (wildlife, ecosystem services, food, fiber, fuel, and healthy, outdoor experiences), they are also the places where it is possible to dismantle debilitating political polarization. Collaboration among diverse interests (including state and federal agencies, tribes, businesses, conservation and recreational groups, etc.) is the essential ingredient to create sustainable, adaptive management regimes on the working landscape. Thus, collaboration is the central component that must be strengthened to truly achieve the Administration's desired landscape scale outcomes.

Capacity-Building: To strengthen collaborative resource management, the federal government must work with state entities, philanthropy, and private investors to expand the capacity of key institutions. Community-based organizations, regional intermediary organizations, and local business entrepreneurs can all yield enormous ecological and economic advances across the working landscape IF pivotal investments are made to increase their capacity.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We see potential for the most success and the greatest opportunity to galvanize diverse Americans and leverage our natural assets by supporting collaborative community-based efforts that represent the best of small rural entrepreneurs and land managers, skilled non-profit organizations, and the federal government all working together to transform our rural economy and landscape. As the Administration considers an array of options to reconnect citizens to America's Great Outdoors, we urge you to support and invest in the ecological, social, and economic resiliency of rural communities and working landscapes in the West. Far from an obligation, it is the only real opportunity to create systemic improvement for our resources, our economy, and our people.

Collaborative process: A commitment to the use of collaborative processes that are open, transparent, and inclusive to define, implement, and monitor conservation and sustainability goals and activities on the landscape. Collaboration and partnership among unusual allies, such as the involvement of landowners, forest workers, businesses, conservation organizations, civic groups, tribal entities and governments, and federal and state agencies leads to solutions that are durable and address the public interest. Collaborative efforts have helped to break gridlock in federal lands management, and have resulted in the development and implementation of projects that employ local people and restore our forests and watersheds. Collaboration is the foundation for economic prosperity in the West, yet it lacks financial and programmatic support from federal agencies and most federal programs.

Power sharing: Shared decision-making power is vital to a healthy and democratic system of management and stewardship. Decision-making processes that recognize social, economic, and political inequity and strive to balance and improve these disparities bring communities together, rather than pit them against themselves and each other.

Restoring and stewarding our nation's natural resources offers significant workforce and small business development opportunities worthy of federal investment². Investment in rural development from philanthropic organizations can never be enough.³ Federal policy and programs have the potential to build on the success of community-based efforts, bringing them to a scale that will begin to address the magnitude of our economic and ecologic challenges. The country's long term resource, food, and energy security is dependent on this investment.

The USDA Forest Service Economic Action Program (EAP) (not funded since 2002) helped rural communities and businesses dependent on natural resources become sustainable and self-sufficient. It provided technical and financial assistance to communities throughout the rural West to retain and build the capacity of small, rural businesses to implement restoration and stewardship activities and utilize material that is removed as a result of sustainable land management activities. The Economic Action Program is the only Forest Service program authorized to provide this type of business assistance.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Community Forest Restoration Program-New Mexico (USDA Forest Service-State and Private Forestry) In 2001, with the passage of the Community Forest Restoration Act of 2000 (Title VI, Public Law 106-393) the U.S. Forest Service created the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) in New Mexico to provide up to \$5 million annually towards cost-share grants to stakeholders for experimental forest restoration projects on public land designed through a collaborative process. These projects may be entirely on one, or any combination of, Federal, Tribal, State, County or municipal forest lands, and must include a diverse and balanced group of stakeholders in their design and implementation. Each project must also address specific restoration objectives, including: wildfire threat reduction, reestablishment of historic fire regimes, reforestation, preservation of old and large trees, and increased utilization of small diameter trees.

Community Forest Landscape Restoration Program (USDA Forest Service-National Forest System) Congress, under Title IV of Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (PDF, 40 KB), established the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The purpose of the CFLR Program is to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. This legislation requires a broad coalition of interests to assess the landscape together, identify priorities, and sketch out a collaborative plan of action. CFLRP promotes benefits to local rural economies and forest health and should be a model for other programs. The CFLRP is not a grant making program, but rather creates the CFLR Fund, which must be appropriated annually and supports implementation activities associated with a collaboratively developed landscape scale strategy that aims to: encourage ecological, economic, and social sustainability; leverage local resources with national and private resources; facilitate the reduction of wildfire management costs, including reestablishing natural fire regimes and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire; demonstrate the degree to which various ecological restoration techniques achieve ecological and watershed health objectives; and encourage utilization of forest restoration by-products to offset treatment costs, benefit local rural economies, and improve forest health.

The USDA NRCS Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) in the 2008 Farm Bill is an innovative program that encourages landowners to work together to implement and maintain conservation practices that affect multiple landowners at a landscape scale. Instead of piecemeal delivery of programs ranch by ranch or program by program, this initiative supports projects that involve partnership among groups of landowners to address conservation priorities, regulatory requirements, and innovative cross-boundary resource management. This program invites community-based organizations to partner with NRCS for the delivery of specific Farm Bill conservation programs to landowners in ways that meet and respond to local needs, opportunities, and customs. While federal programs like CCPI recognize the value that community-based organizations provide, they fail to provide financial assistance to these partner organizations for their contributions in engaging and mobilizing local populations.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Increase interagency collaboration. The high percentage of public lands in the West creates a unique rural landscape where even private lands are situated in a public lands context. Examples include rural communities surrounded by public land, a checkerboard of private and public land, or private land adjacent to a large swath of public forest or rangeland. In these public lands communities with natural resource-based economies, the land management agencies are often an economic driver. Increased dialogue between the Forest Service, BLM, FWS and Rural Development would leverage scarce government dollars and promote rural communities' efforts to engage in conservation and rural development. Additionally, land owners and stewards often work at the intersection of multiple land management agencies. For example, a rancher might work with the NRCS on private land, graze on both USFS and BLM public land allotments, and intersect with the USFWS and even NMFS for endangered species conservation measures. Increased interagency collaboration has the potential to expand the effectiveness of programs and regulations by integrating agency mandates, practices, and standards promoting the management of whole landscapes for conservation. In addition to potential cost reductions, increased cooperation also reduces transaction costs for communities intersecting with public agencies, and increases trust and understanding between local populations and the federal government.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Create and fund a Community Capacity and Collaborative Support Grant Program at \$50 million annually to enhance conservation and rural economic resiliency. Investment is needed to retain and build the capacity of community based organizations, collaborative groups, and small rural businesses to participate in landscape level forest and watershed restoration and stewardship activities, utilize the by-products of land management activities for traditional and emerging markets in payments for ecosystem services, and develop mitigation and adaptation strategies for climate change. Investment is essential to economic recovery in rural communities adjacent to public lands. The program will provide funding through competitively awarded grants to directly support and/or provide technical assistance for: organizational and staff support, including facilitation; travel related to collaborative group activities; workshops and training related to current science, management practices, facilitation, contracting, and other topics that will assist groups in building their capacity to meet their project goals; natural resource related business support services, including marketing and utilization of products and services resulting from land stewardship, grant writing, bonding access, federal bidding procedures and other technical advice; landscape level planning and modeling and watershed assessment; design of silvicultural and restoration prescriptions and treatments to enhance forest and watershed resilience, adaptation, and restoration; design and coordination of monitoring of ecological, economic, and social impacts of projects and management actions; dissemination of best practices and tools to assist collaborative groups and community based organizations in project development, implementation, and monitoring; and outreach and engagement of youth and traditionally under-represented populations. Outcomes: Ensure community based organizations (CBOs) and collaborative groups have the financial and technical resources to convene, plan, implement, and monitor landscape scale restoration projects. Strengthen the relationships and partnerships between the land management agencies, collaborative groups, and community-based organizations. Create peer-to-peer learning networks among CBOs and collaborative groups working on projects across the region and in adjacent regions that will accelerate learning and adoption of best practices. Provide training and technical assistance related to collaboration, multi-party monitoring, project design, and stewardship contracting for government agency employees, non-profit, and business partners. Ensure best practices are employed and shared consistently across the region among nonprofits, federal employees, and the business community. Support and enhance small rural businesses providing quality jobs in land management and restoration.

Fully fund the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) authorized under the Forest Landscape Restoration Act at \$40 million in FY2012. This legislation requires a broad coalition of interests to assess the landscape together, identify priorities, and sketch out a collaborative plan of action. CFLRP should receive full funding for the next ten years and should be used as a template for other programs to invest in restoration and land stewardship across the West.

Support and expand use of stewardship contracting as a tool for implementing collaborative forest restoration and stewardship. Stewardship contracting has been one successful and critical tool for foster restoration of our nation's forests and watersheds while creating community benefit. The expansion of stewardship contracting should be should be aggressively pursued.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Support and fully fund the Forest Service Integrated Resource Restoration Line Item in FY2011 President's budget. Consolidating funding for restoration and stewardship into one line item will enable land managers to effectively budget for integrated outcomes related to land management goals. The IRR line item proposed in the FY2011 President's budget fixes an outdated structure that stovepipes activities that are better integrated to give land managers more effective budget tools to achieve landscape scale restoration and stewardship objectives on the ground. We support all three components of the IRR line item, with the addition of performance measures and other related guidance.

The federal government must accommodate, support, and adequately fund collaborative efforts on the landscape. Collaborative community-based efforts present a high area of opportunity to make progress on the gridlock that has surrounded public land management in the West. Land management agencies must support and participate in these efforts. By participating, the land management agencies are not abdicating their authority, but are rather partnering with stakeholders to develop management solutions that have diverse support. Funding for CBOs is integral to support the collaborative structures and institutions that assemble diverse interests and viewpoints, and facilitate them towards common ground.

Fully fund the Farm Bill Conservation Programs at the mandated levels for FY2011, \$4.3 billion. The NRCS conservation programs authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill are critical to enhancing ecosystem health on private land across the nation. These programs provide technical assistance and financial incentives for conservation of private forest and ranchlands. These include programs such as the Forest Stewardship Program (State and Private Forestry), Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (Natural Resources Conservation Service).

Fund the new Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program at \$10 million annually. This program, maintaining working landscapes, managing the pressure to develop green spaces so vital to the character and integrity of many communities, and management of changing land ownership. The program provides matching funds to help county or local governments, nongovernmental organizations, or Native American tribes acquire forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses, and are economically, culturally, and environmentally important to local communities. Funds will also be set aside for technical assistance. This assistance will help each grant recipient develop and implement a required forest management plan, crafted with a high level of community input.

Fully fund and increase the flexible utilization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), while increasing expenditures under Forest Legacy and USFS Land Acquisition. This program is critical to stem development pressure and helps conserve working landscapes, curb future costs to the public, and secure the land base for rural economic activities. Congress should give direction to federal and state agencies to increase utilization of LWCF funding for the purchase of conservation easements on private lands.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Integrated community-scaled biomass utilization strategies can offset the costs of forest restoration and hazardous fuel reduction activities while contributing to rural economies, energy independence, and carbon emission reductions. The following programs represent a comprehensive approach to encouraging efficient, community scaled biomass utilization strategies across the nation. It is critical that Congress fund all of these programs as each fulfills a different need for support, planning, and implementation of broad biomass utilization and climate change planning strategies.

Fully Fund the Community Wood Energy Program at \$5 million. The Community Wood Energy Program (CWEP) was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill at \$5 million. The program will provide up to \$50,000 grants to qualifying state or local government entities to prepare “community wood energy plans.” Once a plan has been approved, the qualified applicant may request up to 50 percent matching grants toward the capital cost of installing biomass energy systems. Increase funding for the Woody Biomass Utilization Grants program under the Hazardous Fuels line item to \$10 million. The Woody Biomass Utilization Grant Program, funded under the USFS Wildland Fire, Hazardous Fuels Line Item supports the utilization of forest restoration byproducts from National Forest system lands.

Fully fund the Climate Change Adaptation Initiative in the Department of the Interior at \$17.5 million. The Department of the Interior’s Climate Change Adaptation Initiative is a proactive approach to adapting to and mitigating for climate change impacts to our nation’s public lands. The approach is collaborative and based on integrating science with the broad experiences of partners across regional landscapes. This program will be vital to understanding potential climate change impacts on public lands and reaching social agreement on management actions necessary to address impacts and implement mitigation measures.

Require the USDA Forest Service and NRCS to join the DOI Climate Change Adaptation Initiative efforts to increase interagency coordination on landscape scale approaches to climate change adaptation. Congress should advise USDA to join the DOI Climate Change Adaptation Initiative to increase interagency collaboration and coordination on climate change strategies.

Establish a Revolving Loan Fund to support retro-fits of institutional facilities that use petroleum-based fuels to generate thermal energy.

Ensure every region has a USFS woody biomass utilization specialist. Currently, not every region has them, and in some regions the position is less than 1 FTE.

Expand the USFS Fuels for Schools and Beyond Program. The Fuels for Schools and Beyond Program, administered by the US Forest Service in Region 1, is a significant resource for communities in the region to explore conversion of boilers at elementary and secondary schools to woody biomass from petroleum-based fuels.

Establish a new competitive research and development program within the Department of Energy or the USDA Forest Service to encourage the development and implementation of appropriately-scaled dispersed energy generation technologies.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increase funding and strengthen existing programs to retain and encourage the next generation to remain and invest in their family land-based businesses. Increased funding and outreach for participation in programs such as the Beginning Rancher Program (Farm Bill program) helps promote long-term conservation and intergenerational transfer of open space and working lands.

In addition to the US Forest Kids in the Woods program, create programs that support the engagement of young adults in the outdoors through job training and employment. Youth oriented work programs successfully train and employ America's young adults and serve as a critical bridge to long term, stable employment. Agencies can contract with these programs to achieve public land management goals. Employing young adults from rural communities builds community leaders, keeps youth and dollars working locally, and builds natural resource management capacity in public lands communities.

Create a program or re-tool an existing program (AmeriCorps, state Civilian Corps) to direct funding to land management agencies' district offices in rural areas to employ recent college graduates for 1 to 2 years. Recent college graduates are struggling to find jobs in the economic recession and often the land management agencies are understaffed and underfunded. Public land management is diverse work, providing opportunities to grow technical skills (i.e. facilitation, stakeholder outreach, archeological surveys, geology, botany, engineering, etc.) well as labor-intensive skills (i.e. thinning and fuels reduction, riparian restoration, trail building and maintenance, facility construction, etc.).

Federal agencies should inventory existing youth programs across agency jurisdictions to 1) review programs for redundancy and, 2) create an appendix or report on all existing programs to help streamline program delivery. Funding for youth-related programs exists within numerous federal agencies – Agriculture, Labor, Transportation, and Interior. Thus, identifying and accessing these various programs to support long term youth training and employment programs is a challenge.

Restructure matching requirements and timelines to give organizations adequate time to secure the required financial support to make projects a reality. Match requirements for many federal programs place a significant burden on organizations that provide youth-oriented training, education, and work programs. These organization that are required to invest significant time and resources in identifying and securing private funds to meet match requirements.

As you prepare your report to President Obama, the NWRA would like to respectfully recommend that National Wildlife Refuges and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should play a leadership role in implementing the America's Great Outdoors initiative. Whether providing strategic science-based conservation priorities or supplying skilled, experienced boots on the ground managing land, the Service has over a century of experience delivering landscape conservation on both public and private lands across the country. In short, many of the AGO goals articulated at Listening Sessions and on the AGO website can be advanced by recommitting and investing in proven U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs and making them more inclusive by fostering greater collaboration among agencies and departments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Develop a coordinated National Conservation Strategy'- Articulating a common vision and strategy for protecting American biodiversity, ecosystem services, and cultural and historic resources, based on a comprehensive assessment of protected and threatened resources, would help set common goals and roles among federal agencies and private partners. Using new tools provided by Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (Lees), inventory and monitoring programs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service should lead this integrated effort on public and private lands.

Promote Landscape Conservation - The Department of the Interior should lead landscape conservation approaches to conserve and restore fish and wildlife and ecosystem services by promoting inter-agency cooperation, partnerships with states, communities and nonprofits. Identify Important Geographies that are under immediate threat from development and climate change, and that enjoy strong local support, such as the Everglades, Chesapeake Bay, Lower Mississippi, Great Lakes, Southern Texas, and the Mojave Desert as America's Great Outdoors - Treasured Landscapes.

Expand the National Wildlife Refuge System - To protect and conserve migratory birds, marine mammals, threatened and endangered species, and Species of Greatest Conservation Need (from State Wildlife Action Plans), the Refuge System must work at a scale large enough and representative of all American habitat types - terrestrial, aquatic and marine - to conserve America's fish, wildlife and plants for future generations.

Create a National Wildlife Corridor System - Wildlife Corridors should be managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with the primary goals of providing habitat connectivity to allow for climate change adaptation and natural migration of wide-ranging animals on public and private lands using a variety of conservation tools.

Develop a Private Lands Conservation Strategy - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service should together work with landowners, private investment capital, and land trusts to conserve and/or restore important private lands (as designated by the National Conservation Strategy) using increased funding through the Farm Bill and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

Mandate an Increase in Urban National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks - As our nation becomes increasingly urbanized, we must make our fish, wildlife, historic and cultural heritage relevant to the next generation, with an emphasis on reaching diverse urban communities who currently are not engaged with National Wildlife Refuges or National Parks.

Expand the Leadership Role of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and National Forest Service in International Conservation - To protect the U.S. interest in mitigating the effects of climate change, the loss of productivity in our world's oceans, and the dramatic loss in biodiversity in the Western Hemisphere and abroad, we must protect wildlife beyond our own borders.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Recognize that the Natural Resources Agencies have been Drastically Under-Funded Our resource agencies are not simply vehicles for recreation - they are the national bank of clean water, clean air, the web of life, and natural resource economies from shellfish to timber. As such, they should receive operations and management budget and program increases, and supporting program increases including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy Program, Endangered Species Grants, Coastal Grants, North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grants, and Multinational Species Conservation Grants during these difficult times while also promoting efficiencies at the Agencies.

Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at its authorized level of \$900 million. LWCF is the primary source of funding for DOI land and conservation easement acquisition, and it is essential to provide the tools to federal agencies to implement the America's Great Outdoors vision.

Support those who support our refuges and other public lands - Each year more than 30,000 people volunteer at national wildlife refuges, and their contributions result in 20% of the work conducted on these vital habitats. Further, nearly 250 refuge 'Friends' volunteer organizations raise dollars, educate children and families and serve as a voice for our refuges and wildlife conservation in their local communities. The contributions of these citizens should be recognized and supported with a comprehensive initiative to provide training and resources to build groups' capacity and continuity.

Now is the time to encourage the Senate to seize this opportunity. Please tell the Senate leadership that full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund should be included in legislation that you could sign into law and protect this important economic activity, which benefits so many Americans.

Amend the surface transportation law and transportation policies to encourage states to give due consideration to waterway access in the transportation planning process and in conjunction with new construction, reconstruction or repair of road and bridge transportation facilities, except where such use is unsafe, not permitted or appropriate. Promoting waterway access along existing transportation public rights-of-way is one of the easiest ways to enhance public access to the Bay's rivers and streams.

Provide additional funds for carrying out the Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Program and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

The U.S. Department of the Interior uses the discretionary authority available under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act to set aside 10 percent of the funds available for a Chesapeake Treasured Landscapes Initiative.

Existing National Wildlife Refuges be expanded and new ones established in the watershed.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Department of Defense provide additional Readiness and Environmental Protection (REPI) program funds for conservation of lands adjacent to military installations in the Chesapeake region.

Congress and the Secretary of Education work together to enact the No Child Left Inside Act. This legislation provides incentives for states to provide high-quality environmental instruction, outdoor learning activities, and teacher professional development and will help ensure that every student graduates from high school with the environmental knowledge and skills necessary for the environmental challenges and "green" economy of the 21st Century and to be healthy and productive citizens.

You encourage the Secretary of Education to become actively engaged in both the Federal Leadership Committee established under the Chesapeake Bay Executive Order and in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Federal funding for NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program be boosted.

We need the administration's strong leadership to enhance funding for community efforts to protect and restore natural places, and for programs intended to protect our land and water, like fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

As your administration incorporates these ideas into a set of proposals and recommendations, we respectfully urge you to build on what Wallace Stegner rightly called "America's best idea" by making the protection of public lands a centerpiece of the AGO Initiative and your Administration's conservation legacy.

In particular, we ask that the final AGO report articulate a strategy to work with communities across the nation and with Congress to establish new national monuments on our most important public lands using the Antiquities Act of 1906. As stated in an April 8, 2010, letter sent by several of our organizations, the designation of public lands as national monuments has long been a cornerstone of conservation in America and is one of the most significant tools available to the President. Since 1906, 15 presidents from both parties have successfully used the Antiquities Act to protect irreplaceable natural and historical treasures across America. A conservation strategy for the 21st century should think boldly about the ways in which the Act can adapt to address current conservation challenges.

Our groups urge you to act on this broad and deep support by using all of the tools at your disposal -including the Antiquities Act - to protect and expand our cherished lands, waters, and historic sites.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

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Expanding federal ownership of land is inappropriate and can not work in a broad conservation plan. The Federal government should not seek to obtain ownership of private lands for any purpose. Our federal government cannot financially manage the land it currently owns. Many land management agencies have huge backlogs just to repair and maintain what they have. Conservation funds should be used to improve forest health and infrastructure, not to acquire more land.

As the only federal “bricks and mortar” grant program available to advance the goals of the National Historic Preservation Act, Save America’s Treasures (SAT) has grown into the most successful preservation effort in the country’s history, awarding over \$350 million in federal and private funds to restore more than 1,200 nationally significant sites and collections in every state and territory. Many SAT projects involve volunteers in outdoor conservation and recreation projects. For example, in southeast Utah, underprivileged Navajo youth are working with employees of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to stabilize important pueblo sites that draw thousands of visitors to the area each year. In Philadelphia, Fairmont Park’s Strawberry Mansion/Woodford Orchard, hosts special programming to educate children from underserved communities in healthy eating by engaging them in gardening and farming in a historic context. Housed within the Historic Preservation Fund, SAT grants often fund rehabilitation projects that are important community anchors and engines. SAT grant projects stimulate heritage tourism and community engagement and serve as spark plugs for economic revitalization and job creation. We recommend funding SAT at \$30 million annually.

Preserve America is a federal program that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage. Goals of the program include a greater shared knowledge about the nation’s past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving our heritage assets and support for the economic vitality of our communities. The goals are carried out through grants which are invaluable seed money to develop sustainable preservation strategies that is unavailable for any other federal source. Preserve America should be funded at a minimum at \$5 million annually.

National Heritage Areas are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally-important landscape. Inaugurated in 1984, the National Heritage Areas movement now encompasses 49 areas, ranging from factory towns and city neighborhoods to farmland and battlefields. Though still relatively new, the National Heritage Area approach has already been incredibly successful in supporting heritage tourism and, creating thousands of new conservation, preservation, and historian jobs in communities across the country. Each year, more and more regions seek recognition under this innovative public/private partnership – a testament to the need of such a program. Funding for National Heritage Areas, which often facilitates community participation in preservation of rural areas, boost tourism, and requires local participation and leadership should increase to at least FY2010 levels of \$17million.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (Conservation System) is in dire need of more funding for increased law enforcement, interpretation programs, improved management, widespread inventory, and better protection of cultural resources. The Conservation System currently represents the best 10 percent of BLM's land but each year new units are added, visitation increases and operational costs rise. Still, the Conservation System consistently receives less than 4 percent of BLM's funding. For example, in FY 2007, the Conservation System was given a scant \$52.5 million—barely \$2 per acre. By contrast, the NPS was funded at \$19 per acre in FY 2006, yet even that amount is not enough to maintain our nation's treasures. In short, Conservation System program funding and staff are simply inadequate for ensuring the lasting preservation of BLM's nationally significant landscapes. The budget for the System should be increased to at least \$100 million in FY 2012.

To ensure their lasting protection, the Conservation System deserves strong policy guidance from the Department of the Interior. We recommend that this be addressed through a Secretarial Order.

The USFS should provide line-item funding for the management of historic and cultural resources in the National Forest System (System), especially focused on the preservation requirements of Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). At a minimum, this Forest Service Heritage Program line item should include an annual increase of \$15 million, of which at least \$6 million per year would be for monitoring, stewardship volunteers and Passport in Time (PIT) projects and \$3 million per year would be for stepped up law enforcement for cultural resources. Additionally, \$8.5 million (of a total of \$31 million needed) should be allocated immediately for the most critical deferred maintenance projects pertaining to cultural resources. The USFS should also produce a report that documents how much funding reaches "on-the-ground" heritage program activities, thereby promoting transparency and accountability for the use of heritage program funds.

Increase cultural resources funding for the parks and for park programs to restore parity between cultural and natural resources.

Increase opportunities for the protection of significant properties, gateway communities and critical landscapes around or within national parks that need protection. Create incentives for local governments and private landowners to work with the NPS to plan for the long-term preservation of our heritage resources on a landscape scale. This should include acquisition of lands from willing sellers to protect key locations using Land and Water Conservation Funding, Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Account funds and conservation easements.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Establish a \$1 million per year pilot program from FY 2011 through FY 2015 to create an incentive for local and state governments to work cooperatively with the NPS for long-term planning to protect heritage resources on a landscape level in areas experiencing rapid population growth. The pilot should be funded from the Cultural Programs Activity in the National Recreation and Preservation account. The program could offer grants to local governments for up to half the cost of preparing a plan to preserve heritage resources in cooperation with NPS. The grant should require planning in cooperation between the NPS and other local government grantees in instances where the park unit straddles multiple cities, counties and states.

At many battlefields and military parks, significant portions of hallowed landscapes where Americans made their ultimate sacrifices are not preserved because National Park boundaries usually encompass only fractions of actual battlefields. In areas of the U.S. that are experiencing rapid urbanization and sprawl, such as the mid-Atlantic region, rural farms on which large portions of historic battlefields are located are being redeveloped into subdivisions, strip malls and large "box" stores. To help preserve America's hallowed landscapes and honor the sacrifices of millions of past citizens, NPS should work with local governments to plan for development that will preserve the character of the landscapes and promote economic development for neighboring communities.

We encourage the appropriate presidential utilization of this critical tool to recognize and protect our rich natural and cultural heritage. With the exception of the NPS Organic Act of 1916, no law has had more influence over the development of the modern National Park System and the creation of the National Landscape Conservation System than the Antiquities Act. Since the passage of the Antiquities Act in 1906, fifteen presidents have used the Act to designate 124 National Monuments.

Create a new administrative designation called a Cultural Use Area (CUA) on BLM areas or lands containing cultural resources that are of particular importance for public, scientific or traditional uses. The Cultural Use Area designation would differentiate the cultural resources from other areas in a particular planning area in order to facilitate management of those resources as well as planning for other objectives. Cultural resources on lands not included within the CUA still need to be managed for the values they contain and opportunities they afford.

I also urge you to keep the promise to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund which helps protect river health and clean water nationwide.

An official wildlife corridor land designation would identify and protect this corridor through binding standards agreed upon by federal land management agencies and in cooperative agreements with Departments of Transportation, other state agencies, private landowners, and local governments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's Great Outdoors (AGO) has a unique opportunity to be a leader by creating this new wildlife corridor land designation. AGO can utilize ongoing work, such as BLM's Ecoregional Assessments, to help identify corridors and then create and apply designations through land management plans and executive order. An important component will be inviting partners to join in wildlife corridor protection by providing funding and incentives through the Farm Bill, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Transportation Bill, Climate Bill, Energy Bill, and several internal DOI programs such as the Partners for Fish and Wildlife.

We urge you to move forward with your plans to establish the Dakota Grassland Conservation Area and do so with a sense of urgency. Thank you for your consideration of the Association's position on this critically important initiative. We gladly offer our collective expertise and assistance, if needed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administration work with state and local partners to develop and implement a plan that utilizes a comprehensive suite of Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture programs to conserve the valuable PPR landscape, including:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grassland and wetland easements to address the current substantial backlog of landowner demand;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-led North American Wetlands Conservation Act projects;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System and Waterfowl Production Area programs;
- USDA Conservation Reserve Program lands including enrollment in general signup CRP, as well as targeted continuous CRP practices such as CP-33 for upland game birds, CP-37 targeted at waterfowl production, and CP-38 targeted at various game birds including prairie chickens and ring-necked pheasants;
- USDA Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Improvement Program, encouraging public access for hunters and providing economic support to rural landowners and communities; and
- USDA Wetlands Reserve Program; and
- Newly developed programs supporting youth involvement with wildlife habitat conservation and hunting opportunities.

On behalf of the Lord & Schryver Conservancy, a community based non-profit in Salem, Oregon dedicated to preserve and interpret the legacy of the two pioneer women landscape architects who practiced in the Northwest from 1929-69, I am writing to urge you to include public gardens and planned landscapes in your proposed legislation regarding preservation of natural areas as a way to reconnect children to the Great Outdoors. While woods and farmland are certainly critical to your goal, so too are public gardens and planned landscapes, especially within an urban area.

We urge you to consider the inclusion of public gardens and planned landscapes as essential to your goal of reconnecting children to the outdoors.

Ensure special districts and authorities are explicitly eligible to receive grants and other types of financial assistance as specified in federal legislation, implementing regulations and agency guidance.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increase federal funding for land conservation and outdoor recreational purposes, based on objective criteria such as population served, regional environmental protection needs, interconnectivity to other protected publicly accessible lands, adherence to regional and local comprehensive plans, and the dollar leverage achieved by federal investment.

Reduce transactional costs associated with applying for federal funds. A reduction in such costs will enable many SPDs to be more competitive applicants.

Incentives should be available to conserve privately owned lands, which allow some level of public access (trails, etc.) or have other obvious public benefit, such as protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Additionally, there should be incentives for these types of private lands to eventually become public access parks.

Consideration should be given to include SPD representatives on federal advisory committees and/or panels on America's Great Outdoors and other matters impacting our range of interests. These could include committees serving the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture and the Department of Transportation. As locally accountable service providers, SPDs offer an important perspective on how to connect U.S. citizens with the outdoors, best practices in the management of public parklands and green infrastructure and should be a key part of the implementation strategy.

I implore you, President Obama and all the government departments working on this, America's Great Outdoors Initiative project to drastically change our present ineffective and reprehensible wildlife policies, and especially to stop the cruel roundups, the poisoning of predators, and to eliminate holding pens and use some of the \$100 million dollars to create sanctuaries for our wild horses and control their populations by effective PZP use, and finally to actually practice stewardship, by preserving and protecting the species in our care instead of killing them off in the most heinous ways. If we have evolved at all as human beings we will take this obligation seriously. Compassion cannot be mandated but it is clearly the only ethical solution. It is just plain common decency.

Landscapes of National Significance. The listening sessions highlighted that large landscape-level integrated conservation principles are necessary if we are to preserve our natural resources and landscapes of national significance. It is essential in the 21st century for us to look for new ways to coordinate Federal agencies, recognize the important role of private lands, engage communities, and find creative, collaborative solutions. Coordination at the landscape scale can make Federal programs more effective and efficient. National Parks are central elements in networks of large landscape conservation, as is evident in the Crown of the Continent and the Florida Everglades, for example.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The National Park Service should play a key role in protecting the nation's coastline, as was witnessed by their extraordinary efforts in the Gulf of Mexico spill. The Gulf of Mexico event also highlighted the critical contributions made by ocean water quality and wildlife abundance to America's Great Outdoors. A collaborative approach to ocean protection including the National Park Service should be encouraged.

Funding. The listening sessions identified public concerns about the need for adequate funding to support the National Park Service. If funding cuts as have been proposed by OMB in their general statement for FY 2012 are applied to the National Park Service budget, they will undermine the success of the America's Great Outdoors initiative. Increased funding is needed to protect park resources, restore deteriorating infrastructure, and provide basic services to the public. The Advisory Board supports full funding for NPS operations and programs including the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Board also will be looking into other sources of revenue including an endowment to support the National Park Service's long term mission.

Establish policies and provide incentives for local and federal agencies to engage in regional, integrated, multipurpose projects, similar to projects described above. For example, support from the Army Corps of Engineers is critical in the Compton Creek and Dominguez Channel Flood Project. Without the Army Corps of Engineers' collaboration with the County to develop a comprehensive Ecosystem Restoration Plan, local jurisdictions will not have the resources or expertise to design and implement meaningful and sustainable alternatives.

Direct Federal America's Great Outdoors agencies to encourage cooperation and partnership among Federal, State and local agencies.

Direct the Department of the Interior and the Housing and Urban Development Agency to support proposals that prioritize funding for the acquisition of critical open space, urban park projects, and trails in local communities

Direct the Department of the Interior and the Department of Education to work together to support funding that promotes partnerships between recreation agencies and local schools that maximize joint use of school land and adjacent open space.

Direct the Federal America's Great Outdoors agencies to coordinate with stakeholders and other government agencies when creating regulations (particularly those affecting water quality) to ensure decisions are backed by a comprehensive review and are based on sound scientific principles that have been validated by a peer review process.

Direct the Federal America's Great Outdoors agencies to support proposals that prioritize funding for projects that emphasize flood control and water independence through detention and infiltration of storm flows while incorporating recreational and environmental enhancements.

Direct the Federal America's Great Outdoors agencies to support proposals that prioritize funding for water-quality projects through ecosystem restoration that incorporate recreational and educational components.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

DCNR work with National Park Service and specifically the Northeast Regional Office to implement a pilot project to develop best practices in parks and recreation with a focus on urban parks, children and nature. and recreation's role in a healthy citizenry.

DCNR in collaboration with NPS assist in convening northeast states and other partners to review Land and Water Conservation Fund programs to ensure these best practices are encouraged, and barriers to success are eliminated.

Partner with NPS to expand Pennsylvania's Gel Outdoors PA program from our State Parks to Local Community Park and Recreation Facilities; include development of a statewide media campaign.

Work with NPS to develop leadership and mentoring program for the next generation of Park and Recreation professionals, including hosting regional Park & Recreation Summits.

Dedicate federal resources in partnership with DCNR and other related programs to fund strategic land acquisitions within the Susquehanna River Watershed, as well as boat launches, trails and other public access opportunities for residents and visitors.

Support the establishment of Chesapeake Bay National Park using a partnership parks model that builds in part on the acquisitions and state park development by DCNR in the Lower Susquehanna River watershed.

Much progress has been made in ensuring cleaner estuaries and natural shorelines in Rhode Island over the last forty years. But with continued development pressure compounded by threats from climate change, our estuaries are as threatened as ever. We ask you to partner with local governments and residents to renew America's commitment to precious coastal areas like Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island Sound. Without significant investment and smarter governance in these waters and coastlines, millions of people's quality of life and businesses will be impacted.

As members of the bipartisan House Land Conservation Caucus and other concerned members of Congress, we write today to thank you for your commitment to community driven open space preservation embodied by the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative. Here in Congress, we've worked with members on both sides of the aisle to promote and enact common sense policies that allow landowners and state and local governments to conserve and protect threatened farms, forestland, and other treasured natural landscapes. We appreciate your efforts to solicit input from a broad array of stakeholders, and we would like to offer several proposals for inclusion in your final report to the President.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We urge you to prioritize long-term - and permanent, where appropriate - renewals of tax deductions and credits that incentivize land conservation. For example, we have labored mightily to secure periodic renewals of the qualified conservation easement income tax deduction (26 U.S.C. 170e), which expired in calendar year 2010. The federal estate tax, also lapsed, increasingly drives the development of open space by making it more difficult to preserve working lands from one generation to the next. The uncertainty and unpredictability of continually-lapsing tax incentives severely limits their utility, as conservation often requires complex, multi-year transactions that rely on a stable tax environment to work

In your effort to encourage greater leveraging of existing outdoor conservation resources, we believe federal programs could be better integrated both between agencies (horizontally) and amongst existing state and local programs (vertically) to cost-effectively conserve larger landscapes and watersheds. Currently, federal resources for voluntary land conservation are spread across a half-dozen agencies, ranging from the U.S. Forest Service to the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Private landowners, non-profits, and county and municipal governments too often have a difficult time negotiating this maze. Providing more user-friendly centralized access to (and guidance amongst) the various tax benefit, grant, and technical assistance programs will allow for greater synergy between them and allow a broader range of applicants to participate

Although we strongly support enhanced and streamlined federal programs, we also believe it's important to stress that many of the best open space preservation solutions are emerging across the nation in a "bottom-up," locally-driven fashion. Our communities are generating home-grown, collaborative solutions to conservation challenges that deserve a willing and nimble federal partner with the resources and wherewithal to leverage and implement them. For example, resources like the National Park Service's River, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program -- which provides technical assistance and guidance for recreation and park projects -- allow the federal government to supplement and enhance the innovative work done by local communities.

We encourage the administration to continue to work with Congress and communities to create, expand and better protect our shared outdoors spaces including national forests, parks, monuments, wildlife refuges, wildemess areas, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Thank you again for all your work to help Americans confront our 21st-century conservation challenges

We ask you to partner with local governments and residents to correct the disparity between parklands and national estuaries to improve our threatened waters and protect the people and of businesses that depend on these resources for their livelihoods. Active local support and local financial commitments stand ready to match federal resources.

Your leadership can improve the way federal agencies work with each other as well as with state and local governments when it comes to protecting watersheds and the waters of the nation's harbors, bays and rivers. We ask that you use the AGO process to elevate and prioritize all national estuaries.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This process presents an opportunity to develop a cross-cutting federal initiative to leverage greater protection of recognized national priorities - estuaries of national significance by focusing and funding existing federal programs, such as the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Coastal & Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP); allowing federal agencies to work together on strategies regardless of agency jurisdiction or designation; and giving national estuaries the same status as national rivers and making them eligible for federal side LWCF funds

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We stand ready to work with you to step-up the federal commitment to our estuaries as important habitats, recreational areas, and working waters, by including national estuaries in the next big conservation initiative, America's Great Outdoors.

I am writing to ask that you invoke your authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906, 16 U.S.C. §§ 431-433, to proclaim the Otero Mesa National Monument on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Otero County, New Mexico:

For nearly a decade, I have advocated protection for this wild Chihuahuan desert grassland ecosystem, which is a vast expanse of federal public lands that not only supports an amazing array of birds and game species, but also safeguards a vital fresh water aquifer. Now is the time to formally recognize the value of this rare but unprotected landscape and protect it for future generations, an important and necessary step that I highlighted in my remarks at the commencement of your America's Great Outdoors initiative and in my letter to Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, which is attached. I, personally, and the State of New Mexico look forward to supporting your establishment of the Otero Mesa National Monument.

I wanted to follow up about the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which is a federal funding source for open space acquisition. The LWCF represents a \$900 million per year funding stream, but only \$2 million has been spent in the Santa Monica Mountains in the past decade. Yet the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) needs to acquire 22,500 acres of land to implement its land protection plan. This land would complete an interlocking system of federal, state, and local parks. These pristine natural areas are necessary to form adjoining wildlife corridors as well as recreation opportunities for people. The land was chosen based on continuity of habitat, scenery, and access to millions of urban residents. But the American people, not just the SMMNRA, are being shortchanged. The LWCF is frequently underfunded and often used for projects inconsistent with its founding mission. The LWCF was established in 1964 to fund acquisitions of outdoor recreation areas, particularly in urban areas with a large concentration of people. In 1977 the level of funding was increased to \$900 million, with a significant portion of the monies coming from the leasing of offshore oil rights. Therefore, when oil companies deplete natural resources by drilling offshore, we replenish and preserve natural resources through LWCF. It is time to get back to the mission of this fund. Secretary Salazar has said that he would like the LWCF to be fully funded, and I hope that the President will support him in that goal.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The SMMNRA also represents a seamless partnership of federal, state, local, and non-profit agencies, making it a model for recreation areas across the country. Please join me and our committed group of elected officials in support of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, in insisting that L WCF is fully funded and that it is used to fulfill its mission.

We are writing to request that you give strong consideration to hosting an America's Great Outdoor (AGO) Initiative "listening session" in Massachusetts this fall. AGO seeks to build on State, local, private, and tribal priorities for the conservation of land, water, wildlife, historic, and cultural resources, to determine how the Federal Government can best advance these priorities through public private partnerships and locally supported conservation strategies. Massachusetts would provide an excellent location to better serve those in southern New England. While listening sessions have been held in, or are planned for, Maryland, South Carolina, Washington, California, North Carolina, Minnesota, Montana, New York, Utah, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire, there are no listening sessions planned for southern New England despite the significant population, the array of active statewide and regional conservation organizations, and a culture that has connected New Englanders to the ideas driving the President's Initiative. The people of Massachusetts and New England have supported innovative land conservation in the public interests for over one hundred years. Our land trusts, landowners, sportsmen, and nonprofit partners have worked diligently to promote a better quality of life in our region by protecting parks, open space, coastal estuaries, and vital watersheds. The people of Massachusetts and southern New England have much to offer the nation as we seek to engage the next generation to care for our natural resources and be better stewards for our landscapes.

We write to commend you for your leadership of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO), including your department's new efforts to accomplish the goals of AGO through landscape conservation using existing programs. America's great natural landscapes are truly the foundation of our nation's prosperity and quality of life.

As you integrate landscape conservation into the President's FY12 Budget, we believe that you should strongly consider two important landscapes in New England: the Northern Forest region that covers more than 26 million acres in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, and the Connecticut River watershed that covers 7.2 million acres in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire. Conservation of these landscapes would help achieve the goals of AGO, including clean drinking water, a strong farm and forest economy, carbon sequestration, fish and wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation.

The efforts of AGO are needed in these landscapes because both are threatened by unprecedented levels of development and fragmentation. More than 80 percent of the 26 million-acre Northern Forest remains unprotected. The Green Mountain National Forest is projected to see increased housing density on 500,000 acres within ten miles of its boundary—an area larger than the entire national forest itself. The Connecticut River watershed ranked among the twenty most threatened watersheds nationally in the Forests on the Edge report issued by the U.S. Forest Service in 2005.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are immediate opportunities in FY12 to conserve the Northern Forest and Connecticut River 1-1 S watershed through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Forest Legacy Program. Beyond land conservation, there are important new efforts emerging in the Northern Forest to enhance private lands stewardship and restoration, bolster the working lands economy, and leverage greater tourism and economic development from the region's natural and recreation assets. The President's Budget should also provide resources to support these activities as part of a holistic approach to landscape-scale conservation

We hope that you will select the Northern Forest and Connecticut River watershed as focus areas for LWCF and other resources in the FY12 President's Budget. We would enjoy the opportunity to provide you with more details on the specific programs and related funding needs for FY12 that would make this effort a success.

The commitments we make today to preserve these lands and waters will define our legacy for generations to come. I encourage you to transform the overwhelming support that you have received at these sessions into an ambitious proposal.

While I am a strong proponent of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and appreciate the benefits of a robust federal land acquisition program, the AGO initiative must go beyond federal land acquisition and ownership to achieve its objectives. It must grow outside the federal land agencies to achieve a broader impact on the nation and on future generations. This support will be critical as we enter an era of budget retrenchment and discretionary spending cuts.

As you know, I have a particular interest in restoring the Chesapeake Bay and greatly appreciate this administration's aggressive commitment to save this important estuary. Great estuaries like the Chesapeake, other watersheds, and landscapes like the Northern Rockies can be powerful themes around which to organize conservation efforts, channel support and create innovative public and private financial commitments. The bay restoration program can serve as a model for how the federal government can promote, protect, and sustain the great outdoors initiative. Federal resources are used to facilitate cooperation among the bay states, conduct research and, at times, compel compliance where other environmental laws come into play. Its substantial financial contribution is but a fraction of what it leverages from the state and local governments, nonprofit organizations and private individuals.

The AGO initiative should find ways to encourage more cooperative arrangements with other landscapes and themes, utilizing a full array of public and private partners. The modest federal investment to create the Rappahannock National Wildlife Refuge, for example, leveraged commitments by local governments and nonprofits to protect more than 30 miles of sensitive wetlands and valued riverscapes within the refuge's proposed management area. In many instances, these protections are in the form of easements held by private land trusts.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One means by which limited federal dollars could have a disproportionate impact on urban areas is through a competitive grant program. The AGO initiative needs to include a competitive grant program along the lines of what we discussed this past spring in your office. A pilot version of this proposal has been included in the Fiscal Year 2011 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill as drafted by my subcommittee. A portion of the National Park Service's Stateside grant program, which today is mostly a "gap filling exercise" by the states to address unmet capital needs, should be converted into a competitive grant program whereby state, local, and regional governments and nonprofits could compete to secure multi-million dollar grant awards to develop and implement conservation proposals.

These proposals should include a full range of objectives from protecting natural, cultural and historical resources to improving a network of trails and greenways. It should provide children and underserved communities with access to nature and outdoor recreation. These applicants should be able to bypass state review and submit their proposals directly to the National Park Service for consideration. At least a 30 percent match should be required.

I believe a competitive program would inject new excitement into the conservation and parks and recreation movement, spurring innovative partnerships and financing, inspiring new participants, and a higher level of public engagement on the need to protect open space. It would be my hope that even if some of these proposals fail to win federal approval, they will have raised public expectations and created constituencies that will continue to push forward at the local level on an agenda to preserve open space and undertake more responsible land use plans.

One option that has the support of a broad array of interests, including labor, timber harvesters and environmentalists, is the Community Forestry and Conservation Act (S. 11501, H.R. 3302). This legislation would allow tax-exempt Community Forestry Bonds to be used as a new financial tool to conserve our nation's private working forests while maintaining jobs in this essential industry and protecting valuable natural resources, such as water quality, habitat and carbon storage. These bonds will allow environmentalists, community leaders and the timber industry to join together and jointly manage their community forests. Thus, it is no surprise that this provision is supported by a unique coalition represented in the attached list and has bipartisan support in the House of Representatives and Senate.

During these difficult economic times, communities around the country are facing job losses and severe economic challenges. Amidst these many challenges, our private working forests could provide an important source of jobs and income, especially in our rural communities. Private forests are responsible for an average of 8 jobs per 1,000 acres. In addition, across 29 states, working forests contribute a sizable \$115 billion to the gross domestic product.

We propose that the federal agencies with jurisdiction over outdoor access and programs form an interagency task force - with high-level participation - on urban watersheds with a special emphasis on the Los Angeles River. In addition to the USEPA, this task force should include participation by the Army Corps of Engineers, Housing and Urban Development, Bureau of Land Management, National Parks Service, Bureau of Reclamation, US Forest Service, and others, each of which have jurisdiction over enjoyment of, and access to, urban environments.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My area of the world used to be farmland, forests and fields and is now becoming one big urban sprawl of subdivisions and mini malls. Please do something to stop this so that these actions don't eventually take over our county and national forest areas also. We're running out of green space, so please do something to bring it back.

Hello to America's leaders! I consider my personal experiences outdoors—from family picnics, to hikes, to Rio Grande raft trips, to bicycle races and tours, to music festivals, and to innumerable backpacking and cliff-diving trips—the most valuable and memorable ones. They nourish my well-being. Outdoor spaces are important to me, not just because I work for an adventure publication but also because I urge leaders in Washington to protect our shared outdoor spaces .

We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our quality wilderness lands so that future generations may also enjoy them.

I support your Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative.

Dear Folks, i thank you for the opportunity to engage in conversation regarding the great outdoors initiative. when i visited the "discussion" site, i was unable to access the discussion portion. i also noticed, that according to the little topic icons on the right margin, the largest voiced opinions on this issue were from folks who want to use offroad vehicles and keep\the mountains or other natural ares from being protected. i had the opportunity to visit the listening session held at occidental college in los angeles in the spring. the greatest number of people at that meeting seemed to have a great variety of interests. my prejudice is toward protection of the environment and encouragement of understanding of and participation in nature. as a docent at my local county natural area, i see people hungry for open natural space. on weekends we have people of all stripe, age, income, background come and visit.

CHALLENGE: i see people needing work. i noticed that our san gabriel mountains were badly burned(one third of the angeles national forest was burned. while there is some natural recovery in a burned forest, there is the issue of access, as the national forest in seventy percent of our los angeles county public open space. I read in a wbsite for tree people, how they wanted volunteers to help remediate the forest, using a grant or partnering with boeing corporation. this is all very nice for tree people, but boeing is a military government contractor, which receives taxpayer dollars.

What Works: Let there be something along the lines of the civilian conservation corps. we have the california conservation corps, where young folks can work on park and natural areas, gathering work experience in gainful, useful employment. We have the forest service, the los angeles county department of parks and recreation , other good public and private agencies such as el nido, which guides young families. We can have partnerships between local, state, federal, private agencies in the public interest, such as environmental protection agency, department of human resources, other agencies related to the environment and worker support.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

challenge: need local easily accessed parks along urban corridors of los angeles and san gabriel rivers what the federal government can do: declare the "emerald necklace" to be a special essential area, create a chain of local riverside parks including employment of park groomers/hosts, naturalists/ interpreters, and/or rangers along the river corridors in partnership with appropriate local public and private agencies

i had the great privilege to be present at the listening session for the great outdoors initiative at occidental college this past summer. i would like to submit my feelings and ideas, in the words of others who give good form to some of my thoughts. challenges: San Gabriel Valley and other los angeles county residents have traditionally suffered from limited access to open space as well as high diabetes and obesity rates. Federal support for a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area will expand healthy recreational opportunities for our families along the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers and in the San Gabriel Mountains. How the Federal Government Can Help/Tools: Provide Transit to Trails program to take inner city children on fun, educational and healthy trips to mountains, rivers, beaches and other natural open space throughout the nation for low or at no cost, compared to the benefits. Transit to trails would enrich their education about land, water, wildlife and cultural history and emphasize the importance of physical activity and healthy eating for lifelong health.

How the federal Government can help/tools: In order to improve access for all the campaign for america's great outdoors can provide green jobs through Civilian Conservation Corps Style jobs for youth of color and low income that would also improve parks, recreation, the environment. This program could provide work in this time of severe unemployment. challenges: Of the local native ecosystems, Coastal Sage Scrub is one of the most endangered on the planet. There are lands in the San Gabriel Mountains/ Watershed worthy of Wilderness Protection and rivers that deserve the designation "wild and scenic." "Wilderness" is a designation that protects "undeveloped" land from development. Wild and Scenic" designation protects rivers from damming and development. The federal government can help protect the san gabriel mountains and watersheds by designating more areas like the San Gabriel and Sheep Mountain Wilderness(es).

challenges: provide more park cultural historical sites that preserve the stories and resources of diverse people for this and future generations. more sites should facilitate an experience that weaves the stories of diverse people faithfully, completely and accurately. how the federal government can help: The National Park Service and the Forest Service should provide leadership for protection and interpretation of diverse sites. Park and heritage should stimulate and provide a greater understanding of, and dialogue on, civil rights, democracy, unvarnished history. these are lessons learned from best practice examples like Manzanar National Historic Site.

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am asking you to seize this opportunity to find new ways to support reasonable management of our public lands. I'm not particularly fond of Wilderness or National Parks. Both have too many rules. But finding a balanced approach to manage the land in a sustainable way is definitely a priority. My personal priority is protecting wolves from trophy hunting. There is no reasonable argument for killing wolves. I would support any measure to provide fair compensation to farmers that lose animals to wolf predation, but killing the wolves is not the answer. Another personal priority is keeping federal land open to dogs, preferably off-leash. My dog is part of my family, and it's not reasonable to restrict dogs on public land. Dogs only become problematic when they are cooped up and on leash. Allowing dogs to run free and get plenty of exercise enables them to act appropriately in every situation. (You could probably say the same thing about humans, but...) I also believe that mountain biking & snow kiting have been over-regulated by power zealous federal employees. These activities should be perfectly acceptable in both wilderness areas and national parks. Well, that's my two cents for now. As a very liberal outdoor-loving athlete and dog owner, I beg you to find a balance between the stupid hippies and the stupid hunters. Neither side is rational. There are reasonable solutions to every dispute. Thank you! I think that you are doing an exceptionally good job as President.

Jackson, WY

Dear Secretary Salazar, I am writing in regards to the Wildland Project. I am a typical American citizen who enjoys spending time in the great American Outdoors. I am also a firm believer in equal access for all user groups. The vast majority of American lands hold great potential, promise and inspiration for all citizens and locking individuals, young and old, poor and rich from using and experiencing these areas is simply not right. The premise of local control over federal lands makes incredible sense considering the multitude of user groups nationwide...a one size fits all approach is not feasible or sustainable. I hope that individuals in charge of developing this ever important policy will take the time and effort to get a TRUE picture of what the American public wants from its open spaces. I believe that you will find that there are an incredible number of responsible user groups willing to work with each other and public agencies to share access and ensure the quality experience for generations to come. Locking people out of these areas will simply concentrate use and only give the further impression that the activities themselves are not a healthy use of the environment. This is a very important subject and I thank you for your service to the country. Please consider multiple land uses as one of the highest priorities

Discussion Question 3

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We heartily applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We need strong presidential leadership now, more than ever, to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. We're asking the President please to make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse yet, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments; wrong-headed in the extreme! Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and we urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Again, we want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. We eagerly look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

Impose a 25 mph top speed for all OHVs with a gross weight under 3,500 lbs.