

*Tom Jankovsky*  
District 1

*John Martin, Chair*  
District 2

*Mike Samson, Chair Pro Tem*  
District 3



March 8, 2021

Scott de la Vega, Acting Secretary of the Department of Interior  
United States Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Kevin Shea, Acting Secretary of the Department of Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

**Re: *Garfield County Colorado Approves Resolution Opposing the Federal Government's 30 x 30 Program & Requests a Coordination Meeting with the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture***

Dear Acting Secretary Scott de la Vega & Acting Secretary Kevin Shea,

On Tuesday, February 16, 2021, the Garfield County Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution, attached, opposing the Federal government's 30 x 30 Land Preservation Goal contained in Section 216 of President Biden's Executive Order 14008 entitled "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad."

By this letter, the Commissioners request a coordination meeting with the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture to discuss with the Secretaries the Garfield County's policies contained in our ***Garfield County Federal Lands Natural Resources Coordination Plan and Policies*** so that we can work to resolve inconsistencies between the EO and the County's policies regarding federal land in Garfield County.

As you are aware, this EO directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a program to conserve at least 30 percent of the lands and waters in the United States by 2030, which is called the "30 x 30" program; however, while the EO's language lack definitive substance. Does "conserving" mean preserving these areas in a natural or undisturbed state? In reality, most of the land dedicated likely to achieving the 30 x 30 goal necessarily will be the federal land found in the 11 western states and Alaska. Forcing rural communities and businesses that depend on the use of public lands and national forests such as Garfield County to bear the brunt of the program would be inequitable. This is elaborated upon in the attached resolution.

The EO lacks any specificity or meaningful details that could serve to inform counties & local governments, like Garfield County, as to the policies that will directly affect them. We ask you to consider and respond to the follow series of questions prior to the coordination meeting with Garfield County.

- 1) ***How will the lands and waters that are to be included in the 30 x 30 program be identified? What criteria and requirements will be used?***
- 2) ***The federal government already owns and manages about 640 million acres of land – about 28% of all land in the United States. Are the lands already owned by the federal government counted toward the 30 x 30 goal? Are these lands the program’s primary target?***
- 3) ***What federal agency or agencies will be responsible for managing the 30 x 30 program? Who will make decisions about what lands and waters to place in the program and how these lands will be administered in the future? What process will be followed in connection with administering the 30 x 30 program?***
- 4) ***How will land placed in the 30 x 30 program be managed? Will be it be managed like a wilderness area, with no surface uses and restricted public access? Or will it be managed like a national park or recreation area, with public access, improvements, and amenities?***
- 5) ***How will the planning and management requirements imposed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and other federal laws be coordinated with the 30 x 30 program? For example, will the BLM be required to revise its existing resource management plans to address public lands included in the 30 x 30 program?***
- 6) ***How will the planning and management requirements applicable to the National Forest System be coordinated with the 30 x 30 program? Will the Forest Service be required to revise its existing land resource management plans to address NFS lands included in the 30 x 30 program?***
- 7) ***How will non-federal (e.g., state, and private) land and waters be acquired and managed under the 30 x 30 program?***
- 8) ***What is the legal authority for the 30 x 30 program? Will legislation be needed to provide legal authority for the program? Does the legal authority vary from agency to agency?***

As stated earlier in this letter, Garfield County is requesting to coordinate with the Secretaries which is consistent with the direction specifically given by President Biden in Section 216 (i) of the EO where,

***“(i) The Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality shall, as appropriate, solicit input from State, local, Tribal, and territorial officials, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen,***

***and other key stakeholders in identifying strategies that will encourage broad participation in the goal of conserving 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.”***

Garfield County has a long history of significant engagement with our public land agencies since approximately 2/3rds of the County are owned by either the Bureau of Land Management or the United States Forest Service. This is especially important when you consider the implications of implementing the 30 x 30 goal by converting private lands to public lands as well as increasing restrictions on existing public lands. To be sure, increasing restrictions on existing public lands will reduce their rightful productive use and the loss of private lands will further erode / reduce the county tax base with no federal compensation clarity regarding increased Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools payments. This is a 'lose-lose proposition' for many western United States counties.

Garfield County would like to schedule an in-person coordination meeting with you as directed by President Biden in the EO as soon as possible. Please contact Fred Jarman, Deputy County Manager, to set the details of that meeting. He can be reached at [fjarman@garfield-county.com](mailto:fjarman@garfield-county.com) and (970) 987-1811.

Very truly yours,

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John Martin, Chairman

Cc Board of County Commissioners  
U.S. Representative Ken Buck  
U.S. Representative Doug Lamborn  
U.S. Representative Lauren Boebert  
U.S. Representative Joe Neguse  
U.S. Representative Jason Crow  
U.S. Representative Ed Perlmutter  
U.S. Senator John Hickenlooper  
U.S. Senator Michael Bennet  
Elijah Waters, BLM Northwest Colorado District Manager  
Greg Larson, BLM Upper Colorado River District Manager  
Lisa M. Stoeffler, Acting Forest Supervisor, White River National Forest  
Kevin Batchelder, Garfield County Manager  
Fred Jarman, Garfield County Deputy Manager

Attachment(s) ***Exhibit A*** - *Resolution Opposing the Federal Government's 30 x 30 Land Preservation Goal*





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the 30 x 30 program, if implemented, will conflict with the plans, policies and programs of Garfield County as expressed in "Garfield County Federal Lands Natural Resource Coordination Plan and Policies," adopted September 2020 which obligates the federal government to coordinate its policy development with Garfield County as also required by the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLPMA) and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA); and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Garfield County, Colorado, as follows:

1. The Board opposes the 30 x 30 program, including its objective of permanently preserving 30 percent of the Nation's lands in its natural state by 2030, or any similar program that will set aside and prevent the productive use of millions of acres of our lands.
2. The Board further opposes the designation of public lands and national forests in Garfield County as wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, open space, or other conservation land, thereby restricting public access to such lands and preventing the development and productive use of the resources on or within such lands.
3. The Board supports the continued management of the public lands and the national forests under principles of multiple use and sustained yield, recognizing the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, timber, food, and fiber, and in careful coordination with Garfield County to ensure consistency with County land use plans and land management policies, as required by law.
4. The Board supports maintaining and enhancing public access to public lands and national forests and opposes road closures, road decommissioning, moratoria on road construction, and other limitations on public access for the purpose of fulfilling the 30 x 30 program's objectives.
5. The Board recognizes and supports the State of Colorado's water rights system, including the doctrine of prior appropriation and other state laws and programs governing water rights and water use, and opposes any federal designation of waters and watercourses within the County that would impair or restrict water diversions and uses authorized under Colorado law.
6. The Board supports reasonable national, regional, and global greenhouse gas emissions policies and goals that are comprehensive, practical, cost-effective, and do not unnecessarily single out specific industries or activities, but opposes the use of global climate change as an excuse to set aside large tracts of land as preserves or open space to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives.

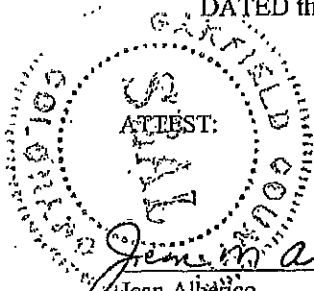
7. The Board maintains that the designation of public lands and national forest lands as wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, open space, or other conservation land to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives may lawfully occur, if at all, only through the planning process mandated by the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (for public lands) or the National Forest Management Act (for national forest lands), including public notice and an opportunity to comment, analysis and disclosure of the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Garfield County, its businesses, and its citizens, and careful coordination with Garfield County to ensure consistency with County land use plans and land management policies.

8. The Board also maintains that any non-federal lands or other rights that are acquired to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives should be acquired only from willing landowners and for the payment full and fair market value for all rights and interests acquired, and not through regulatory compulsion, and only after analyzing and considering the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Garfield County, its businesses, and its citizens.

9. The Board shall send a copy of this Resolution to the Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture and all other relevant Federal and State agencies; and

10. The Board, recognizing the President has directed the federal departments to work with local governments to implement the 30 x 30 program, will request a meeting with the Department of Interior to occur within the next 60 days and begin discussions of the Board's position on the 30 x 30 program.

DATED this 16<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2021.



Jean Alberico  
Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
GARFIELD COUNTY, STATE OF COLORADO

By:

John Martin, Chairman

Upon motion duly made and seconded the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the following vote:

Commissioners:

Tom Jankovsky (Aye)

Mike Samson (Aye)

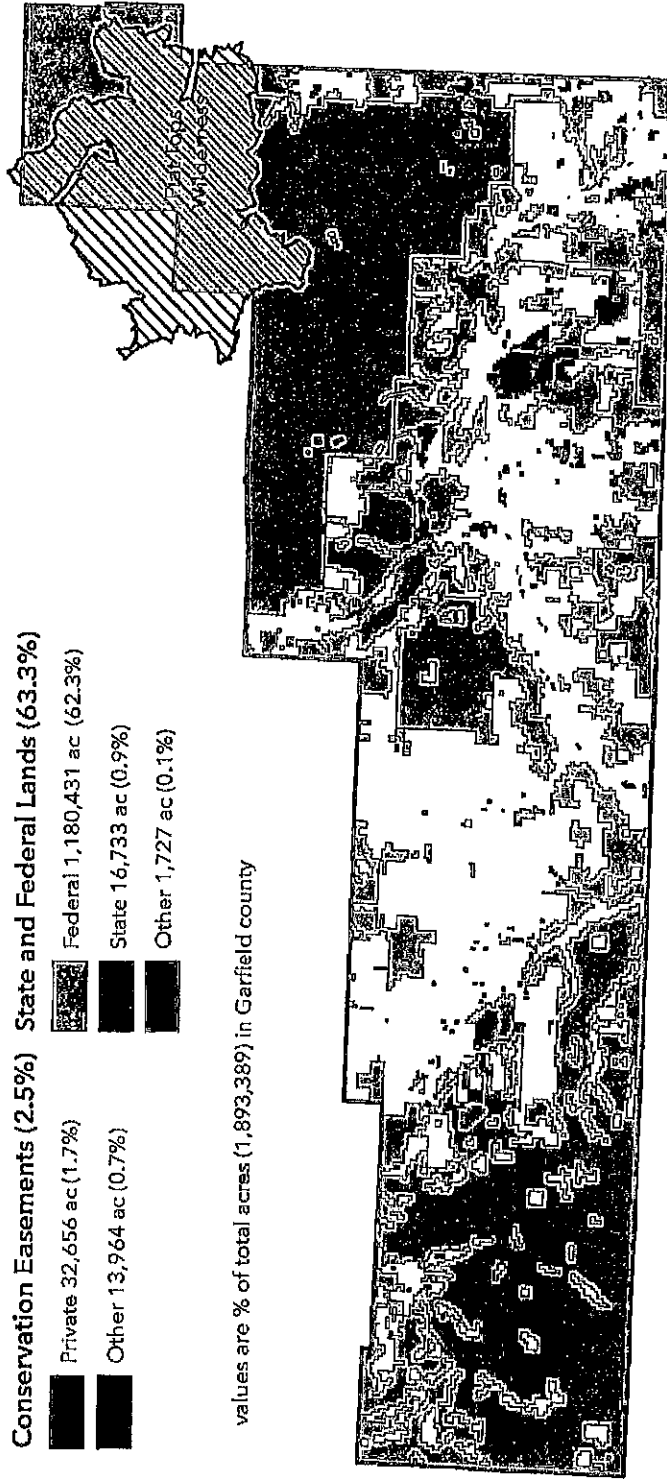
John Martin (Aye)



# Exhibit A Garfield County Land Ownership



values are % of total acres (1,893,389) in Garfield county



Garfield County Enterprise GIS  
Prepared: February 9, 2021  
Calculations based on GIS Conservation Easements, State and Federal Ownership, and County Boundary layers

