



TOWN OF
GRAND LAKE

Dear Honorable Members of Congress,

This letter is being written to demonstrate the Town of Grand Lake's full support of S. 1380, the Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness and Indian Peaks Wilderness Expansion Act. The passage of legislation will provide nearly 250,000 acres of new wilderness to Colorado and finally complete a thirty year effort to designate the area as wilderness. This designation has tremendous opportunities for the 3 million plus annual visitors that visit Rocky Mountain National Park and the Arapaho National Recreation Area, as well as to the Grand County residents who consider the area our backyard and personal playground.

A Wilderness designation makes sense for Rocky Mountain National Park for numerous reasons. First and foremost, it is one of this country's most precious resources, and should be preserved for future generations to enjoy. As Enos Mills, a true champion of the creation of this national treasure so succinctly put it "In years to come when I am asleep beneath the pines, thousands of families will find rest and hope in this park". Mr. Mills would have had no idea at the time what an understatement he truly made; millions have found rest and hope and so much more in Rocky Mountain National Park, and with your help, millions more will continue to enjoy what has been set aside for all.

Secondly, this bill will help to secure the future financial success of the gateway communities; Grand Lake and Estes Park. With a wilderness designation, commercial applications will continue to locate in the gateway communities because they would not be allowed in the National Park. From our perspective, this is a win-win proposition. Visitors will be allowed continued unfettered view corridors, pristine wilderness and unmatched access to majestic wildlife, while the communities that struggle with a short tourist season won't have to worry about business competition from their National Park.

Furthermore, the preservation of the Park itself helps to ensure our future economic stability. Many of the 3 million tourists that visit the Park each year find their way into Grand Lake, and help to contribute nearly 70% of the Town's sales tax revenues in the four short months between the Memorial Day and Labor Day Holidays. What is true for the Town is equally true for our small business owners, who are almost completely dependent upon the visitor's of Rocky Mountain National Park for their continued success.

Third, this bill deserves your support because it represents cooperation at its finest; both in the sense of a non-partisan effort, as well as a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional one. In addition to Grand Lake, the broad array of groups working on this legislative initiative include: Grand County Board of County Commissioners, Larimer County Board of County Commissioners, Boulder County Board of County Commissioners, Town of Winter Park, Town of Estes Park, Colorado Trout Unlimited, Colorado Wildlife Federation, League of Women Voters of Estes Park, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Headwaters Trails Alliance, Colorado

Mountain Club—Shining Mountains Group (Estes Park), Colorado Mountain Club—Fort Collins Group, Colorado Wilderness Network, and the Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance. The reason that this support is evidenced everywhere is because the foresight of the Congress and President Woodrow Wilson in 1915 continues to be apparent. Let future generations look into the history books to see the wisdom of this Congress, in preserving 250,000 acres of new Wilderness for them to enjoy and treasure.

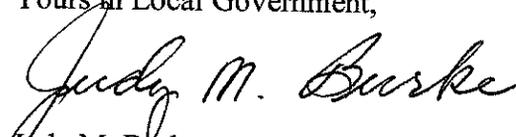
Finally, this bill should be adopted because it is well written and brilliantly conceived, with members of the Congressional Delegation having solicited and accepted input from interested parties. The Town supports the creation of the East Shore Trail Area. Within a year of the passage of the bill, the Town and Grand County in cooperation with Headwaters Trails Alliance, will work with the Secretary of the Interior to establish the alignment line and the boundaries of the trail. We support the use of motorized vehicles and machinery for the construction and maintenance of the trail and fully encourage the use of the trail by non-motorized bicycles.

Private property rights are strongly valued in Grand Lake, and these rights are respected in this bill. Specifically, wilderness designation will not lead to increased fire danger to homes because a buffer has been excluded from the designation around the border of Grand Lake. The buffer was requested for fire mitigation and future development possibilities that are unknown at the time with the private property that borders the Park. It is our understanding that this will be reflected on the “Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado Wilderness Boundaries” Map.

The Town supports the expansion of the Indian Peaks Wilderness. This expansion will increase the acreage of the wilderness by nearly four thousand acres and, also, allow for the proposed East Shore Trail to be located along the shore of Lake Granby outside the wilderness boundary.

The Town sincerely appreciates all of the efforts that have been made by our Congressional Delegation on behalf of the citizens of Colorado. We are confident that all members will support this legislation to ensure that all visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park will continue to enjoy this pristine natural environment as it is today.

Yours in Local Government,



Judy M. Burke
Mayor