

**Revised Statement of  
Acting Associate Deputy Chief Greg Smith  
National Forest System  
Forest Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture**

**Before the  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests  
United States Senate**

**Concerning S. 1794, “Browns Canyon National Monument and Wilderness Act of 2013”  
July 23, 2014**

Mr. Chairman, I am Greg Smith, Acting Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System, U.S. Forest Service. Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding S.1794, the “Browns Canyon National Monument and Wilderness Act of 2013.”

S. 1794 would designate approximately 22,000 acres of federal land that are managed by two federal agencies, the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service as the Browns Canyon National Monument. Within the Monument, 7,960 acres of public lands managed by Bureau of Land Management and 2,500 acres of National Forest System lands on the Salida Ranger District on the Pike and San Isabel National Forests would be designated as the Browns Canyon Wilderness.”

USDA testified in support of the designation of the Browns Canyon before the House Natural Resource Committee, regarding H.R. 4289, the Colorado Wilderness Act of 2009, on March 11, 2010. At that time, USDA expressed concern regarding allowing continued motorized use of Turret Road; in S. 1794 the wilderness boundary has changed and thus has remedied our concern. S. 1794 would designate approximately 12,060 acres of National Monument and 2,500 acres of Wilderness to be administered by the Forest Service, as depicted on the map titled “Browns Canyon National Monument” dated November 7, 2013. We have determined these land designations to be compatible and congruent with the management prescriptions in the current Pike and San Isabel National Forest Plan. Therefore, USDA supports S. 1794. We defer to the Department of the Interior regarding provisions in the bill affecting BLM.

S. 1794 provides that existing grazing in the National Monument and Wilderness shall continue and motorized and mechanical transport shall be prohibited in the portion of the National Monument east of the Arkansas River, except on roads and trails open to such uses on the date of enactment of this Act. Additionally, grazing permits or leases for the National Monument area shall continue to be administered and no curtailment of grazing in the National Monument or Wilderness shall occur due to the designation of this Act. Nothing in this Act affects the use or allocation of any water, water right, or interest in water on the date of enactment of this Act and the Forest Service may prescribe measures to control nonnative invasive plants and noxious weeds within the Forest Service portion of the National Monument and Wilderness.

Subsection 7(a)(2)(D)(i) stipulates that Forest Service Road 184 within the new National Monument shall be maintained as a Level II Road. Subsection (iii) would allow for temporarily closures of the road to any and all uses to protect public safety and for maintenance or other administrative uses. Forest Service Road 184 within the proposed National Monument is currently open, and in accordance with laws and regulation will be managed administratively to prevent resource damage, trespass, or public safety issues. However, the Department does not support specifying the maintenance level in this legislation.

In addition, we recommend several technical corrections to the bill, the first regarding the date of the map on record at the BLM Salida, CO, office. The map is dated November 5, 2013, not November 7, 2013 as written in S. 1794. We also recommend additional technical corrections to Section 7(e), 'Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds', in order to be consistent with law, regulation and policy; the words 'nonnative' and 'plants' should be struck and the word 'species' should be inserted in place of 'plants'.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions.