

# UTAH REP. ROB BISHOP'S PUBLIC LANDS INITIATIVE: A DISASTER FOR UTAH WILD LANDS

**U**tah Representative Rob Bishop's recently released "Public Lands Initiative" (PLI) is a fossil fuel development bonanza and public land giveaway that rolls back existing protections for Utah's wild lands.

♦ **The draft PLI is a step backward for conservation in Utah.** The PLI does not begin to do justice to the 4.4 million acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in eastern Utah and proposed for wilderness designation under America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. Forsaking 60% of these lands, the PLI designates only 1.7 million acres of wilderness—which is actually a net loss of protected land in eastern Utah since 1.8 million acres now enjoy wilderness-quality protection as "natural areas" or "wilderness study areas." Furthermore, PLI wilderness would be a tortured imitation of the real thing, managed under unprecedented provisions that undermine the Wilderness Act. This includes locking in livestock grazing at or above current levels, allowing the removal of pinyon and juniper forests by huge mastication machines, allowing predator control via helicopters, and permitting chainsaws in wilderness.

The PLI also substitutes faux "conservation areas" and "special management areas" for many areas deserving of wilderness protection. These misleading designations give unprecedented control to county and state government, promote motorized recreation, create extensive permanent road networks, and allow deforestation of pinyon and juniper forests with large machines.

♦ **The draft PLI does not protect the Bears Ears region.** A coalition of Native American Tribes are asking President Obama to proclaim a 1.9 million-acre "Bears Ears" national monument in southeastern Utah and provide them with co-management authority to protect their ancestral homelands. Containing over 100,000 cultural sites, the Bears Ears is the most significant unprotected cultural landscape in the U.S. The PLI rejects the Tribes' proposal and instead includes measures that will harm cultural and natural treasures and exacerbate the looting and pillaging of sacred sites. This includes designating parts of the Bears Ears for permanent fossil fuel development, sanctioning thousands of miles of now-disputed roads, and giving the state and county outsized influence in the management of America's public lands.

♦ **The draft PLI is a ticking carbon time bomb.** At a time when our nation and the world are struggling to seriously address climate change, the PLI works in the opposite direction. It creates fossil fuel zones where intense resource extraction will be permanently encouraged. In fact, it designates more land for fossil fuel zones than wilderness—almost 2.5 million acres. It opens up now protected wilderness study areas for coal, oil, gas, and even oil shale; gives the state significant tracts of land for intensive energy development; and creates a corridor for the long-opposed Book Cliffs (or "tar sands") highway to encourage oil shale and tar sand mining.

♦ **The draft PLI is a public land giveaway.** The PLI grants the State of Utah control over more than 10,000 miles of dirt roads, two-tracks, cow trails, and dry washes, with the right to convert these "routes" into 66-foot-wide highways. The PLI gives away tens of thousands of acres of federal land to state, local and private interests. It hands over management of 110,000 acres in the San Rafael Swell to the State. It fails to ensure fair, equal-value land exchanges, trading away large blocks of high-value federal land for scattered sections of low-value state land. And it bestows inordinate authority to county and state officials by requiring federal land managers to submit a report to Congress if they fail to follow the demands of local politicians regarding vast areas of our nation's public lands.

♦ **The public was left out of the Public Lands Initiative.** The Utah congressional delegation only sought input from rural areas representing 5 percent of Utah's population and .05 percent (or 1/20th of 1 percent) of the nation's. They never held hearings along the Wasatch Front where most of Utah's population is located, nor did they seek input from citizens nationwide. And they repeatedly ignored Native American requests and recommendations.

Learn more at [suwa.org/pli](http://suwa.org/pli)

# PHOTOS OF LANDS THREATENED BY THE PUBLIC LANDS INITIATIVE



*Most of White Canyon, a central part of the Bears Ears National Monument proposal, is left out of the PLI altogether.*



*The PLI would give away the Sixshooter Peaks and surrounding public lands near Canyonlands National Park to the state.*



*The Molen Reef proposed wilderness is slated for fossil fuel development in the PLI.*



*The PLI would remove wilderness protection from this portion of the Desolation Canyon Wilderness Study Area.*



*This section of the San Juan River proposed wilderness in the Bears Ears National Monument proposal would become a fossil fuel zone.*

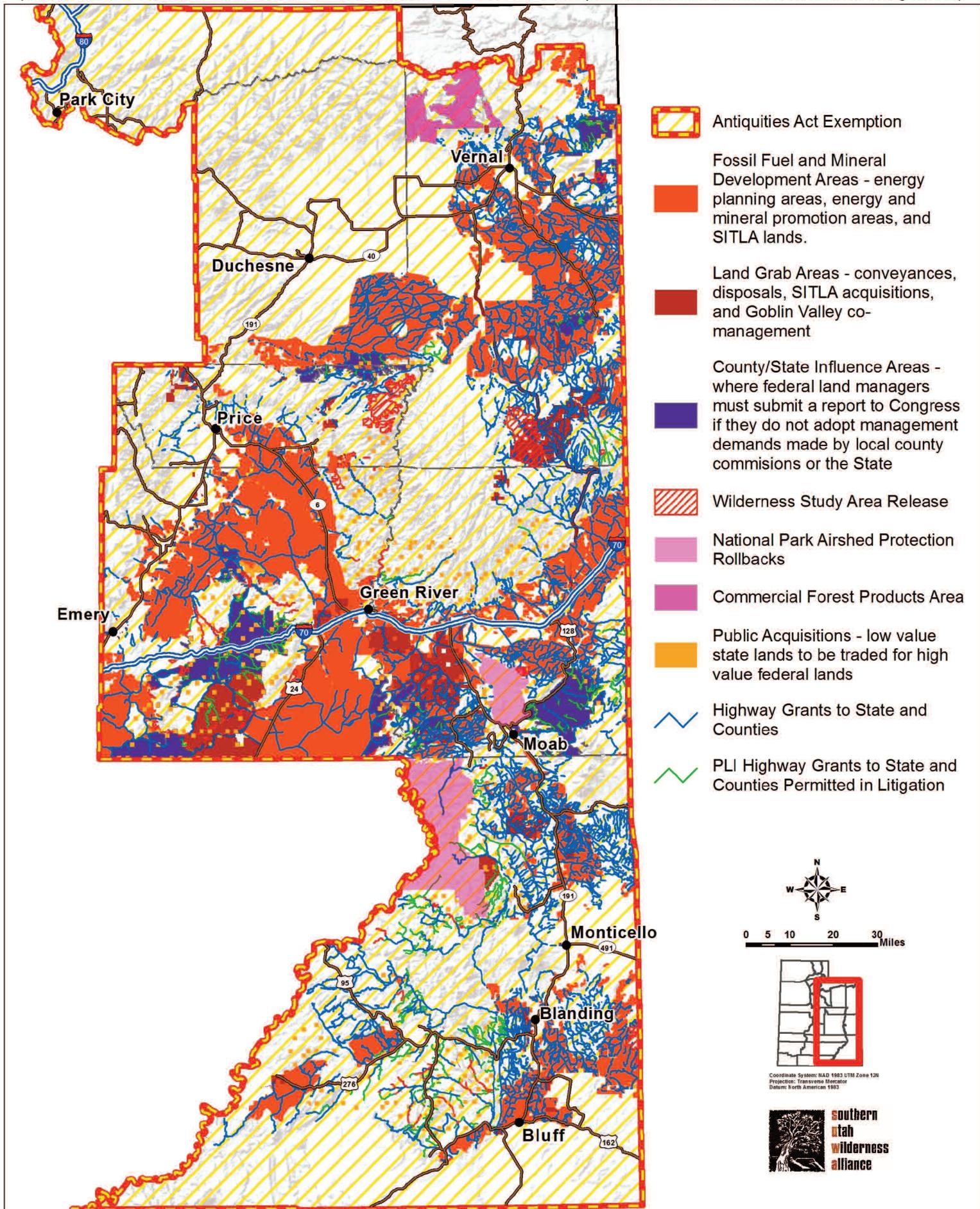


*Claimed rights-of-way like this (barely visible) one in the Bridger Jack Mesa proposed wilderness would be handed over to the counties.*

# Anti-Conservation Provisions of the PLI

This map shows many of the anti-conservation measures included in the PLI.

(It does not show areas recommended for watered-down or otherwise inadequate wilderness or conservation area designation.)



# Proposed BLM and Forest Service Wilderness in the PLI

This map shows wilderness designations proposed in the PLI for Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service public lands -- that is, wilderness weakened by unprecedented loopholes which lock in livestock grazing, allow pinyon-juniper deforestation, authorize the use of chainsaws, and permit predator control via helicopter.

