

*"If you don't want it printed, don't let it happen."*

# Aspen Daily News

Saturday, July 31, 2021 | Print Edition

[https://www.aspendailynews.com/news/pitkin-county-others-team-with-conservation-group-to-protect-open-space-pass-core-act/article\\_a49270ca-f1a4-11eb-80e8-03712d0a6767.html](https://www.aspendailynews.com/news/pitkin-county-others-team-with-conservation-group-to-protect-open-space-pass-core-act/article_a49270ca-f1a4-11eb-80e8-03712d0a6767.html)

## Pitkin County, others team with conservation group to protect open space, pass CORE Act

Megan Webber, Aspen Daily News Staff Writer



Pitkin County Commissioner Greg Poschman, second from left, participates in a July 24 roundtable discussion on the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Economy Act, better known as CORE, at the base of Mt. Sneffels near Ridgway. The gathering included, right of tree, U.S. Sen. John Hickenlooper, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet. Mt. Sneffels would be permanently protected if the legislation is passed.

Courtesy of Michael Bennet U.S. Senate Office

---

Pitkin County is one of 80 communities across the Western U.S. to collaborate with The Mountain Pact to advocate for protection of local open space, rivers and more, and for passage of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act.

[The Mountain Pact](#) is a conservation effort to mobilize outdoor recreation-based economies to speak with a collective voice on federal climate, public lands and outdoor recreation policy, according to a news release. On Wednesday, The Mountain Pact released a [report](#) detailing recommended next steps to reach President Joe Biden's goal to restore at least 30% of lands and waters by 2030, commonly referred to as the "[30x30 goal](#)."

The report also details how Western mountain communities are contributing to the [America the Beautiful Initiative](#), a response to [scientific evidence](#) that worldwide biodiversity is deteriorating at a record rate, the release says. In Pitkin County, officials are participating by advocating for a number of protections, including mitigating methane leaks in Thompson Divide and passing the CORE Act, Pitkin County Commissioner Greg Poschman said.

"The Mountain Pact has brought us the ability to reach out to a broader audience and find like-minded communities," he said.

He also praised the 30x30 initiative, saying that the county is enthusiastic about collaborative and inclusive approaches to conservation and for reducing carbon emissions.

"Ultimately preserving 30% may not be enough, but this a great start," Poschman said.

The county has been involved with The Mountain Pact for about a year, he said. Two months ago, Poschman spoke with U.S. Secretary of the Interior

Deb Haaland about local efforts, and was able to meet with her again last week, along with U.S. Sens. John Hickenlooper and Michael Bennet.

He said they discussed a mutual shock at the influx of people visiting Colorado public lands in the past year, and acknowledged that nearly every recreational community in the country is currently facing the problem of how to educate people on taking care of the lands they visit versus simply using them.

Poschman said it's a good thing to have the interest of U.S. senators and the Interior Secretary, and that he received praise on the number of conservation efforts in which Pitkin County is involved. Pitkin County is unique, he said, because of everything happening locally.

"We have a lot," he said. "We've got Healthy Rivers and Streams, which is unique. Not many communities have a dedicated fund to protect rivers. Our Open Space fund which has been doing a lot, a hell of a lot... We're doing things that other people can actually emulate. Other municipalities are doing this as well and have an interest in it."

Pitkin County was credited in the report for conserving land and riparian areas, and for restoring wetlands and river courses, using projects that rely on volunteers, nonprofits, government entities and private citizens. The initiatives listed in the report include the Agricultural Leasing Program, the Healthy Rivers and Streams Fund, the Open Space and Trails Program, Conservation Easements and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Program.

In Colorado, the town of Frisco, and San Miguel, Summit and Eagle counties also are participating with The Mountain Pact. Communities in Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon and Utah are involved as well.

“Eagle County is excited to see the expanded vision for conservation in the America the Beautiful plan,” Eagle County Commissioner Kathy Chandler-Henry said in the news release. “Including our private landowners, tribes, individuals and public entities in the ambitious and necessary protection of our lands and waters is the first step toward creating a future for our children and grandchildren that values natural resources.

“We’ve seen the healing powers of nature during this last difficult year. Ensuring that we have an America the Beautiful for all is within our reach,” she added.

[mwebber@aspdailynews.com](mailto:mwebber@aspdailynews.com)

@meganrwebber on Twitter