



The Colorado Sun

<https://coloradosun.com/2021/02/03/core-act-opinion/>

Opinion: Son of a 10th Mountain Division ski trooper on why the CORE Act matters

This measure will sustain both healthy outdoor recreation and our outdoor economy for future generations -- and will honor Colorado's military legacy.



Greg Poschman

2:55 AM MST on Feb 3, 2021



U.S. Army Sgt. Harry Poschman (85th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division) on maneuvers with Camp Hale in the background in 1943. The smog cloud

over Camp Hale was a regular feature in winter, due to temperature inversions. (Poschman Collection)

Tuesday brought an important moment for public lands protection in Colorado with the announcement of the reintroduction of the [Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy \(CORE\) Act](#), and it is time for Congress finally passes this important piece of legislation.

The CORE Act was reintroduced by Sen. Michael Bennet and Rep. Joe Neguse and was co-sponsored by Sen. John Hickenlooper as well as Reps. Jason Crow, Ed Perlmutter and Diana DeGette.

The measure was [passed by the U.S. House of Representatives](#) with bipartisan support in 2019. It [passed the House again](#) in 2020 as a rider to the National Defense Authorization Act, but [was later blocked](#).



Greg Poschman

The CORE Act unites four previous public-lands bills that were crafted with local governments, businesses, conservationists and sportsmen over a 10-year period. It would protect about 400,000 acres of Colorado's most beautiful public lands, securing important wilderness areas along with existing outdoor recreation areas that welcome four-wheeling, hunting, hiking, and mountain biking.

This well-thought-out act will sustain both healthy outdoor recreation and our outdoor economy for future generations. The CORE Act would provide the most significant public lands protection in Colorado since the 1993 Colorado Wilderness Act. In an era where we are witnessing rapid loss of elk and deer herds, the CORE Act is an important step toward restoring a healthy natural balance.

Specifically, the CORE Act would improve management, conservation, and recreation at the Curecanti National Recreation Area; protect the iconic scenery, recreation, and water supply in the San Juan Mountains; and secure the hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation economies of many towns across the state of Colorado.

The measure coincides with Colorado's and the nation's goal of protecting 30% of the world's land and waters by 2030, which was included in [President Biden's recent executive orders on the environment](#).

The bill also includes a first-of-its-kind National Historic Landscape designation for Camp Hale near Leadville to honor Colorado's military legacy at the home of the 10th Mountain Division ski troops. The CORE Act is a unique and powerful tribute to those who served our country in World War II, then came home to build our skiing and outdoor recreation economy.

This issue hits home for me because my father, Harry Poschman, served in the 10th Mountain Division and was a ski instructor at Camp Hale, then led a machine-gun combat squad in Italy.



U.S. Army Sgt. Harry Poschman, a ski instructor, demonstrating a turn on his on his 7'6" military issue skis at Camp Hale, Colorado, in 1943. (Poschman Collection)

While my father passed away in 2006 at age 93, one of his ski trooper buddies, John Tripp of Carbondale (age 101), is still waiting to see Camp Hale designated a National Historic Landscape. In fact, several of the last living members of the 10th Mountain Division have called for passage of the bill before they pass.

Most importantly for my home county of Pitkin and neighboring counties, the CORE Act would protect the ranches, rural agriculture and wildlife of the Thompson Divide, one of western Colorado's most spectacular landscapes, with

221,500 acres of uninhabited forestlands and mountain meadows, spanning portions of Pitkin, Garfield, Mesa, Delta and Gunnison counties.

To safeguard a continuation of the ranching and recreation that drives our local economies, the CORE Act would permanently halt new oil and gas leasing within the Thompson Divide area.

Sen. Bennet, who also co-sponsored the CORE Act in January 2019 with Rep. Neguse, astutely said at the announcement, “I think of this as an expression of the bipartisan desire of Coloradans to protect places that are special to them and also seek the economic benefits that occur when public lands are protected.”

He is correct about the values his Colorado constituents want sustained and the economic benefits this act will bring when signed into law. [According to the Outdoor Industry Association](#), Colorado’s outdoor recreation economy generates \$28 billion in consumer spending and 229,000 jobs annually, nearly four times as many direct jobs as the oil and gas industry and the mining industry combined. More than 71% of Colorado residents participate in outdoor recreation each year.

Many of us in Western Slope counties and communities are grateful to Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper and Reps. Neguse, Crow, Perlmutter, and DeGette for their support for the CORE Act. So many local elected officials across our state applaud their genuine Colorado appetite for protecting, regulating, and responsibly managing our public lands for all.

Greg Poschman, who was born and raised in Aspen and is a member of the [Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners](#). He is a three-time [Emmy award winner](#) for directing and camerawork.