



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, December 20, 2021

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## Local Elected Officials in the Mountain West Celebrate Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful

**DURANGO, CO** -- In response to the Department of Interior releasing its first annual [America the Beautiful progress report](#), [The Mountain Pact](#), an organization that works with local elected officials in over 80 communities across the Western U.S., released the following statements:

***[The Mountain Pact Executive Director Anna Peterson said](#)**, “We applaud the Biden administration’s work on the America the Beautiful goal this year through greater land protections in the Tongass, Greater Chaco Landscape, Arctic Refuge, Boundary Waters; through restoring protections for Bears Ears, Grand Staircase, and Northeast Canyons and Seamounts national monuments; as well as promising meaningful engagement and co-stewardship with Tribal nations. By uniting local governments, private landowners, Native American Tribes, and historically underserved communities, this initiative is bringing us together to advance a shared vision of a better America.”*

*“To conserve nature and buffer the United States’ communities from the worst impacts of climate change and the biodiversity crises within the next eight years, we must rapidly accelerate efforts to restore and conserve substantially more land and water through the use of the Antiquities Act, among other methods. We urge President Biden to establish new national monuments like community-led efforts of [Avi Kwa Ame](#) in Nevada and [Castner Range](#) in Texas.”*

### California

***City of South Lake Tahoe, Mayor Devin Middlebrook said**, “The America the Beautiful initiative lays out exactly the right approach to restoring biodiversity and combating climate change. Local governments can help achieve the 30x30 goal by enacting smart comprehensive land use and growth management plans. Our city is focusing on creating more equitable access to public lands and parks for the most underserved members of our community.”*

***Council Member, David Polivy from the Town of Truckee said**, “Conservation, greenhouse gas reductions, healthy communities, and economic vitality all go hand in hand in Truckee. With our community’s focus on outdoor recreation and getting people out of their vehicles, our success expanding our cross town trail network along with critical river side open space is testament to our Town’s commitment to address the issues of today and those for tomorrow. We look forward to pursuing the national goals of President Biden’s America the Beautiful Initiative and are aligned in our commitment to support healthy lands and waters in and around our built communities.”*

### Colorado

***Eagle County, Colorado Commissioner Kathy Chandler-Henry said**, “Eagle County is excited to see the expanded vision for conservation in the America the Beautiful plan. 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."*

**Town of Ridgway, Colorado Mayor John Clark said,** *"From boosting our outdoor economy to protecting our critical water resources and wildlife habitat to conserving some of our wildest public lands, the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act is a collaborative effort that brings some of the best ideas and input from across the state into one piece of legislation. The need for this legislation is critical, in order to fight climate change while putting us on a path to conserving 30% of our land and water by 2030."*

**Pitkin County, Colorado Commissioner Greg Poschman said,** *"Pitkin County, Colorado is enthusiastic about collaborative and inclusive approaches to conservation and for reducing carbon emissions. 30X30 is a great initiative and the time has come for implementation. Ultimately preserving 30% may not be enough, but this a great start."*

## **Idaho**

**City of Driggs, Idaho Mayor Hyrum Johnson said,** *"With tourism and development both at all-time highs, like in so many western communities, community staff and leaders are feeling significant pressure. Farmers, anglers, ranchers, and private landowners are some of America's most effective conservationists. This is especially true in Driggs and Teton Valley, Idaho. We are grateful that President Biden's ambitious plan supports our private landowners committed to protecting their property by providing the tools, financial resources, and incentives for landowners and the private sector to restore degraded natural areas and manage their resources sustainably. Locally-led conservation efforts can provide a sustainable economic base for rural communities while preserving important traditions and safeguarding nature."*

## **Montana**

**City of Bozeman, Montana Mayor Cyndy Andrus said,** *"I am very pleased to see that the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act includes the public lands portions of the Gallatin River, Taylor Fork and Hyalite Creek, which is the primary source of Bozeman's drinking water. Protecting these important headwaters streams will also protect every downstream water user, including farmers and ranchers, municipalities, industrial users, and river-based recreationists that contribute to Montana's \$7.1 billion outdoor recreation economy."*

## **Oregon**

**City of Ashland, Oregon Councilor Tonya Graham said,** *"We know that conserving 30% of our lands and waters is a threshold we need to accomplish for our overall ecological health. We appreciate President Biden giving us guidance on what this can mean for local communities and how private entities, local, state, and federal governments can work to preserve our lands and waters collectively."*

## **Utah**

**Summit County, Utah Council Chair Glenn Wright said,** *"Farmers, anglers, ranchers, and private landowners are some of America's most effective conservationists. We are grateful President Biden's ambitious plan supports private landowners committed to protecting their property by providing the tools, financial resources, and incentives for landowners and the private sector to restore degraded natural areas and*

*manage their resources sustainably. Locally-led conservation efforts can provide a sustainable economic base for rural communities while preserving important traditions and safeguarding nature.”*

**City of Moab, Utah Council Member Kalen Jones said,** “Restoring protections for Bears Ears National Monument will preserve these lands, support Tribally-led conservation priorities, and hopefully lead to increased funding to support management and enjoyment of Bear Ears National Monument.”

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*Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](#) mobilizes local elected officials in over 80 Western mountain communities with outdoor recreation based economies to speak with a collective voice on federal climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation policy.*

## **MORE INFORMATION**

### **The Mountain Pact’s Efforts around America the Beautiful:**

- **[RESOLUTIONS](#):** Many communities in The Mountain Pact network passed resolutions in support of the America the Beautiful Initiative in 2021.
- **[REPORT](#):** This summer, The Mountain Pact release a [report entitled \*Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful - Now is the Time - Western Mountain Communities Working to Achieve the 30x30 Goal\*](#) that highlights examples from all eleven Western states on what Western mountain communities are doing to conserve nature and contribute to the [America the Beautiful Initiative](#). The report offers [recommendations](#) for on-the-ground conservation work, policy recommendations, as well as new strategies and projects to help achieve the goals of the America the Beautiful effort.
- **[ANTIQUITIES ACT LETTER](#):** The Mountain Pact sent a [letter](#) to the Biden administration signed by over 115 Western state legislators, county commissioners, mayors, and council members from all eleven Western states. The letter thanks the administration for taking climate action and protecting our public lands through programs like the historic [America the Beautiful initiative](#). The letter applauds the administration’s restoration of Bears Ears, Grand Staircase-Escalante, and Northeast Canyons and Seamounts national monuments and urges the President to use the Antiquities Act to protect more lands as national monuments.

### **America The Beautiful Initiative and the Biden Administration**

The initiative is in response to [scientists telling us that worldwide biodiversity is deteriorating at a faster rate than at any time in human history](#). From [2001 to 2017, more than 24 million acres of land were lost to human development](#) in the lower 48 United States, which equals the loss of one football field-sized patch of land every 30 seconds.

In fact, many [scientists](#) continue to warn that [we must conserve and restore at least 30 percent of lands and waters by 2030](#) if we want to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems, support an increasing global population, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Through an [executive order](#) in January 2021, President Biden announced his administration’s goal to conserve 30% of U.S. lands and water by 2030 (commonly referred to as 30x30). Then in May 2021, the administration

followed up on the executive order by issuing a [report](#), *Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful*, which recommends “a ten-year locally-led campaign to restore the lands and waters upon which we all depend, and that binds us together as Americans.” The report out today is a follow-up to the executive order.

America the Beautiful is a bold, science-based initiative that includes the [30x30](#) goal, the first-ever national conservation goal to address the twin threats of climate change and the rapid loss of biodiversity and safeguard America’s lands, water, and wildlife. It supports the conservation efforts of people across the country in rural and coastal communities, Tribal Nations, private landowners, and many others on the frontlines of conserving, stewarding, restoring, using, and enjoying nature.

There is overwhelming support for action. Recent polling found that [77 percent of voters in the Rocky Mountain West](#) support this initiative. Many [local governing bodies across the West](#) have passed resolutions supporting the America the Beautiful initiative and the 30x30 goal.