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## **Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful - Now is the Time** ***Western Mountain Communities Working to Achieve the 30x30 Goal***

**DURANGO, CO** -- Today [The Mountain Pact](#), an organization that works with local elected officials in over 80 communities across the Western U.S., released 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.

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."

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.

Reaching the America the Beautiful goal does not involve a one-size fits all approach. To the contrary, different communities around the country will develop conservation strategies that reflect their unique needs and interests and efforts to reach the America the Beautiful goal will rely on varied and flexible approaches.

The Mountain Pact [report](#) presents a small sample of land preservation and climate action projects that Western mountain communities have completed, or are currently working on, and ideas for not only future projects, but also policy prescriptions that can help this nation achieve the ambitious conservation targets set by this Administration.

The projects described in the report range from locally focused conservation efforts to securing federal land designations, but in no way do they represent the full spectrum of ideas for advancing conservation. The Mountain Pact hopes that these examples will help spark new thinking in communities across the country and inspire people to develop new projects and policies that can help address the nature crisis.

## QUOTES

**[The Mountain Pact](#) Executive Director Anna Peterson said,** *“The America the Beautiful goal to expand conservation and protect even more of America’s lands and waters is an ambitious and critical step to conserve nature and buffer the United States’ Western mountain communities from the worst impacts of climate change. We celebrate that this remarkable vision also works towards a more inclusive and equitable vision of nature conservation that better reflects our country’s values and expands access to the outdoors for all. By uniting local governments, private landowners, and Tribal communities and individuals, this plan will bring us all together towards a shared vision of a better America.”*

### Arizona

**City of Flagstaff, Arizona Former Vice-Mayor said,** *“I think that the America the Beautiful initiative is a great response to the climate and biodiversity challenges our country is facing. The City of Flagstaff’s Greater Buffalo Park and Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve are two fantastic examples of locally-led and broadly supported conservation projects that can count toward the 30x30 goal.”*

### California

**City of South Lake Tahoe, Mayor Pro Tem 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.”*

**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."*

**Town of Frisco, Colorado Mayor and avalanche forecaster Hunter Mortensen said,** *"Oil and gas leasing on public lands across the West leads to an increase in dust. This unique combination of factors has caused a dangerous springtime phenomenon of dust on snow events in the mountains of Colorado. Dust blows in during springtime wind storms, settling on the snow. This causes snow to melt 1-4 weeks earlier which negatively impacts both summer and winter tourism, as well as harming agriculture and increasing the likelihood of wildfires."*

## **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.*  
*and*

**City of Driggs, Idaho Mayor Hyrum Johnson said,** *"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."*

**Blaine County, Idaho Board of Commissioners Chair Dick Fosbury said,** *"Blaine County's pristine public lands and waters contribute to healthy lifestyles and an exceptional quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Our comprehensive plan helps to protect natural resources by prioritizing conservation and growth management. And yet, a changing climate is increasing the frequency and severity of wildfire and flood events which threaten our way of life and damage public lands and water. The America the Beautiful initiative will strengthen our efforts to restore heavily damaged public lands and build resilience within our community."*

## **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."*

## **Nevada**

**Clark County, Nevada Commissioner Justin Jones said,** *"For too long, the costs and impacts of nature loss have fallen disproportionately on low-income communities and communities of color in the U.S. 74 percent of communities of color and 70 percent of low-income communities in the contiguous United States live in [nature-deprived areas](#). This critically needed proposal focuses on improving access to outdoor spaces close-to-home and restoring degraded lands, coastlines, and waters across this country."*

and

**Clark County, Nevada Commissioner Justin Jones said,** *“Clark County looks forward to working in tandem with Secretary Haaland and other administration officials to achieve the shared goals of the America the Beautiful initiative to preserve our public lands, address climate change, and support the priorities of the Moapa Band of Paiutes and other Tribes here in Southern Nevada.”*

### **New Mexico**

**City of Las Cruces, New Mexico Council Member Gill Sorg said,** *“To me, it's a no brainer. We need to keep our biodiversity and habitat from being destroyed. Las Cruces continues to pursue locally-led efforts to preserve the many arroyos and open space in and near the city. We continue to add more park acreage as we grow as these provide unique habitat for a wide variety of birds. We also support the preservation of many Wilderness Study Areas and conservation lands across Southern New Mexico like our Sky Islands, for example.”*

### **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**

**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.”*

**###**

*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.*