



**Conservation
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Protecting America's Heritage



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Groups join forces to defend the Red Cliffs and Beaver Dam Wash National Conservation Areas in Southern Utah

ST. GEORGE, UT (March 31, 2017) – Conserve Southwest Utah (CSU), the Conservation Lands Foundation (CLF) and The Wilderness Society (TWS) filed a motion to intervene in the Washington County, Utah appeal of the Final Resource Management Plans (RMP) for the Red Cliffs and Beaver Dam Wash National Conservation Areas (NCA).

On February 23, 2017, Washington County, Utah filed an appeal with the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), contesting the final RMP for the Red Cliffs and Beaver Dam Wash NCAs. At the heart of the appeal is Washington Counties claim that BLM failed to consider and approve the construction of a highway or northern corridor through the Red Cliffs NCA. Intervention status will give the three conservation organizations options in the case of an unfavorable settlement or ruling.

“The Red Cliffs and Beaver Dam Wash NCAs are extraordinary landscapes, sustaining not only the native habitat but also the recreation and tourism critical to our local economy and the signature vistas of our county’s visual appeal,” stated Tom Butine, Board President of Conserve Southwest Utah, the local citizen-based conservation non-profit headquartered in St. George Utah. “CSU and our members have invested heavily over the past 11 years to establish these protected lands and care deeply about their value to those who live and visit here. We hope to continue the dialog with our county commission to understand and resolve the issues.”

The Red Cliffs and Beaver Dam Wash NCAs were established by legislation in 2009 after years of collaboration and input from the public and other stakeholders. Red Cliffs was designated in large part to protect habitat for the threatened Mojave Desert tortoise, while allowing development in other areas of Washington County. This compromise was agreed to and signed by officials in Washington County as part of a Habitat Conservation Plan in 1996.

“The plan was the product of years of hard work and public input,” said Phil Hanceford, Assistant Director of The Wilderness Society’s BLM Action Center. “It is a shame to see government throwing away resources on legal action and going back on commitments made during negotiations around the designation of the National Conservation Areas.”

CSU, CLF and TWS filed a motion to intervene in the Interior Board of Land Appeals on March 23 2017 through their legal representation, Todd Tucci of Advocates for the West, whose mission is to use law and science to restore streams and watersheds, protect public lands and wildlife, and ensure sustainable communities throughout the American West.

“Logically, the construction of a highway through a National Conservation Area designated by congress to protect desert tortoise habitat does not make sense,” stated Danielle Murray, Senior Director at the Conservation Lands Foundation. “The final RMP gets it right. It reflects the overarching intent of congress and six years of input from stakeholders. We intervened to ensure all this hard work that led to a sensible plan is not undermined.”

The Red Cliffs and Beaver Dam Wash NCA’s when designated became part of the National Conservation Lands—a collection of places around the West recognized for their scenic, ecological, historic or cultural significance. They were protected to “conserve, protect, and enhance for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generation the ecological, scenic, wildlife, recreation, cultural, historical, natural, educational, and scientific resources of the NCA; and to protect listed threatened or endangered species.”

Todd C. Tucci of Advocates for the West is representing Conserve Southwest Utah, the Conservation Lands Foundation, and The Wilderness Society in the administrative appeal.

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Conserve Southwest Utah (CSU) is a 501.c.3 non-profit grassroots coalition of local citizens advocating conservation the area’s natural resources (our public lands, our water and our air) and cultural resources (the remnants of native and pioneer activity) and for the Smart Growth principles that enable conservation, for the benefit of present and future generations. www.conserveswu.org

The Conservation Lands Foundation is the only organization dedicated solely to protecting, restoring and expanding the National Conservation Lands so they will endure from generation to generation. The National Conservation Lands are 36 million acres of protected public lands, rivers and trails managed by the Bureau of Land Management, that have joined the ranks of our national parks and wildlife refuges as guardians our nation’s natural, cultural and outdoor heritage, and drivers of its \$646 billion outdoor recreation economy. www.conservationlands.org

Advocates for the West is an Idaho-based public interest environmental law firm that uses law and science to restore streams and watersheds, protect public lands and wildlife, and ensure sustainable communities throughout the American West.