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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Over 80 Western Businesses Urge More Protections for Bureau of Land Management Lands as Critical Piece of Conserving America the Beautiful

Durango, CO: With the start of the winter Outdoor Retailer Snow Show this week, a [letter](#) signed by over 80 Western outdoor businesses, was sent to the Biden Administration asking the Department of Interior and Bureau of Land Management to include protections for more Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands as a critical piece of accomplishing the America the Beautiful goals.

The America the Beautiful initiative focuses on ways federal land management agencies can help meet President Biden's goal of conserving 30% of the nation's lands and waters by 2030. The letter states: *"This goal is essential to providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, equitable access to nature, and ultimately safeguarding the climate. Outdoor recreation is a significant economic driver in the United States, each year generating [\\$689 billion in consumer spending and supporting 4.3 million jobs](#). Our industry is greatly dependent on the many benefits conferred from our nation's open spaces and protected public lands."*

The BLM is the largest land manager in the nation with almost a quarter of a billion acres under its purview. These lands include traditional homelands of Indigenous populations, vital watersheds for downstream communities, and outstanding fish and wildlife habitat. Yet, many BLM lands remain at risk. For example, Colorado's 8.3 million acres of BLM public lands make up one-third of the federal public lands in the state, but only 8% of these lands are permanently protected, dramatically less than other public lands types.

Some recommended conservation designations included in the letter are: Backcountry Conservation Areas (BCAs), Recreation Management Areas, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs).

"Patagonia was grateful that the Biden administration's restored Bears Ears, Grand-Staircase Escalante, and Northeast Canyons and Seamounts national monuments. It was a critical course correction and sent an important message that the conservation of nature and cultural sites should be the top priority of federal land management agencies," said **Meghan Wolf, Environmental Campaigns Manager for Patagonia**. We hope the administration will seize this moment to push harder and protect more of these special places. They can start by directing the Bureau of Land Management to do more to protect lands with wilderness characteristics as wilderness study areas."

John Land Le Coq, CEO and Founder of Fishpond, Inc. said, "Over 80 western businesses strongly encourage the Department of Interior and Bureau of Land Management to do all that it can to protect more lands as part of the America the Beautiful initiative. From Cooper Mountain to Red Hill Pass in the renowned Southpark Area of Colorado, the Bureau of Land Management has an immediate opportunity to conserve valuable wildlife habitat

and outdoor recreation opportunities as Backcountry Conservation Areas through the Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan.”

Louis Bubala, a director with the Nevada Outdoor Business Coalition said, “Protecting more Bureau of Land Management lands—like the culturally important Avi Kwa Ame area south of Las Vegas—can help support local economies and tourism industries while preserving our outstanding opportunities for recreation, including camping, hiking, paddling, hunting, and fishing. This ambitious project will also help mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis and protect wildlife habitat.”

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LETTER:

January 26, 2022

The Honorable Debra Haaland
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

As outdoor business owners and operators from across the West (and Alaska), protected public lands play a critical role for our businesses and way-of-life. We applaud the Administration’s recent restoration of the Bears Ears, Grand-Staircase Escalante, and Northeast Canyons and Seamounts national monuments. We hope the administration will continue to prioritize national monuments across our nation’s public lands and waters.

We also want to commend the Interior Department for the America the Beautiful report and its focus on ways federal land management agencies can help meet President Biden’s goal of conserving 30% of our nation’s lands and waters by 2030. This goal is essential to providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, equitable access to nature and ultimately safeguarding the climate. Outdoor recreation is a significant economic driver in the United States, each year generating [\\$689 billion in consumer spending and supporting 4.3 million jobs](#). Our industry is greatly dependent on the many benefits conferred from our nation’s open spaces and protected public lands.

The lands overseen by the Bureau of Land Management represent one of the greatest opportunities to advance conservation through the President’s America the Beautiful initiative. The Bureau manages approximately 250 million acres of America’s public lands, many of which remain in their natural state and provide outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation, including camping, hiking, paddling, hunting and fishing, and picnicking.

Unfortunately, many of these areas and the activities that they support are at risk of being unnecessarily degraded or lost. We urge you to use all the conservation tools at your disposal to ensure that these important public lands continue to offer the unique recreational opportunities that bring millions of Americans to the great outdoors. When used wisely, these conservation mechanisms will support outdoor recreation, local economies and tourism industries as well as provide certainty for rural and gateway communities to make long-term investments.

Some conservation designations we recommend utilizing include,

- Backcountry Conservation Areas (BCAs)- these areas can be managed to conserve intact wildlife habitat and support high quality wildlife-dependent recreation.

- Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs and ERMAs)- these areas can be managed to support primitive and dispersed human powered recreation opportunities along popular river corridors, and in mountains, canyons, and prairies.
- Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)- these areas offer a respite from the sight and sound of modern society, a refuge for wildlife and opportunities for families to picnic, horseback ride, climb, hunt, paddle and hike.
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)- these areas can preserve and protect sacred sites, cultural and historic resources as well as conserve wildlife and wildlife habitat and provide for the outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and promote the preservation of public access and enjoyment of the open air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the nation.

We are grateful for your leadership and commitment to see the President's America the Beautiful initiative succeed and strongly encourage the Department and Bureau of Land Management to do all that it can to better conserve and protect our nation's important public lands and waters.

Sincerely,

10Power

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Nevada Outdoor Business Coalition

Oregon Outdoor Alliance

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