

Eastern Utah Public Lands Initiative

In 2013 Congressman Rob Bishop (later joined by Congressman Jason Chaffetz) introduced a Public Lands Initiative (PLI) for eastern Utah. The goal of the PLI was legislation that would resolve long-standing land use controversies and give some certainty to Federal land management issues in the future. The Congressmen invited county commissioners in several eastern Utah counties to develop PLI proposals for their respective counties that could be incorporated in the eastern Utah legislation.

San Juan County's Participation in the Public Lands Initiative

The San Juan County Commission fully supports the Public Lands Initiative and the goals articulated by Congressmen Bishop and Chaffetz. In developing San Juan County's proposal for the PLI, the County Commission had the following objectives:

The San Juan County proposal would be developed from the ground up with a **focus on local participation**,

To develop the proposal, the Commission established a Public Lands Council composed of county residents representing various interests. This Council met many times over an 18 month period and developed three proposals. In conjunction with the Council, the Commission held open houses at various locations in the County and published information about the PLI process and proposals in local media and on the County's website. County residents were encouraged to submit comments on these proposals. Additional meetings were held with Native American groups to discuss their concerns before the Council settled on a final proposal on June 15, 2015.

The San Juan County proposal would **represent the wide range of interests and viewpoints** held by citizens of the County.

Lands Council membership included interests representing minerals, cultural resources, recreation, Native American concerns, travel management, livestock grazing, wildlife and wilderness. Individuals with special interests or knowledge were invited to participate in Council meetings as needed.

The San Juan County proposal would **balance** natural and cultural resource **preservation** with natural resource **development**.

The County Commission and residents of the County have strong ties to, and feelings about the land and landscapes of the County. Conserving and preserving these natural and cultural resources is an important priority.

The Commissioners also recognize the importance of economic development and economic stability for County residents. A significant part of San Juan

County's economy is tied to the development of natural resources in the County. San Juan County's proposal strikes a careful balance between preservation for the future and responsible development to support economic stability.

The San Juan County proposal would **insure greater local involvement** in federal lands management.

The County Commission feels strongly that land management is enhanced (improved) when the State, County and Native American tribes are involved in management discussions and decision making. The County's PLI proposal would mandate that federal land management agencies encourage greater local participation and give credence to local concerns.

San Juan County's Proposal

The final Lands Council proposal was discussed at length in open County Commission meetings. The County Commission ultimately voted to adopt and submit the Council's proposal to Congressmen Bishop and Chaffetz. San Juan County's proposal includes:

2 National Conservation Areas (NCAs including wilderness)	703,047 acres
Wilderness areas (within and outside NCAs)	536,896 acres
Indian Creek Recreation Area	10,470 acres

Energy Zone designation (high mineral potential areas).

Transfer of federal mineral rights on McCracken Extension to Utah Navajo Trust Fund.

Enhanced coordination with State, County and Tribes in management of federal lands.

Recognition of current federal agency transportation plans with adjustments to accommodate County concerns.

Land exchanges and transfers to meet local needs.