



**RE: Please Oppose H.J. Res. 60/S.J.Res.30, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area; Motorized Vehicles**

Dear Senators,

Carved into the heart of the Colorado Plateau by the Colorado River over millions of years, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area features stunning redrock canyons, expansive stretches of undisturbed landscapes, and significant cultural and paleontological resources. Known mostly for water-based recreation on Lake Powell, Glen Canyon's 1.25 million acres also boasts superb opportunities for remote, land-based backcountry recreation.

Since Glen Canyon's inception as a national recreation area in 1972, the National Park Service (NPS) has largely turned a blind eye towards protecting the park from illegal off-road vehicle (ORV) use, despite repeated calls from the conservation community to regulate motorized vehicles in the park. Because NPS did not do so, in 2005, a coalition of organizations sued NPS over its decades-long practice of allowing illegal ORV travel within Glen Canyon. That litigation was settled in 2008 and the agency promised to develop and implement an ORV management plan.

More than a decade later, in 2021, NPS codified the decades of illegal use in a plan that—for the first time—authorized all sorts of vehicles (such as conventional vehicles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), dirt bikes, and side-by-sides) to drive on Lake Powell's ever-increasing shorelines. The ORV plan also opened—for the first time—certain roads in the spectacular Orange Cliffs unit (which serves as a backdrop to Canyonlands National Park) and several extremely remote routes feeding into the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments to ATVs and off-highway vehicles (previously all of these roads were only open to conventional motor vehicles).

In March 2023, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA), a steering committee member of the Utah Wilderness Coalition, filed a lawsuit in federal court challenging the ORV plan. SUWA argued that the plan failed to take the requisite hard look at the plan's environmental impacts and failed to designate ORV areas and trails to minimize those impacts. As a result, SUWA argued those two failures rendered arbitrary and capricious the agency's determination that the plan, once implemented, would not lead to impairment of Glen Canyon's resources.

SUWA and the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) (who separately sued over the ORV Plan) entered into a settlement agreement with the NPS that required the agency to promulgate a new rule proposing to 1) close the Orange Cliffs to ATVs and side-by-sides; 2)

close designated shoreline access areas (SAA) to motorized use unless lake elevations rise to sustainable levels; and 3) various remote routes to ATVs and side-by-sides. That rule was finalized and published in the Federal Register at 90 Fed. Reg. 2621 on January 13, 2025 (Final Rule).

### **What the Final Rule for Glen Canyon NRA DOES:**

The Final Rule adopts the changes proposed in the settlement agreement and amends 36 C.F.R. §7.70(f) accordingly. Specifically:

- Street-legal ATVs and off-highway vehicles (e.g., side-by-sides, dirt bikes) are no longer allowed on the 8 mile stretch of the roads in the Orange Cliffs. Conventional vehicles (e.g., Jeeps, SUVs) are allowed.
  - This restores the pre-2021 status quo and ensures the Orange Cliffs are managed cohesively with the Maze District of Canyonlands National Park, in accordance with Canyonlands' Backcountry Management Plan.
    - The Orange Cliffs are adjacent to Canyonlands' Maze District and many of the roads in the Orange Cliffs connect to roads in the Maze.
- NPS is now required to designate threshold lake elevations that determine whether an SAA should be opened or closed to motorized vehicle use.
  - If the water is at or above the designated elevation for a particular SAA, NPS may open that SAA to motorized vehicles.
  - However, if the water is below the designated elevation level for a particular SAA, NPS cannot allow motorized vehicle use on that SAA.
  - NPS has identified the following thresholds to determine whether an SAA should be opened or closed to motorized vehicles.
  - Lake Powell has not been above 3600 ft since August 2020. Thus, except for Lone Rock Beach and Stanton Creek, all SAAs are currently closed to motorized vehicles.

### **What the Final Rule for Glen Canyon NRA DOES NOT do:**

- The Final Rule does not completely restrict access in any location. Rather, it merely regulates modes of transportation and means of access such that fragile resources are protected and diverse recreational interests are balanced. Specifically:
  - All of the roads in the Orange Cliffs remain open to people traveling in conventional vehicles such as jeeps, trucks, and SUVs.
  - An SAA closed due to water levels below the threshold elevation is only closed to motorized vehicles off of the designated park road.
    - Visitors may still drive on the designated park roads leading into an SAA and may visit the SAA off the designated road by foot or other non-motorized means.
    - And, if/when the lake levels rise to the threshold elevations, NPS may open the SAA to motorized vehicle use off the designated park roads.
- The 17 miles of remote roads throughout the Recreation Area closed to ATVs and off-highway vehicles remain open to people traveling in conventional vehicles.

**Most important takeaways:**

- The Final Rule is very niche and affects a subset of motorized recreation in a very small area of the 1.25 million-acre Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA). A total of 25 roads are affected (6% of the total park roads in the NRA) and Approximately 4,930 acres of shoreline are affected (0.4% of the NRA's total acreage).
- Visitors in conventional vehicles are unaffected by the Final Rule with regard to travel on park roads (the only restriction to conventional vehicle travel is off park roads in closed SAAs).
- Given how minor this Final Rule is, it would be a waste of Congressional resources to spend time focusing on House Joint Resolution 60/Senate Joint Resolution 30, which would use the Congressional Review Act to disapprove the Final Rule.
- Conversely, disapproving the Final Rule increases the likelihood that Glen Canyon's resources and areas, particularly the Orange Cliffs, will be impaired by ATV and off-highway vehicle use.

**It is imperative that H.J. Res. 60/S.J.Res.30 not pass the Senate. The House version already passed on April 29th. Please vote NO on this resolution and protect Glen Canyon National Recreation Area so that everyone may enjoy its beauty, recreate in it, and ensure protections for cultural sites in Utah.**

Thank you for your consideration. Please reach out with any questions or information you need.

Sincerely,

The Utah Wilderness Coalition Steering Committee:

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## Full list of Utah Wilderness Coalition Members

Center for Biological Diversity	<b>AZ</b>
Rupestrian CyberServices	<b>AZ</b>
Wildland Trekking Company	<b>AZ</b>
Brown Bag Farms	<b>CA</b>
Californians for Western Wilderness	<b>CA</b>
The Climate Reality Project: California Coalition	<b>CA</b>
Desert Tortoise Council	<b>CA</b>
Latino Outdoors	<b>CA</b>
Natural Resources Defense Council	<b>CA</b>
San Diego Chapter of the Climate Reality Project	<b>CA</b>
San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy	<b>CA</b>
Coloradoan for Utah Wilderness (ColorUWild)	<b>CO</b>
Desert Ecosystems Analysis and Restoration	<b>CO</b>
Glenn Randall Writing and Photography	<b>CO</b>
Grand Valley Audubon Society	<b>CO</b>
Great Old Broads for Wilderness	<b>CO</b>
Rig to Flip	<b>CO</b>
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council	<b>CO</b>
Wild Earth Guardians	<b>CO</b>
Creation Justice Ministries	<b>DC</b>
Earthworks	<b>DC</b>
GreenLatinos	<b>DC</b>
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)	<b>DC</b>
Sierra Club	<b>DC</b>
Hawaii Audubon Society	<b>HI</b>
Alliance for the Wild Rockies	<b>ID</b>
Western Watersheds Project	<b>ID</b>

Decatur Audubon Society	<b>IL</b>
Elgin Green Groups	<b>IL</b>
First United Methodist of LaGrange (IL) Environmental Justice Committee	<b>IL</b>
Illinois Clergy & Laity for Utah Wilderness	<b>IL</b>
Illinois Task Force for Utah Wilderness	<b>IL</b>
Midwest SOARRING	<b>IL</b>
Northwest Illinois Audubon Society	<b>IL</b>
Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin	<b>IL</b>
Burroughs Audubon Society	<b>KS</b>
J Groene Construction	<b>KS</b>
Massachusetts Audubon Society	<b>MA</b>
Massachusetts Friends of Redrock Wilderness	<b>MA</b>
Maryland Ornithological Society	<b>MD</b>
Mainers for Utah Wilderness	<b>ME</b>
RESTORE: The North Woods	<b>ME</b>
Jackson Audubon Society	<b>MI</b>
Michigan Friends for Red Rock Wilderness	<b>MI</b>
Petoskey Audubon Club	<b>MI</b>
Minnesota Friends for Utah Wilderness	<b>MN</b>
Western Values Project	<b>MT</b>
American Whitewater	<b>NC</b>
Earthsong Photography	<b>NC</b>
Presbyterians for Earth Care	<b>NC</b>
New Mexico Friends of Utah Wilderness	<b>NM</b>
Nuestra Tierra	<b>NM</b>
Stone Forest Inc	<b>NM</b>
William Stone Photography	<b>NM</b>
Bird and Hike	<b>NV</b>

Friends of Nevada Wilderness	NV
Get Outdoors Nevada	NV
Nevadans for Utah Wilderness	NV
Patagonia	NV
Carol Montgomery Drake CPA PLLC	NY
JSA Sustainable Wealth Management	NY
New Yorkers for Utah Wilderness	NY
Ohio Friends for Utah Wilderness	OH
The Bee Collective	OH
350 PDX	OR
Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs	OR
Happy Mountain Kombucha	OR
Hudson Henry Photography	OR
Lane County Audubon Society	OR
Mountain Shop	OR
Oregon Wild	OR
Oregonians for Wild Utah	OR
Salem Audubon Society	OR
Pennsylvania Friends of Utah Wilderness	PA
Aldous and Associates	UT
Alliance for Better Utah	UT
Alta Lodge	UT
Bret Webster Images	UT
Bridgerland Audubon Society	UT
BYU Earth Stewardship	UT
Canyon Country Rising Tide	UT
Cathedral Church of St. Mark (Episcopal SLC)	UT
Clayhaus Photography	UT

Dabney & Dabney PLLC	UT
EcoFlight	UT
Elders Rising	UT
Environmental Ministry First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City	UT
Episcopal Diocese of Utah	UT
Equality Utah	UT
FOUNTAINavm	UT
Fisher Brewing Company	UT
Glen Canyon Institute	UT
Great Basin Coffee	UT
Great Salt Lake Audubon	UT
Green River Action Network	UT
Holiday River Expeditions	UT
Imlay Canyon Gear	UT
James Kay Photography	UT
Jinks Dabney LLC	UT
Latinxs United for Change and Activism (LUChA)	UT
League of Women Voters of Utah	UT
LULAC Young Adult Quetzalcoatl 44016 Council	UT
Malach Consulting	UT
Mormon Environmental Stewardship Alliance	UT
MOSAIC Inter-Faith Ministries	UT
Mountain West Cider	UT
Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanx de Aztlán (MEChA) de University of Utah	UT
Save Our Canyons	UT
Save Our Great Salt Lake	UT
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance	UT
Student Organization for Society and Natural Resources-USU	UT

Superbloom Coffee Roasters	<b>UT</b>
Taproot Soda	<b>UT</b>
UPLIFT	<b>UT</b>
Utah Moms for Clean Air	<b>UT</b>
Utah Physicians for Healthy Environment	<b>UT</b>
Utah Rivers Council	<b>UT</b>
Utah Society for Environmental Education	<b>UT</b>
Utah Tar Sands Resistance	<b>UT</b>
Wasatch Mountain Club	<b>UT</b>
Wasatch Rising Tide	<b>UT</b>
Wasatch Touring	<b>UT</b>
Web of Life Wellness Center	<b>UT</b>
Words and Photographs by Stephen Trimble	<b>UT</b>
Kettle Range Conservation Group	<b>WA</b>
Kishwaukee College Green Team	<b>WA</b>
Peddler Brewing	<b>WA</b>
Washington Friends of Wild Utah	<b>WA</b>
Rock County Progressives	<b>WI</b>
Wisconsin Friends for Utah Wilderness	<b>WI</b>
Upper Green River Alliance	<b>WY</b>