

Second Regular Session

Sixty-second General Assembly

LLS NO. R00-0772.01 Robert Pogue

STATE OF COLORADO

BY REPRESENTATIVES George and Hoppe;
also SENATOR Wattenberg.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 00-1018

101 CONCERNING OPPOSITION TO THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE
102 PREFERRED MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE FOR THE WHITE RIVER
103 NATIONAL FOREST.

1 WHEREAS, The White River National Forest, established in
2 1891, is one of America's largest and oldest national forests,
3 encompassing 2,270,000 acres in western Colorado; and

4 WHEREAS, The White River National Forest includes public
5 lands within nine Colorado counties - Eagle, Garfield, Gunnison, Mesa,
6 Moffat, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, and Summit; and

7 WHEREAS, The White River National Forest, site of the most
8 recreational activity in the Rocky Mountain Region, is the fifth most
9 recreated national forest in the United States, attracting some nine million
10 visitors every year from across America and around the world; and

11 WHEREAS, The White River National Forest is home to the
12 world famous ski resorts of Vail, Aspen, Copper Mountain, Breckenridge,
13 Keystone, Arapahoe Basin, Beaver Creek, Snowmass, Sunlight, Aspen
14 Highlands, and Buttermilk; and

15 WHEREAS, In addition to skiing, visitors flock to the White River
16 National Forest to enjoy camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, boating,
17 bicycling, snowmobiling, four-wheeling, and many other recreational
18 activities; and

19 WHEREAS, Tourism and recreation in the White River National
20 Forest directly supports 34,000 jobs in Colorado, pumps \$720 million
21 into the state's economy, and serves as the chief economic driver for
22 numerous communities in western Colorado; and

23 WHEREAS, The headwaters of six rivers - the Frying Pan, the
24 Roaring Fork, the Crystal, the Eagle, the Blue, and the White - are found
25 within the expansive reaches of the White River National Forest, rivers
26 that serve as critical sources of water for the entire state of Colorado; and

1 WHEREAS, The White River National Forest contains 750,000
2 acres that are rightly managed as wilderness under the existing
3 management plan, providing protection where appropriate for biologically
4 sensitive locations that serve as critical habitat for a diverse range of
5 protected species, including the nation's largest herd of elk; and

6 WHEREAS, The United States Forest Service ("Forest Service")
7 has released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") containing
8 potential revisions to the White River National Forest's management plan,
9 as the Forest Service is directed to do every 10 to 15 years; and

10 WHEREAS, The Forest Service established in its DEIS a Preferred
11 Management Alternative that, according to the plan's summary,
12 "represents an aggressive approach to habitat management" and
13 "addresses the idea that a higher priority be given to physical and
14 biological resources than to human uses of the Forest"; and

15 WHEREAS, The Preferred Management Alternative's enumerated
16 philosophy is a substantial departure from the White River National
17 Forest's historic management, which has balanced reasonable human
18 uses, and recreational uses in particular, with habitat and wildlife
19 management; and

20 WHEREAS, The Forest Service confers upon itself in the
21 Preferred Management Alternative the spurious right to regulate instream
22 flow of rivers that run through the White River National Forest, thus
23 usurping time-honored Colorado water law and unduly infringing upon
24 existing water rights; and

25 WHEREAS, The Preferred Management Alternative would
26 substantially inhibit reasonable human uses like fishing, mountain biking,
27 climbing, snowmobiling, and even hiking on Aspen's world-famous
28 Maroon Bells; and

29 WHEREAS, The Preferred Management Alternative's restrictions
30 threaten the economic vitality of the many western Colorado communities
31 that deeply rely on tourism and recreation in the White River National
32 Forest; and

33 WHEREAS, A balanced management solution, which the
34 Preferred Management Alternative is not, that would protect the White
35 River National Forest's biodiversity and environmental integrity without
36 usurping Colorado water law, undercutting the economic life-blood of
37 western Colorado, and unduly restricting reasonable recreational uses of
38 the forest has been proposed by Congressman Scott McInnis,
39 representative of Colorado's 3rd congressional district in the United States
40 House of Representatives; now, therefore,

41 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Sixty-second*
42 *General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring*
43 *herein:*

1 (1) That the members of the Sixty-second General Assembly
2 strongly oppose implementation of the Preferred Management Alternative
3 for the White River National Forest and urge the United States Forest
4 Service to adopt Congressman Scott McInnis' suggested revisions to the
5 preferred plan, which balance habitat protection and environmental
6 preservation with the economic needs of western Colorado while
7 allowing reasonable human uses of the forest to continue; and

8 (2) That the members of the General Assembly strongly oppose
9 any effort by the Forest Service to usurp Colorado water law and existing
10 water rights by illegitimately imposing instream flow restrictions on
11 rivers that run through the White River National Forest.

12 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Joint Resolution be
13 sent to the President of the United States; the President of the United
14 States Senate; the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives;
15 each member of Colorado's Congressional delegation; the United States
16 Forest Service; the United States Forest Service, Rocky Mountain
17 Region; and the supervisor of the White River National Forest.