

# Colorado's Canyon Country Wilderness Proposal

## Beaver Creek

This area is extremely rugged, the canyons are breathtakingly beautiful. This area will surely become a prime destination for more hikers and backpackers as word of it spreads.

Ron Lautaret, Fremont County Search and Rescue

**Citizens Wilderness Proposal:** 38,378 acres

**BLM Wilderness Study Area:** 27,020 acres

**BLM Field Office:** Royal Gorge Field Office (Cañon City)

**Location:** The proposed Beaver Creek Wilderness is located in Fremont, Teller, and El Paso counties, midway between Colorado Springs and Cañon City.

### Wilderness Qualities

Beaver Creek and its tributaries, on the south slope of the Pikes Peak massif, carve deeply incised granite canyons with tumbling cascades, waterfalls, and calm pools. Beaver Creek is a sizable stream year round; its headwaters reach to the top of Pikes Peak, although the wilderness unit contains only mid-elevations of 6,000 to 10,000 feet.

Life zones range from desert species to verdant pine-spruce-fir forests and meadows. Condition and diversity of wildlife is excellent. Beaver Creek is a renowned coldwater fishery, with a variety of trout, including cutthroat. There are bighorn sheep, mule deer, occasional elk, numerous black bear, mountain lion, golden eagles, and beaver. Endangered peregrine falcons have been sighted here. Most significantly, Beaver Creek includes occupied habitat of the Mexican spotted owl, a federally-listed threatened species. Several owl nests have been located within the proposed wilderness.

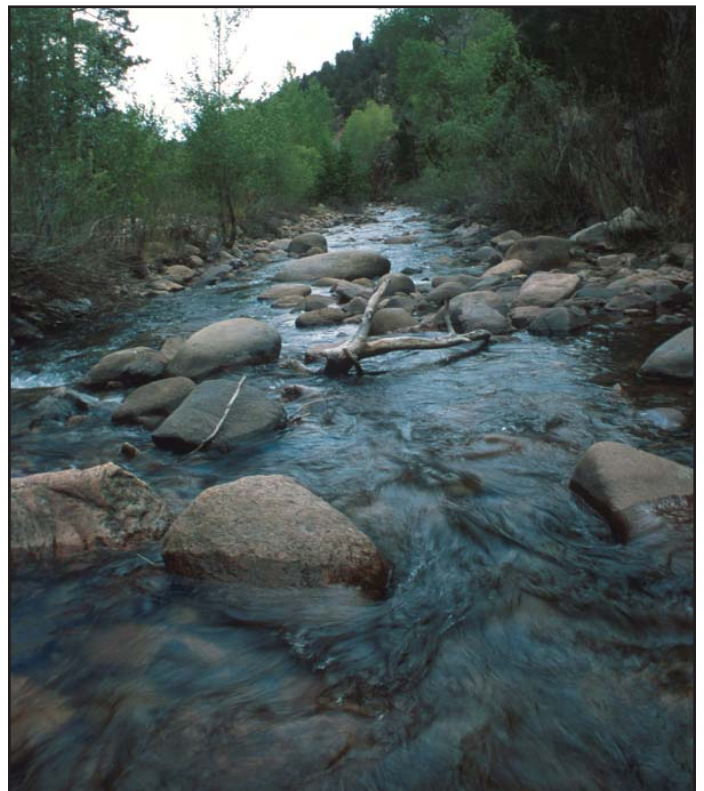
Beaver Creek forms a crucial ecological link between the alpine high country of Pikes Peak and the arid rangelands of the high plains. Recognizing this, The Nature Conservancy purchased private lands in Aiken Canyon adjacent to the proposed Beaver Creek Wilderness in order to augment the natural values of the surrounding ecosystems.

The contrast between Beaver Creek's magnificent wilderness and its proximity to large urban populations makes the area's wilderness values extremely

significant. High quality year-round recreation opportunities abound for hiking and backpacking, fishing and hunting, nature study, and climbing.

### Resource Information

Resource conflicts are few in this area. Rugged topography and scant timber and forage severely limit the potential for lumbering and grazing. According to USGS and Bureau of Mines reports, there are no economically important minerals and little potential for discovery of new deposits, and the area contains no valid existing mineral rights that predate the WSA.



Beaver Creek is a renowned coldwater fishery with a variety of trout.

There is no conflict with off-highway vehicles because BLM currently prohibits motorized vehicles in the area. There are portions of 12 grazing allotments within, but some of these permits are inactive.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife owns and manages 1,500 acres within the area that includes the stream corridor of East and West Beaver Creeks and the main stem below their junction. A cooperative management agreement between the CDOW and the BLM ensures that this CDOW inholding will be managed for its wilderness values.

Beaver Creek is a perennial stream that supplies irrigation and municipal water to downstream users in eastern Fremont County, and to the cities of Penrose and Colorado Springs. The stream drains higher elevations of the Pike National Forest. Two reservoirs lie upstream of the proposed wilderness. The Division of Wildlife owns Skagway Reservoir on West Beaver Creek for wildlife habitat. CDOW keeps the reservoir full at all times so that inflow equals outflow. CDOW intends to apply for instream flow rights to West Beaver to the confluence and main Beaver Creek below the confluence to Beaver Creek State Wildlife Area. Colorado Springs owns Rosemount Reservoir on East Beaver Creek on national forest lands above the proposed wilderness. Colorado Springs diverts water from the reservoir via a pipeline to its Broadmoor treatment facility.



Beaver Creek CWP contains a variety of ecosystems, from desert to verdant pine-spruce-fir forests and meadows.

Citizens also propose adding 640 acres of state and several thousand acres of BLM land near Mount Pittsburgh and Turkey Creek on the east. BLM acquired 1,669 acres of adjacent lands as a result of the Turkey Creek land exchange in 1996 on this eastern boundary. The exchange made possible the addition of several thousand acres of contiguous roadless lands to the previously proposed wilderness.

Finally, the proposed addition of two state land sections on the north encompasses additional area of the East Beaver Creek watershed.

## Boundary Issues

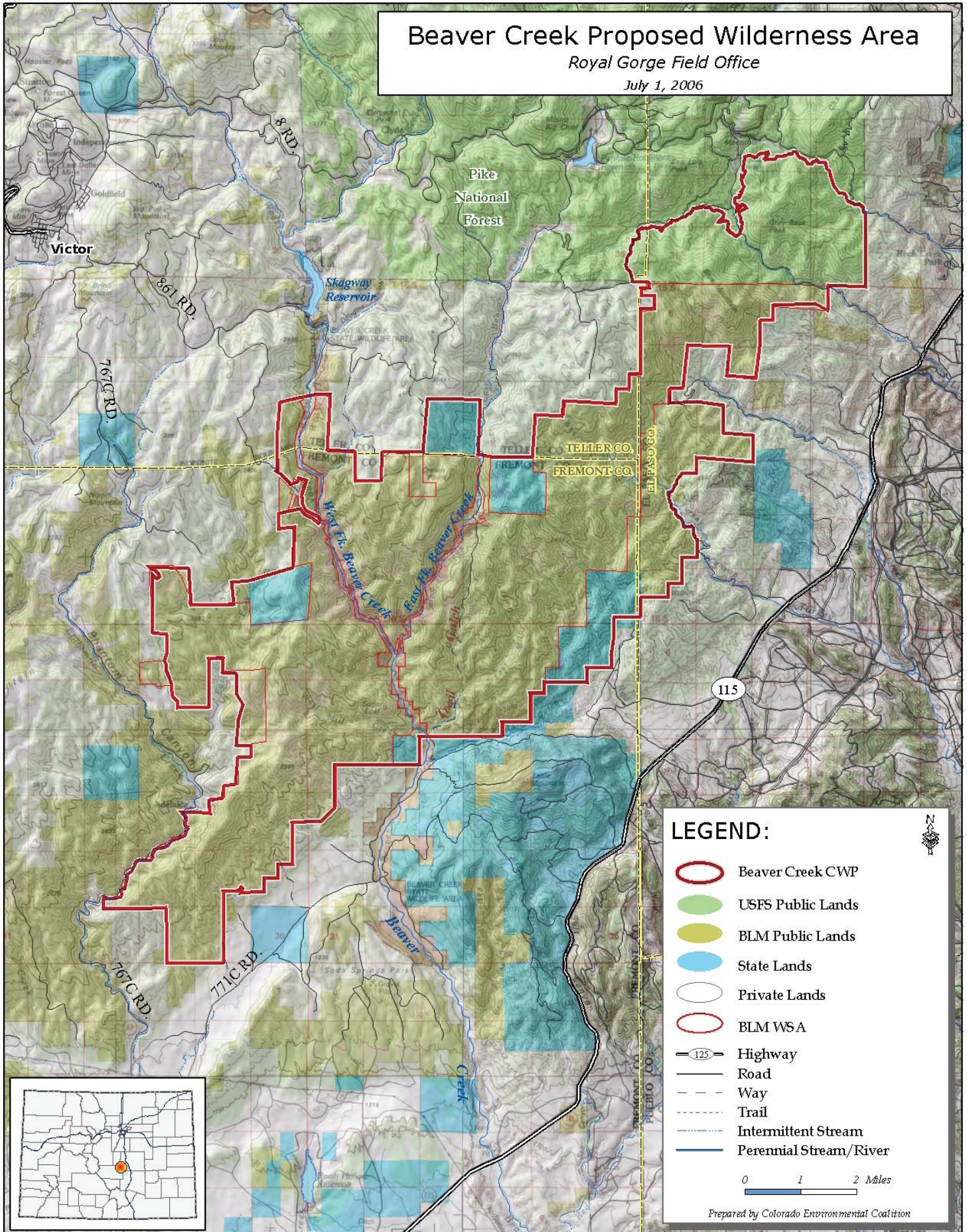
In addition to BLM's WSA boundary, citizens propose adding 4,300 acres of adjacent Pike-San Isabel National Forest. The Forest Service lands include beautiful Little Fountain Creek Canyon just north of the WSA boundary. This piece of roadless land was too small to be inventoried during the Forest Service's RARE II, but it is deserving of protection and provides more sensible topographic boundaries than the agency, straight-line boundaries. These National Forest and BLM lands include the rugged escarpments of Black Mountain and Blue Mountain that possess scenic qualities and ecological diversity in the highest portion of the proposed wilderness.

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## Beaver Creek Proposed Wilderness Area

Royal Gorge Field Office

July 1, 2006



**LEGEND:**

- Beaver Creek CWP
- USFS Public Lands
- BLM Public Lands
- State Lands
- Private Lands
- BLM WSA
- Highway
- Road
- Way
- Trail
- Intermittent Stream
- Perennial Stream/River

0 1 2 Miles

Prepared by Colorado Environmental Coalition