

Letter to New Mexico Federated Republican Women March 17, 2020
Re: M.H. Dutch Salmon Amendment to the Wild & Scenic River Act

In the past several years, New Mexico Senators Heinrich and Udall have conducted secret meetings to which only select stakeholders in the *Wild and Scenic River Act Amendment* were invited. The problem is, all residents of four counties in SW New Mexico are stakeholders, because this legislation will ruin the economy and cost hundreds of jobs. The amendment focuses on the Gila and San Francisco rivers Watershed, but also includes the Mimbres River and Las Animas Creek. The latter two are on the other side of the *Continental Divide*. The 200 to 400 miles of identified segments of these rivers are mostly within Wilderness, **so are already protected**.

Designated River corridors are at least one-half mile in width, because the *W&SR Act* states that they are measured one-quarter mile out on each side of the river from the high-water mark. Who decides where the high-water mark is? Most likely the Environmentalists, of course. One-half mile wide or more will include the best grazing and farming land. Ranchers, farmers, and miners will not be able to clean out their 'diversions' or irrigation structures, because sediment downstream will not be allowed. Rivers change course frequently and those with water rights must move their diversions and equipment to accommodate the change. Changes will not be allowed, so irrigation will likely come to an end.

This *W&SR Act* Amendment will begin kicking ranchers and farmers off river 'corridors' outside the Wilderness despite the Senators' promises to the contrary. Though their land may not be confiscated, property owners will not be able to stay in business, because use of their property and water rights will be severely restricted. If they cannot graze or farm their land, they will lose the lower agricultural tax rate and their taxes will go up.

Private property is no barrier to enforcing this Act and the resulting federal agency regulations. Also, river reaches and tributaries '*above and below*' designated segments will be affected. All it would take is for federal agents and managers to decide that something on private property is affecting or may affect the W&S segments and more mileage will be included in the regulated area.

The resulting required ***River Management Plan*** and its ***Plan Managers***, in addition to selective application of the *Endangered Species Act*, will have authority to restrict all commerce the entire length of named rivers and creeks and any tributaries connected to them **above or below** designated segments. Environmentalists recently tried to shutdown mines in Grant County and they still pursue this goal.

In my experience working for the U.S. Forest Service from 1977 to 2014, the agency often disregards established criteria and regulations when identifying wild and scenic rivers, and roadless or wilderness areas.

The cost of more regulations on public land will be high. Forest Service personnel will be required to prepare plans and enforce regulations, increasing their paperwork load, costing millions of dollars and continuing to keep them out of the woods and in their offices at their computers.

Environmentalists believe in **Preservation** – that living things and geology can remain in a constant, static condition. This is not possible, because all creation begins life, grows, ages, and dies. Even rocks are dynamic and change through wind and water action.

So, Preservation is not the answer - Conservation is. Forest Service policy is supposed to be based on Conservation, but with the influx of environmentalists among employees, it has changed to a **Preservationist ideology**. **The FS has pushed the *Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River* acts to back this false ideology and to keep traditional users off the land and authorize more restrictions on multiple uses. Currently, it is obvious that the U.S. Forest Service has chosen one preferred use – recreation.**

This W&SR Amendment and its resulting Management Plan and Plan Manager will likely pull thousands of acres out of production. I believe the mines are targeted and could be shut down. In my opinion, evidence shows our U.S. Senators and the U.S. Forest Service cannot be trusted. It is obvious they do not represent or respect their conservative constituents or those who traditionally work the land.

Information on this legislation can be obtained online at <https://www.tomudall.senate.gov/gila> , but take the information provided with a bucket of salt, because most of it is false. Please email or write to our New Mexico Senators (and any other U.S. Senator you can think of) and state your opposition to the *M.H. Dutch Salmon Wild and Scenic River Act Amendment*.

Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich

Email: gilacommentstomudall.senate.gov

Or There is no email for Heinrich

Write to: Gila Comments

Office of U.S. Senator Tom Udall
201 N. Church Street, Suite 201B
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Or

Senator Martin Heinrich
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510 **Or**
201 N Church St., Las Cruces, NM 88001

Or Call

Senator Udall: (202) 224-6621
(575) 526-5475

Or

Senator Heinrich: (202) 224-5521
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Also Contact NM Governor & Lt. Gov.

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
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Respectfully,

/s/ Candy Luhrsen

President

Grant County Federated Republican Women

NMFRW Member at Large