



Mimbres Local Farm and Livestock Bureau  
Mimbres, New Mexico

President Donald Trump  
Whitehouse  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C.

**Wild and Scenic Rivers Proposal**

Dear President Trump,

Senators Udall and Heinrich are making another land grab as large or larger than the earlier one they pushed in the Organ Mountains. They are putting forth legislation, the Dutch Salmon Bill, (written by *New Mexico Wild*, an environmental group) to declare portions of the Gila and San Francisco Rivers located in southwest New Mexico as *Wild and Scenic*. *Wild and Scenic Rivers* sound pretty and romantic but designating water courses as such is extremely bad for the economy, agriculture, logging, mining, ranching, and private property owners.

The Senators are claiming that their proposed amendment to the *W&SR Act* would not change any current use of private property and would only benefit the resource. THAT IS A BALD-FACED LIE! Once the segments of a river or stream are designated Wild and Scenic and a River Management Plan (RMP) is in place, the managers can regulate and rule however want.

They have commented publicly that all landowners and residents have been invited to meet with their aides. They have invited small groups of folks to attend meetings but have not invited the majority of landowners within the river corridors. They have also stated that the majority of affected landowners are in favor of this designation. Another blatant lie. The majority of landowners along the rivers and tributary corridors are not in favor of this proposal.

As a landowner within the proximity of the affected streams, I will attempt to attend and ask questions.

What we hear from *New Mexico Wild* and the Senators; tax bases will increase due to increased recreation/tourism. Truth is: there is no evidence that recreational tax dollars increase after Wild & Scenic River designation. The tax base will decrease due to lawsuits that will use *WSRA* to restrict ranching, farming, logging, and mining, resulting in job loss and business closures.

Environmental Organizations and elected Democrats have been trying to shut down copper mining in New Mexico for some time. Freeport-McMoran has a diversion dam on the Gila River. (Per mine environmental engineer Pam Pinson), should the mining corporation of Freeport McMoran enter their diversion for cleaning or maintenance resulting in silt and/or materials flowing downstream, the custodian of the RMP can determine silt is negatively affecting the endangered species or common fish and stop the work on the diversion, essentially shutting down the mine, eliminating jobs and tax base.

Per Pam Pinson, Mining Environmental Engineer, "*The mines oppose the Act for most of the reasons listed below, and it is my (Pam Pinson) understanding that the effect on our sites is limited to water usage and that related to the Gila, and not detrimental to operations from the Mimbres river segment. [Of] All of our drainages only confluence with the Mimbres in the dry (ephemeral) southern reach 30 plus miles [are] downstream of the targeted river reach. Freeport McMoran, Inc., is asking us as employees to provide comments though concerning this*



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*land grab, since it will affect us individually and our neighbors as stated below. I am hearing that it is a done deal despite opposition and that all we can comment on at this point that is helpful, is to push back on which segments will be included on the comment links. Its angering that the majority of residents (voters) are being ignored [so Democrats are able] to push state and national agendas.”*

The East Fork of the Mimbres River, McKnight Canyon, is designated on the maps. Since this reach is above the mines, I believe it could have a negative impact on the mines depending on the RMP.

The Gila National Forest Service has stated for years that 18 miles of river, outside the wilderness, **might** qualify for *WSRA* designation. The *Dutch Salmon Bill* (amendment to the *W&SA*) and maps are suggesting 200 plus miles should be designated. Since the Forest Service disagrees, the bill puts the Secretary of Interior in charge, meaning that BLM, National Park Service, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will write the River Management Plan and be in charge of decision making on projects above and below the designated portions of river, as opposed to the Gila National Forest, whose employees are more qualified.

The RMP will have a minimum flow requirement (CFM). Most of these rivers are ephemeral, meaning that they flow above ground in some areas and underground in others. Their flow is also affected by snowmelt and rainfall. If the minimum CFM is not met in times of drought, federal law will allow the RMP Custodian to stop upriver users from taking/using their legally owned water until CFM is again met. Should a drought continue, the Act does not reject condemning landowner water rights.

The Senators say that, *hiking trails will be improved*. Truth is: there is no ear-tagged funding for trail improvements due to *WSRA* implementation. The Forest Service will continue to close trails due to lack of funding. They also say, *Local government remains in control*. Truth is: *WSRA* over-lays federal law, taking control away from local and state government on all lands within the river corridor, and above and below designated rivers, thus increasing federal tax expenditures.

Over 42 local and state government agencies are opposed to *WSRA*. Over 6,000 miles of easements have been condemned due to *WSRA* nationwide. Local Forest Service disagrees with the extent of rivers being proposed. In response, Senators Udall and Heinrich shifted the RMP custodian to the Secretary of the Interior meaning U.S. Fish and Wildlife or Park Service, which will be in charge rather than the local Forest Service. With lawsuits stopping 14,000-acre feet of Arizona Water Service Area (AWSA) water, 70 million dollars of water flows into Arizona for their use. Additionally, the senators insist that there is no danger to existing water or land use. Truth is: a River Management Plan (RMP) will be written by a custodian under the Secretary of Interior. That RMP will dictate what may and may not be done on private lands above and below designated river segments.

The Senators also state that no changes to grazing allotment holders or forest timber cutting will occur. Truth is: the RMP will make all determinations on activities within the corridor. Should the RMP custodian determine that fencing, timber cutting, maintenance of cattle tanks and drinkers disrupt the intent of the *Act*, he has the authority to stop all those activities. Also, any



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special interest group may file lawsuits to stop those activities. (Note: water wells and drinkers in the forest are legal water rights owned by allotment holder in NM.)

This amendment will require that property owners must allow federal and public access to their private land within the Wild and Scenic Corridors. If federal agents or the public are injured while they are on private land, the landowner assumes all liability. It is the landowner who may be sued.

This amendment has the potential to change all of our lives and make the towns and cities of Grant County, NM, ghost towns.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Don Luhrsen*

Don Luhrsen  
President Mimbres Local Farm and Livestock Bureau  
P.O. Box 645  
Mimbres, NM 88049  
(575) 654-4884