



INDEPENDENCE PASS FOUNDATION

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June 11, 2006

**From: Mark Fuller, Director
Independence Pass Foundation
0238 Fawn Drive
Carbondale, Colorado 81623**

**To: The Keystone Center
ATTN: Roadless Areas Review
1628 Sts. John Road
Keystone, CO 80435**

Dear Sir or Madam

This is to express my support for maintaining the roadless quality of North Independent A and North Independent B Roadless Areas. As the Director of the Independence Pass Foundation, I probably spend more time in and adjacent to these areas over the course of the year than any other person. I either work or recreate in the Independence Pass corridor 80 or 90 days each year and I am intimately familiar with the outstanding natural qualities of these areas. They both contain outstanding wildlife habitat, spectacular scenery, unspoiled ecosystems that take in up to six separate life zones, and great opportunities for dispersed and non-motorized recreation. Every summer I see people skiing the slopes of Blue Peak, rock-climbing near the Grottoes, hiking the Lost Man Loop and picnicking along the Roaring Fork River and its many small tributaries. I have personally participated in all of these activities over the 37 years I have lived in the Roaring Fork Valley. I have observed dozens of species of birds and wildlife in these areas and I cannot conceive of their being managed in a way that would threaten or compromise their habitat value. I have led volunteer groups and inmate work crews on projects within these areas and I can personally attest to the benefits of those experiences for the participants. The roadless qualities of these areas are essential to maintaining a buffer zone between the heavily-travelled Highway 82 corridor and the Hunter-Fryingpan Wilderness to the north. To strip these areas of their roadless protections would open them to activities which could not possibly exceed the value that they have right now.

The Independence Pass Foundation has worked since 1989 to stabilize and revegetate the Highway 82 road corridor; to provide educational opportunities for local residents and visitors; to make recreational and safety improvements; and to preserve and restore the ecological integrity of the Independence Pass area. Roadless protection supports our mission and lack of roadless protection undermines our mission, so our preference for these areas and for any other areas adjacent to the Pass is clear. Moreover, we believe that roadless protection is an essential adjunct to wilderness area protection in that it buffers wilderness from the impacts of air pollution, light pollution, heavy and concentrated recreation use, and noise that would otherwise intrude into our most wild and isolated lands.

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In closing, I ask that the Task Force recommend full protection for these areas and for all of Colorado's Roadless Areas that have similar value.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Fuller', written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Mark Fuller, Director
Independence Pass Foundation