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CONCEPT PAPER

GREEN WOODS SOCIETY'S ROLE IN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Green Woods Society (GWS) works assertively nationwide with local partners in championing responsible energy development practices and countering industry encroachment on America's wild spaces. Building on GWS's strong track record of defending unique natural areas, GWS and the Wild Wonders Charitable Foundation now have the opportunity to make great progress against unprecedented industry threats to Colorado's wildlands, and to forge a strong voice for sustainable policies in the state. With a grant of \$200,000, GWS can intensify its leadership of local efforts in lobbying for administrative protections through land-use planning processes and organizing around issues of energy development in Colorado's high-sensitivity wild areas. The funds would additionally enable the Denver office to employ an Energy Communications Director to mount a new campaign for a comprehensive sustainable energy policy.

To ensure the safekeeping of remarkable natural places nationwide, GWS orchestrates public awareness and action campaigns, advances sensible energy policies, and lobbies to have vulnerable areas designated as protected public lands. GWS undertakes extensive scientific research to support its proposed policies. GIS analysis reveals the relatively minor amount of economically recoverable oil and gas on western federal lands. Other types of field research enable GWS to identify fragile areas particularly vulnerable to energy development. In Colorado, which contains five of these fragile sites, such lands are vulnerable to the state's increasing leniency with drilling permits, over 4,000 of which were issued last year. GWS cooperates with a network of local activists to challenge such worrying trends.

WORKING FOR CHANGE WITH GROUPS IN COLORADO

An integral aspect of GWS's work on energy issues in Colorado is collaboration with partner groups whose activism connects the larger GWS energy campaign to a powerful grassroots network of local advocates and concerned citizens. Notably, GWS provides active leadership on issues of land-use planning, working with groups such as Western Woods Club, Colorado Citizens Brigade, Colorado Earthworks Coalition, and others to respond to draft plans with targeted and well-researched technical comments. In addition, GWS helps partners implement corresponding media campaigns, advocacy, and legal activity around planning processes.

GWS displays its dedication to working with local groups through strategic leadership and sponsorship of the Central Mountain Conservation Alliance (CMCA) and active participation in the Rocky Ridges Energy Campaign (RREC). GWS and CMCA colleagues work hand-in-hand to challenge energy development on roadless and proposed Wilderness lands by writing protests to oil and gas lease sales, orchestrating media campaigns involving congressional supporters, and pursuing legal action. As a leader in the CMCA's Campaign for Roadless Areas, GWS takes

part in the Governor's Roadless Advisory Task Force to influence a pending petition for roadless areas. To further coordinate regional and national energy strategies, GWS also takes a prominent role in the RREC, participating in weekly calls to refine campaign directions and incorporate diverse allies, such as homeowners and local elected officials, into the larger campaign.

AN EYE ON KEY COLORADO PLACES/PLANNING PROCESSES IN THE NEXT YEAR

In the next year, GWS and its coalition of local allies will confront strong challenges from energy development interests to some of Colorado's most remarkable wild areas. This year will present key opportunities to push for Wilderness designations, and to counter the administration's challenge to the state's roadless areas. GWS will focus on wild areas – Clear Fork Divide, Grand Mesa Slopes, HD Mountains Roadless Area, Roan Plateau, and Vermillion Basin – and other vulnerable places such as the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. All are subject either to drilling proposals, pending revision of management plans, or the auction of roadless lands in lease sales. The Roan Plateau, Grand Mesa Slopes, and HD Mountain Area, for instance, are threatened by the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) recent proposal to open areas to gas drilling. At Clear Fork Divide, damage is already evident: the BLM's August 2006 lease sale saw 5,000 acres of the area's roadless land auctioned off.

GWS will participate in several BLM planning processes that will impact the future of these and other proposed Wilderness areas. The fate of Vermillion Basin hangs on the pending revision of the BLM's Little Snake Recreation Area management plan. The San Juan National Forest plan revision may settle the question of coal-bed methane development there. Seven other plan revisions and amendments will need monitoring and input in the next year to limit damaging exploitation. Upcoming resource management plans that GWS will monitor involve such key areas as Roan Plateau, White River Recreation Area, joint Glenwood Springs/Kremmling Recreation Areas, and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

THE NEED FOR AN ENERGY COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

The multiple challenges currently confronting Colorado on the issue of energy development put the state at the forefront of national discussions on the stewardship of our wild lands. The GWS Denver Office is thus uniquely positioned to impact debate and decision-making around this issue in Colorado, the Four Corners region, and the nation. In the next year the office will focus on developing a comprehensive "Sustainable World Energy" policy that will combine GWS's conservation work with policies on energy conservation, sustainability, and efficiency to draw wide public support to a prudent, long-term energy management vision for the region. Mounting an integrated energy communications campaign around this policy will allow GWS to build on its excellent track record as a leader in the field of responsible energy development to become the recognized, credible public face for sustainability in the future. The office hopes to bring on a dedicated Energy Communications Director who will spearhead this effort by engaging with media, elected officials, and the general public. The campaign will promote GWS's policy as a viable alternative, and position GWS as a leader in shaping future energy policy, both in Colorado and on a national level.