

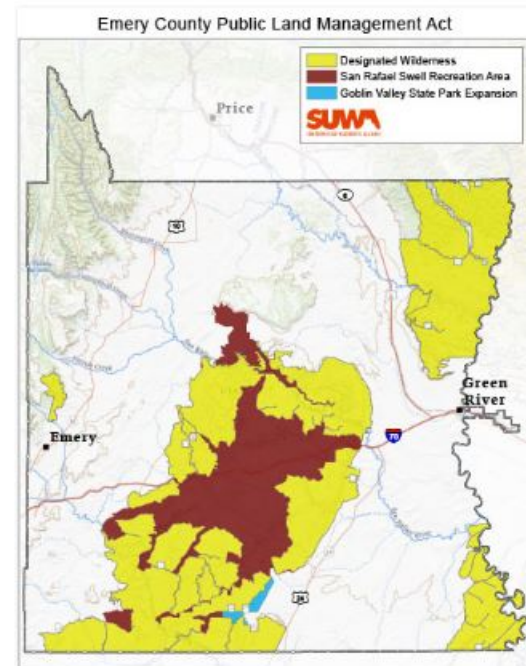
On February 12, 2019, the Emery County Public Land Management Act passed the U.S. Senate as part of S. 47, the Natural Resources Management Act. The bill now goes to the U.S. House of Representatives for consideration.



>> [More photos of lands protected as wilderness by the Emery County Act \(royalty-free\)](#)

The Emery County Public Land Management Act:

- **Protects 663,000 acres of public land as designated wilderness,** including:
  - **Protecting almost 208,000 acres of the Muddy Creek region as wilderness.** This includes virtually all of the southern portion of the San Rafael Swell being designated wilderness.
  - **Protecting more than 172,000 acres of Desolation Canyon as wilderness.** This includes all public lands bordering the western side of the canyon in Emery County, from the Carbon County boundary in the north to the community of Green River in the south.
  - **Protecting nearly 55,000 acres of Labyrinth Canyon as wilderness.** This includes the entire western side of the canyon, running along 49 miles of the Green River from Red Wash to Canyonlands National Park. Cherry-stemmed motorized routes are closed 1/4 mile (at a minimum) from the canyon rim to ensure preservation of wilderness values, and



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the area is permanently protected from illegal mountain bike trail development.

- **Protects Labyrinth Canyon, Muddy Creek, Desolation Canyon, and the San Rafael Swell from additional motorized vehicle route designations**, and ensures currently-closed but highly-sought-after off-road vehicle routes stay that way.
- **Establishes wilderness along the western half of Emery County's boundary with Wayne County, and establishes wilderness along the entirety of Labyrinth Canyon bordering Grand County.** These boundaries will help in establishing contiguous wilderness areas in these two counties in the future.
- **Designates 63 miles of the Green River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.** This includes more than 13 miles of Desolation Canyon as either "wild" or "recreational," and more than 49 miles of Labyrinth Canyon as "scenic."
- **Designates the nearly 217,000-acre San Rafael Swell Recreation Area**, which will be withdrawn from new mining claims and mineral leasing, and is closed to the construction of new off-road vehicle routes and trails. The 2017 settlement agreement reached between conservation organizations, off-road vehicle groups, and the Trump administration over BLM's illegal 2008 travel plan will remain in place, requiring BLM to complete a new off-road vehicle plan for this area in the near future.
- **Facilitates a federal-state land exchange** that, once completed, will add 64,000 acres of designated wilderness. Trading out scattered Utah trust (SITLA) lands and consolidating them in less sensitive areas will ensure that these wild places are protected from future development.
- **Allows SUWA to continue fighting tirelessly for America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA) lands in Emery County** that were not designated wilderness as part of the bill. Those lands will continue to be included in ARRWA as introduced in Congress.

As this bill was a compromise, SUWA didn't get everything that we wanted. On the negative side of the ledger, approximately 17,500 acres of Wilderness Study Areas will be released back to multiple-use BLM management, with a portion potentially allowing for the expansion of a coal mine in the western Book Cliffs. The bill also conveys approximately 6,200 acres of federal land to the State of Utah for an expansion of Goblin Valley State Park.