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## CPA questionnaire response indicates: Three of five Assembly candidates oppose closure, restrictions for multi-use lands

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Three of five Nevada Assembly candidates from Districts 38 and 39 would oppose moves to close or restrict access to multi-use public lands within their districts, according to responses to Candidate Questionnaires from the public advocacy group Coalition for Public Access which has actively battled suggested lands bill and wilderness proposals in a continuing effort to keep the state's public lands open for multiple use in Lyon, Mineral and other Nevada counties.

And, incumbent James Settelmeyer from District 39 and Gardnerville has actively taken that stance in earlier 2008 public meetings but in this case did not respond to the CPA questionnaire.

Most of the five candidates also said they see no need for the idea that a lands bill must contain a wilderness component. One Douglas candidate goes so far as to charge the BLM and Forest Service with harassment and labels wilderness areas "a ruse".

The lone candidate who did not take a firm stance in opposition to such action is Jo Etta Brown, challenger for the District 39 seat. In response to that specific question, Brown responded, "First it would be important to know why such action is being taken by the USFS or the BLM.

However, Brown did add that she believes "it is important for the public to have access to multi-use public lands."

Brown also differed with the other candidates when she said, "Yes, I do support the idea that land bills should contain a wilderness component when feasible.

District 38 incumbent Tom Grady (R) said he feels "our congressional delegation seems to often be on a different agenda than our local residents. We must continue to push for local generation of ideas, local input and county approval for any transfers" (of public lands).

Grady also said a wilderness component requirement for any lands bill "is not necessary".

Challenger Steven J. Dalton says he disagrees with the premise of the argument that federal agencies (Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management) can move to close or restrict access to public lands and adds, "I will oppose most moves by the USFS and BLM to limit access to public lands, but I understand there will be times when measures must be taken."

Dalton said he would "not particularly" support the wilderness requirement for a lands bill.

James Settelmeyer of District 39 (Douglas County) failed to submit a response to the questionnaire, but a return receipt indicated he had received it.

And, the second District 39 challenger David Schuman said he has "watched the BLM and USFS harass and destroy ranchers" and he doesn't feel "the land is theirs to close off" when it comes to such actions by federal agencies. "None of the states east of Colorado are occupied by the Feds. In those states the Feds only acquire land by getting the permission of the legislature."

When it comes to any wilderness requirement for a lands bill, Schuman was even stronger, saying, "I believe that the Federal Government has no right to occupy any land in Nevada except that which it buys with the permission of the State Legislature"». Wilderness areas are a ruse to keep humans out."

## 8 Commission Questions

This is the second in a series of pre-election stories as the CPA presents candidate responses for voter consideration. The CPA chose not to endorse any candidate but to try to educate the public via this process.

### COALITION FOR PUBLIC ACCESS

#### QUESTIONNAIRE TO CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

1. Given the fact that all lands bills (both enacted and withdrawn) have contained a transfer of public lands to the counties, can you visualize alternative means through which counties might achieve the same objectives? Are there public lands within your district that you would like to see transferred from the Federal government to a county within your district or put up for sale to the public? How important is it for counties to obtain Federal lands? Please discuss your answer.

2. The Nevada Congressional delegation has often described lands bills as a "win-win" situation for all concerned, yet the majority of residents in rural counties do not appear to agree with this. What is your view? Please explain.

3. If the U. S. Forest Service (USFS) or the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) moved to close or restrict access to multi-use public lands within your district that are under their administrative jurisdiction, would you oppose such an action? Please explain your answer.

4. The historical average for the transfer of public lands via lands bills in White Pine and Lincoln Counties was one acre for every seventy given over to wilderness. Is 1:70 a fair exchange ratio for counties?

5. Given the actions taken in 2008 by Lyon, Mineral, and Esmeralda Counties with regard to lands bills, would you encourage meetings between wilderness/restricted access organizations and open access advocacy groups in order to reach accord on future wilderness goals? Would you be willing to facilitate these through your personal participation?

6. Do you support incorporating multi-use public lands in to wilderness even when these lands have been determined by the appropriate Federal agency to not meet the established criteria for wilderness contained in the 1964 Wilderness Act? Should the criteria for designating areas as wilderness be relaxed? Please discuss.

7. How do you see the designation of wilderness areas in Nevada affecting economic development? Do you view increasing the size of wilderness areas in the state as increasing Nevada's economic health? If so, how? With regard to solar, geothermal, and wind energy projects, will increasing the amount of wilderness have any effect on their development?

8. Do you support the idea that a lands bill must contain a wilderness component? Please discuss.

Grady: Do not relax criteria

District 38 incumbent Tom Grady's complete responses appear below:

1. The Bureau of Land Management has programs other than "Lands Bills" to withdraw public lands in conjunction with local governments like the county commissioners. Lyon County has used these methods in the past. I will continue to work with Lyon County and other local governments to assist where needed on these programs.

2. Our Congressional Delegation seems to often be on a different agenda than our local residents. This is sometimes caused by outside pressures from "special interest groups". We must continue to push for local generation of ideas, local input and county approval for any transfers.

3. Yes, I would oppose such action by federal agencies. The public must be afforded the full, open public meeting process -- one with the full meaning of the law and not just a meaningless, poorly publicized public meeting.

4. I am not personally aware of a 1:70 ratio for counties, but any such ratio seems awfully lopsided.

5. I was involved in the recent hearings and you can count on me to continue to be involved when any meetings involve my constituents.

6. I do not support the incorporation of multi-use lands into wilderness if they do not meet established criteria. I would say "NO" to relaxing the criteria.

7. I believe that each and every area must be carefully reviewed on its own merits. Once again, local government involvement and support as well as public input are imperative. Multi-use is healthy for our economy and should be encouraged. Reasonable guidelines must be established to protect the users and the land.

8. It is not necessary. The first Lyon County lands bill was for "public purpose". It addressed very beneficial needs and reasonable requests. The "Wilderness" provisions were added by our Congressional Delegation. When dealing with the Federal Government, you must be careful what you ask for. You may get more than you wanted, and not always from a positive angle.

Dalton: No back door financing

Steven J. Dalton is the Democratic challenger in District 38 for the Nevada Assembly. His responses include:

1. I personally know of no other ways to transfer lands, but that doesn't mean they don't exist. I would be willing to listen to proposals and fresh ideas.

Lyon, Storey, Carson and Churchill all have public lands, and I would honestly like to see all of it transferred to the respective county or sold to private hands.

Counties in Nevada lose vast amounts of potential resources to support the counties because the federal government owns the land. The money we get from the feds to offset that loss is less than what we could be getting for it in private hands. It also shouldn't take an act of congress for Lyon County school district to acquire land for new schools.

Crucial

2. I'm not going to side with the congressional delegation on this issue in that I am unfamiliar with all the lands bills in the past. Although I will work with all entities involved to get and keep as much access to federal lands as possible, I disagree with the premise of the argument to begin with.

3. I will oppose most moves by the USFS and BLM to limit access to public lands, but I understand there will be times when measures must be taken. Those should be very few and provide significant evidence to the need and goals of limiting that access. I say again, VERY FEW!

4. Land transfer bills to cash strapped counties should not be a back door way to turn lands into wilderness areas. By a 1:70 ratio, a county in need of a new high school could end up having nearly 4200 acres turned over to wilderness area by requesting 60 acres to build a new school. It doesn't make a great deal of sense to me, but I am willing to listen to all sides regarding their intent and goals in land transfer issues.

5. I would encourage and work to facilitate meetings between both sides of contentious issues in my district. I see one of the roles of a legislator to be a leader in their district, not by thinking they have all the answers, but by facilitating discussion and compromise, listening to all parties involved, and working to ensure the citizens have equal access to the debate and information.

6. If a region of land does not meet the federally required criteria, the government should not be allowed to alter those requirements midstride without the legislative branch's involvement. I don't personally know the specifics of the actual 1964 act, but I have seen very little that makes me think what is happening with wilderness areas is a particularly grand plan.

7. If a wilderness area designation prevents the rural counties from working to establish geothermal, solar and wind capacity, I am fully against it. Period. Nevada stands at the forefront of energy availability and stands to gain much in the coming decades if we can transition our economy to a power exporter of renewable energies. It would provide a revenue stream to cash strapped rural counties and could provide a stable income structure to the state. It would provide short-term economic growth in the construction of the infrastructure, and long term sustainability by providing jobs to those counties.

8. Not particularly. I do look forward to this discussion that is obviously a contentious issue.

Settelmeyer: No response

The Coalition for Public Access mailed separate questionnaires for commissioner candidates in Lyon and Douglas counties and required a returned receipt in each case to track receipt and participation. Incumbent James Settelmeyer did not respond, but did receive the questionnaire.

Brown: Review Wilderness Act

Jo Etta Brown, District 39 assembly candidate, provided the following responses:

1. At least 80% of Nevada's land is still owned by the Federal government. It is important that the sale or transfer of land to counties or other entities be handled in manner that protects all involved. The use of profit from the sale of Federal land at the state level allows for money to be distributed as needed. There could be a method whereby counties would be allowed to participate in the bidding process for the sale of Federal land.

2. There needs to be more information to the public about how the transactions for the sale of Federal land is handled especially in rural counties. Any money that is made available to counties from the sale should be made public knowledge.

3. First it would important to know why such action is being taken by the USFS or the BLM. I believe it is important for the public to have access to multi-use public lands.

4. Each county should have the authority to determine a ratio for a fair exchange of land within their jurisdiction.

5. Yes, I would encourage discussions between wilderness/restricted access organizations and open access advocacy groups and I would be willing to facilitate these discussions. It is very important that groups come together to problem solve and build a strategy for the future that is beneficial for all concerned.

6. It is probably time to review the existing 1964 Wilderness Act to see if it fits the needs of the 21st Century. Acts and laws that are not reviewed over time limit the ability to make necessary changes. If such a review determines that the current Act does meet the needs for designating wilderness areas then we should find ways to continue to work within the guidelines.

7. Renewable energy projects could be limited if not allowed in wilderness areas. Geo-thermal production seems to be in remote and isolated areas this could cause a problem. Nevada must move into the Renewable Energy arena, we are often referred to as the sunshine state. Yet, solar continues

to be used on a limited basis. I fully support building green which will boost jobs and the economy, improving the environment. Nevada can become energy self-sufficient so we aren't at the mercy of oil companies and foreign oil providers.

8. Yes, I do support the idea that land bills should contain a wilderness component when feasible.

Schuman: Wilderness is a ruse

David Schuman is also challenging for the District 39 Assembly seat. His responses appear below:

1. The fact is that the Federal Government has no right to ANY land in Nevada except that which it acquires by following the steps laid out in Art. 1 Sect. 8 Clause 17 of the U.S. Constitution. This was affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in Pollard v. Hagan, 44 U.S. 212(1845). The Nevada Policy Research Institute published a paper by Charles Barr which explains that when Nevada was granted statehood, the Congress held on to the land in order to sell it and pay off the Civil War debt. The Civil War ended in 1865. One of the reasons I'm running is to bring this to the attention of the public AND state officeholders.

2. I have watched the BLM and USFS harass and destroy ranchers for the last 7 years. In my opinion we need to get the Federal Government off of all land it hasn't legally purchased.

3. Yes. The land is not theirs to close off. None of the states east of Colorado are occupied by the Feds. In those states the Feds only acquire land by getting the permission of the legislature.

4. Again, all of the "unowned and waste land" in Nevada belongs to the state. In those states east of Colorado, the state grants most of that land to the various county governments. States like Pennsylvania do have State Forests in areas which are particularly scenic, but most such land goes to the counties.

5. I would be willing to help by explaining the law which requires the Feds to seek state approval before acquiring any land. This needs to get out to the public AND state officeholders.

6. I was a member of the Jarbidge Shovel Brigade which sought and got a Federal Court order allowing us to use the Jarbidge road for vehicle traffic. We then went up the road to the spot where the feds had dumped several tons of small rocks and cleaned those rocks off the road. "Wilderness areas" are a ruse to keep humans out.

7. The Federal Land Stranglehold documents how federal occupation has severely damaged the economy of Nevada. I strongly believe that federal occupation of Nevada damages the state.

8. I believe that the Federal Government has no right to occupy any land in Nevada except that which it buys with the permission of the State Legislature. Please read Pollard v. Hagen

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