

PCEOC Newsletter

July 2008

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Welcome the July PCEOC newsletter. As the summer of 2008 moves on, we want to once again take time to thank all of you who have been so gracious with your support. This battle is far from over and as a community, southeastern Colorado will have to stick together to preserve our economy and way of life. Please look for our booths at the Colorado State Fair, Arkansas Valley Fair, and various other community functions this summer, please stop by and pick up a new bumper sticker, a brochure, make a donation, or just say hi. Also, we would appreciate volunteers who would be willing to fill a time slot operating a booth.

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PCEOC Response to Army's Latest Maneuver

Army Secretary Keith Eastin all but promises to be back in 15 to 20 years to acquire more land, after the proposed 100,000 – 414,000 acres are acquired.

There have been some rather important recent developments in the PCMS battle. These developments are as reported in the two Pueblo Chieftain articles included in this newsletter, *Army offers to scale back Pinon Canyon expansion* and *Army Wants to Speed up Pinon Canyon Land Buy*. The PCEOC wants to make it clear that our position is no expansion and no funding for expansion, regardless of the acreage. The Army as failed to make its case time and time again; confusing need and want.

- Do not believe their promises of economic stimulation, this promise has been made and broken in the past.
- Army Assistant Secretary Keith Eastin all but promises to be back in 15 to 20 years to acquire more land.
- Complete disregard for the Federal no-funding legislation.
- Complete disregard for Colorado's HB1069, signed by Governor Ritter last year.
- Complete disregard for the upcoming GAO report required by Federal legislation.

Army offers to scale back Pinon Canyon expansion

It was just last March that Army officials hinted they were willing to chop back their controversial plan to expand the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site to just 100,000 acres - only a quarter of the 414,000 acres they have been requesting. The Pentagon confirmed that adjustment in a statement Tuesday, which quoted Army Assistant Secretary Keith Eastin saying the smaller request is a recommendation contained in a report that is being delivered to Congress this week.

By Peter Roper in the Pueblo Chieftain on-line 7/16/2008

<http://www.chieftain.com/articles/2008/07/16/news/local/doc487df2d5278f3260918373.txt>

Army Wants to Speed up Pinon Canyon Land Buy

The Army is speeding up its campaign to expand the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site by 100,000 acres by beginning to discuss land purchases with ranchers and landowners, despite a congressional funding ban on the expansion this year. Army Assistant Secretary Keith Eastin said the Army wants to get the additional land appraised and purchased quickly — within two or three years — and from "willing sellers." Eastin said the Army has the money in its budget for that outreach and land negotiations despite a current ban on the expansion that was written into the 2008 federal budget by Sen. Ken Salazar and his brother, Rep. John Salazar, along with Rep. Marilyn Musgrave.

By Peter Roper in the Pueblo Chieftain on-line 7/17/2008

http://www.chieftain.com/articles/2008/07/17/news/breaking_news/doc487f88f5e4d10571608525.txt

Key landowner softens opposition on selling to Army

The Army's gamble to defy Congress and try to acquire 100,000 acres south of the current Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site hinges on one landowner, Denver businessman Craig Walker, owner of the 80,000-acre River Canyon Ranch directly south of the Army training area.

By Peter Roper in the Pueblo Chieftain on-line 7/19/2008

<http://www.chieftain.com/articles/2008/07/19/news/local/doc48817264d23e6023820582.txt>

History Corner

Editors Note: The following are direct quotes from a La Junta Tribune Democrat article on ***Friday, August 17, 1979***. The issues and arguments are eerily familiar, with those opposed citing economic, ecological, historical, and way-of-life concerns, and with the army trying to sooth concerns with the 'more studies' platitude. The article even quotes a well meaning rancher who makes the classic logical fallacy of a false dilemma, stating that he opposes the creation of PCMS, but if he has to have an army as a neighbor, he would rather have an American army than a foreign one.

"Eighteen speakers pulled no punches in saying they didn't want the army to acquire any land for maneuvers in southeastern Colorado. All spoke at a hearing Thursday at the municipal building in La Junta. One after another they drew increasing applause. They talked for over two hours. They talked of archeology, geology and ecology. They talked of fragile grass of dust and dollars the crowd of nearly 100 who listened to the speakers were all but saying "amen" as speaker after speaker said, "I'm totally opposed"."

"Lt. Colonel Don Safford, an ex-paratrooper now heading the Ft. Carson Land Acquisition Committee, conducted Wednesday's hearing. At times he must have felt like he'd dropped in on a meeting in the Kremlin rather than the La Junta Municipal building, but the colonel kept his cool, answered questions when he had answers and agreed repeatedly that lots more study needs to be made before final decisions are made."

Anything sound familiar?

U.S. Secretary of Defense Gates Questions Military's Focus

Generals need to stop worrying about the next war and fight the one they've already got, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said at The Broadmoor hotel Tuesday.

Gates lamented military policies that have left barracks rotting while investing lavishly on high-tech weapons that aren't useful in Iraq and Afghanistan. Speaking at a forum sponsored by the conservative Heritage Foundation, the secretary said Cold War style conflicts are firmly a thing of the past and the military must focus on fighting insurgencies.

"It's hard to conceive of any country confronting the U.S. in conventional terms," he said.

By Tom Roeder in the Colorado Springs Gazette

<http://www.pinoncanyon.com/documents/GatesFocus5-14-08.pdf>

La Junta High School's Andrea Leininger wins the PCEOC essay contest

Andrea Leininger won the recent 750-word essay contest that was open to high school junior and seniors. Her reward was a \$500.00 scholarship. Garrett Schlegel won the second place prize of an i-pod. The PCEOC would like to extend its gratitude to all of the young people who entered the contest. Please click on the following link to read Andrea's essay in its entirety.

Our Land is Our Life Essay Entry by Andrea Leininger:

"So what does the land signify, what does it mean to you? This question has been asked of ranchers nonstop for the past few years, ever since it was made known that the Army wanted to expand their Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site. And every time, we answer, "It's our life.""

<http://www.pinoncanyon.com/scholarship.html>

Any sense? - Funding Ban Editorial Published in the Pueblo Chieftain

A ban once again blocking the Army from spending any money to expand the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site has been included in a new defense appropriations bill being considered by the House of Representatives.

The ban was instituted for the current fiscal year budget in an amendment sponsored last year by Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Colo., and co-sponsored by Rep. John Salazar, D-Colo. This year, at Rep. Salazar's behest, the ban has been included in the main language of the legislation.

Certainly the Army has not done a good job explaining what it contends is its need for a larger tract of maneuver space. Obviously, such expansion would take considerable cattle grazing land out of production. That could be extremely harmful to La Junta, which is the second largest cattle market in the nation after Oklahoma City, and to the economy of the entire Lower Arkansas Valley.

Another piece of legislation approved last year requires the Army to justify in detail why it needs to acquire more land at Pinon Canyon and why it cannot train elsewhere.

The problem is, such reports are difficult for civilians to evaluate. Most of us don't know whether an argument by the Army actually provides real justification for its position.

A committee of military and civilian experts already has found that Fort Carson could integrate five additional brigades with or without more land.

Does it make sense to further damage the land and economy of the Lower Arkansas Valley when the Army can do its training elsewhere?

Pueblo Chieftain on-line Editorial 6/16/2008

‘Save our State’ Public Meeting Held May 10th, in La Junta

There was a public meeting held on May 10th, 2008, at the Otero Jr. College Humanities Center in La Junta, Colorado. Speakers included rancher and board member Grady Grissom; Corwin Brown, rancher, board member, real estate broker/appraiser; Mack Loudon, rancher, Not 1 More Acre board member; Kevin Karney, rancher, board member, and Otero County Commissioner; and Lon Robertson, rancher, board member, and small business owner.

Two speakers of special note included Patty Brady and Pueblo County Commissioner Jeff Chostner. Patty is a Durango resident whose family was displaced and whose land was taken by the military during the creation of White Sands Missile Range. For decades, the military promised to return much of the land back to the rancher; making that promise every few years, and then breaking it with claims of additional training needs. These families have been kept in limbo for decades, hoping that someday the military will return their land. The sacrifice and heart break of Patty’s family is one of the great untold stories in the history of this country.

A wonderful speaker and retired Air Force officer, Jeff Chostner has been a great friend and ally to the people of southeastern Colorado. It would be greatly appreciated if you would extend a big thank-you to Jeff for all of his support.

The meeting also included videos, refreshments, and a discussion session.

Artists participate in art-outings to support the PCEOC

Area artists visited ranches that are potential targets for the Army’s proposed expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. The outings were held at the ranches of Tony and Connie Hass; Cathy Mullins; and Steve and Joy Wooten. These locations included beautiful canyons and pools, petroglyphs, evidence of the Santa Fe Trail, the 19th century stone structures which served as the headquarters of the Bloom Land and Cattle Company, and the location of a helium station which supplied gas for blimps in the 1920s. Also visited was the historic headquarters of the Diamond A Cattle Company. The locations visited along the Purgatoire River includes some of the most beautiful and dramatic landscapes in Southeastern Colorado.

New billboards have been placed on I-25

There are six new tractor-trailer size billboards sited on I-25 in Southern Colorado; located between Pueblo and Trinidad. The PCEOC would like to thank all of the supporters who made this possible, including the site landowners.

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs017/1101682860186/archive/1102103664391.html>

U.S. Rep. Doug Lamborn blasts expansion opposition supporters

U.S. Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-Colorado Springs) accuses those against the expansion of having “*negligent disregard for the personal safety of our troops*”

Canyon expansion opens rift in Colorado

Colorado lawmakers are feuding over a plan to transform hundreds of miles of arid grassland into an expanded training facility for the U.S. Army.

The fight over the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site pits a freshman Republican against one of his top benefactors. It puts strong supporters of the military at odds with the Pentagon. And it has the Salazar brothers - Sen. Ken Salazar and Rep. John T. Salazar, both Democrats - divided about the right path forward.

By: Patrick O'Connor, POLITICO, June 23, 2008

<http://www.pinoncanyon.com/newsletter/politico.pdf>

PCEOC Historical Survey of Expansion Area

The Pinon Canyon Expansion Opposition Coalition and local ranchers have worked with respected professionals to undertake several important surveys to document the wealth of resources that will be affected by any expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. In 2007 a biological survey of the Purgatoire River Region was begun, and in early summer 2008 an independent Cultural Resources Survey of the Purgatoire River Region was begun. Funded through grants and private donations, this survey will encompass southern Otero County, Eastern Las Animas County, and areas of Huerfano and Pueblo County. The region is home to many important historic and cultural resources, including: the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail; significant rock art; early Native American archaeological sites; as well as campsites, stage stops, homesteads, cemeteries and ranches. These sites have been protected by the ranchers of Southeastern Colorado for generations, and many are in a remarkable state of preservation.

Please read more at: <http://www.pinoncanyon.com/documents/HistoricalSurvey.pdf>

Current Events and Volunteer Opportunities

The PCEOC can always use volunteers to run booths at public events such as the Colorado State Fair, the Arkansas Valley Fair, etc. Please contact the PCEOC to offer your services. The following link will take you to a calendar of upcoming PCEOC events, or other events in which the coalition plans be involved with, to have a booth, or some other presence. Volunteers would be very, very helpful at many of these events. Please contact the PCEOC if you would like to offer your services.

<http://www.pinoncanyon.com/events.html>