

PCEOC Newsletter

September 2008

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"The humblest citizen in all the land, when clad in the armor of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of error."

William Jennings Bryan 1896

Thank you for taking the time to read the September 2008 PCEOC Newsletter. There are currently two major points that seem to be the source of some confusion. These points revolve around the idea of willing sellers/private property rights, and the Army's willingness to 'settle' for 100,000 acres. People opposing the expansion feel that private property owners should be allowed to manage their land as they see fit, including selling it to a private sector entity, if they so choose. What Southeastern Colorado and the PCEOC are opposed to is this government agency, the U.S. Army, being a purchaser. This is a very, very, important distinction, one that our own Senator Wayne Allard, and some media outlets, seem to be missing. A government agency or department has no automatic right to purchase land and remove it from the private sector. The Army, despite their claims, has not come close to adequately justifying the expansion of the PCMS. Also, and to the second point of confusion, by the Army's own admission, the 100,000 acres is just a start. They will be back for much, much more in future years.

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Purchase a piece of Southeastern Colorado and help support the PCEOC!

For \$10.00 you can become a Southeastern Colorado landowner and support the PCEOC! An acre of land has been donated and is being sold by the square inch. Purchasers will receive a legal deed to the property. The property is located on the historic Circle Diamond Ranch once occupied by 19th century cattle baron Frank Bloom and is located near Thatcher, Colorado along the historic Santa Fe Trail. The actual acre is across Highway 350 from the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site.

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

The Army's expansion justification report and the PCEOC response

Your chance to voice your opinion and help stop this expansion.

The Department of the Army was required by the National Defense Authorization Act, Section 2831 to create a report, justifying the proposed expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. This report has been issued by the Army; and in the opinion of the PCEOC, the report unquestionably fails to justify any expansion of the PCMS. The PCEOC has issued a response to the Army's report. We strongly recommend that anyone who is interested in the future of Southeastern Colorado take the time to read the PCEOC response. This report contains a great deal of useful information on this issue. Also, the Army is required to accept public comments regarding their report. *It is very important that those opposed to the expansion submit comments. Your efforts in this regard would be very much appreciated and will play a very important role in stopping this expansion. The deadline for public comments is November 15, 2008.*

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

House budget Bill includes Pinon Canyon moratorium

Faced with the need to bail out Wall Street as well as a hard-fought national election, Congress is quickly passing a massive \$660 billion budget for 2009 that includes Colorado provisions, such as extending the ban on the Army spending any money next year to acquire land around the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site northeast of Trinidad.

By Peter Roper - The Pueblo Chieftain

September 25, 2008

<http://www.chieftain.com/articles/2008/09/25/news/local/doc48db3ccd92d13365635797.txt>

Three Cheers for Marilyn Musgrave and John Salazar!

Legislative Champions for Southeast Colorado secure another year's prohibition on any Pinon Canyon expansion - saying that Army efforts to move forward with expansion related activities are premature at best.

Congressman John Salazar and Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave, in separate actions, each successfully pressed for the passage of the 2009 spending ban. In a September 22nd press release Representative Musgrave advised of a letter she wrote pushing for inclusion of language prohibiting spending on PCMS expansion. In a September 24th press release Representative John Salazar announced the successful inclusion in the FY09 Continuing Resolution.

In her letter to leadership Congresswoman Musgrave wrote in part: "As the House and Senate work to pass appropriations measures for FY2009, I respectfully request that you include language prohibiting funding for the purpose of expansion at the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site (PCMS) in southeast Colorado. The House already passed this language in Section 127 of the FY2009 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act and I urge you to ensure its inclusion in whichever measure is considered by the House and Senate for vote."

In his press release of September 24th, Congressman Salazar stated: "Southern Colorado can breathe a deep sigh of relief knowing the time out on expansion will continue through 2009. I am proud of my colleagues for standing up for rural America and Colorado farmers and ranchers. We've set up a process and are currently awaiting a GAO review of the Army's proposal from this summer and until that is complete it is premature to move forward."

Be sure to let them know how much we appreciate their standing up for us. Call, tell others to call, and thank:

Representative Marilyn Musgrave at 202 225-4676 (DC) or 719 456-0925 (Colorado)

Representative John Salazar at 202 225-4761 (DC) or 719 543-8200 (Colorado)

The Pueblo Chieftain's Editorial page supports the Moratorium.

WE WERE pleased to learn that the continuing resolution wending its way through Congress includes an extension of the moratorium on the Army spending any money next year to acquire land around the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site northeast of Trinidad.

By the Pueblo Chieftain

September 28, 2008

<http://www.chieftain.com/articles/2008/09/28/editorial/doc48ded7afa0aa5511021239.txt>

Ranchers walk out on Army official in Trinidad

TRINIDAD, Colo. -- Ranchers packed a pair of meetings here today as the Army's charm offensive for expansion of the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site sputtered in the face of stiff opposition. Army Undersecretary Keith Eastin got to see signs more apparent of the hard road ahead than the billboards along the interstate from Fort Carson to Trinidad opposing the service's plan to add 100,000 acres to its 235,000-acre training area 150 miles southeast of Colorado Springs.

By Tom Roeder – The Colorado Springs Gazette

August 6, 2008

<http://www.pinoncanyon.com/documents/walkout.doc>

Who Owns The West?

The federal government owns almost 40% of the State of Colorado. Federal ownership of land can be very appropriate in many cases; however, how much more land do they actually need? Please follow the link to access a map illustrating the amount of federally owned land in the West.

<http://www.pinoncanyon.com/documents/FedLand.pdf>

Not one more acre in Pinon Canyon – Denver Post Guest Commentary

So, years after the Pentagon's plans to massively expand the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site in southeastern Colorado became public knowledge, Keith Eastin turned up in Trinidad last month to "open dialogue" with the local community. He was touting the latest in a long line of expansion plans - in this one, the Army has temporarily scaled back its request for 418,000 acres of our native grasslands to "just" 100,000 acres and apparently believes it has a willing seller for nearly all of that despite a funding ban.

By Toyleen and Mack Loudon - Not 1 More Acre!

September 23, 2008

<http://www.pinoncanyon.com/documents/PostGuestComment.doc>

Army loopholes vs. tough ranchers

For the past several years I've been following the Army's proposal to expand their maneuver site at the historic Pinon Canyon in southeastern Colorado from 236,000 acres to more than 418,000 acres. The more I read and the more I drive through the southern part of this stunning landscape, the more dismayed I am about the state of our nation and the values that govern it.

By Michelle LeBlanc - The Valley Courier

Posted: Wednesday, Aug 20th, 2008

<http://www.pinoncanyon.com/documents/ValleyCourier.doc>

Summary of the PCEOC position and Brochure

For a summary of the PCEOC position and to print out brochures to distribute to your friends, family, and business associates, please click on the following link.

<http://www.pinoncanyon.com/Brochure/HighStakes.pdf>

History Corner

The following information is from the U.S. Army's Draft EIS (Environmental Impact Study) submitted during the creation of the PCMS. The EIS was/is done as part of the required processes the Army must go through when acquiring land.

From the Gazette Telegraph, June 3, 1980:

It lists annual loss of the value of cow-calf production for the two areas to be between \$880,000 and \$1.4 million, with Las Animas and Otero Counties to lose approximately 67 jobs in agricultural supply and support businesses.

Editor's note: Over the last thirty years, there has been a considerable amount of lost economic opportunities for Southeastern Colorado because of the creation of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. Once again the people of Southeastern Colorado are being asked to sacrifice their economy and culture for what El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs see as an economic insurance policy.

Current Events and Volunteer Opportunities

The PCEOC can always use volunteers to help fight off this unneeded expansion. Any help would be greatly appreciated; 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>