

The Consequences of Public Land Takeover in Nevada

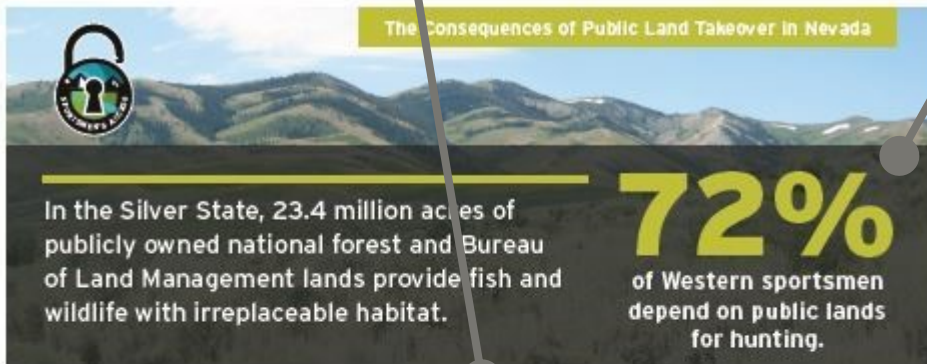
Don't Be Misled

The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) recently created and distributed a flyer designed to persuade sportsmen to oppose the transfer of certain public lands to the states. Unfortunately, much of this information is either misleading or entirely inaccurate. Like the TRCP, the Nevada Lands Council is extremely concerned about the future of American's access to public lands in Nevada and the West; however, advocating false information will not lead to viable solutions.

The original document can be found at: <http://sportsmensaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/fact-sheet-template-Nevada.pdf>

Led by "special interests". This is false. Legislation calling for the transfer of certain lands in Nevada is not sponsored by special interests but is the product of the Nevada Land Management Task Force that was made up of one county commissioner from every county in Nevada. The Task Force produced a resolution calling for the transfer that was approved by all the counties, both houses of the NV legislature and signed by the Governor.

This is likely true and will certainly not change except the access that is being lost now, under federal control, will be better protected by the state. If the state of NV controlled the land sportsmen access would be preserved and even improved.



"Economies would take a hit":

This is also false. In fact the Task Force commissioned an economic analysis that determined that not only can Nevada afford to manage its own public lands but can expect a net revenue of three hundred and fifty million dollars from doing so.

Despite the immense value of America's public lands, special interests are working hard to hand lands over to the state of Nevada. When it comes to land management decisions, the state wouldn't just swap in new players – it would change the whole game. In state hands, everything else would come second to generating income from those lands. Take a look at what state seizure of America's public lands would actually do.

1. State and local economies would take a serious hit

The transfer of America's public lands to state hands would have a negative impact on local economies across the state.

Tax increases

A potential reality for 17 million taxpayers taking over the enormous costs of management.

\$33 million for fires

Nevadans would pay for wildfire suppression costs on an additional 23.4 million acres.

\$25.2 million lost

Nevada counties would lose millions in federal Payments in Lieu of Taxes.

Outdoor recreation is more restricted on state lands than on America's public lands. For example, on state trust lands across much of the West:

Areas are closed to public recreation.

Target shooting is prohibited.

Camping is restricted.

This is partly true. Because Nevada becomes the new land lord the economic analysis determined the State can provide PILT funds that now come from the Federal Government to local counties. It should be noted that counties have to fight with the feds every year to get this payment and it is rarely paid in full. These funds are at jeopardy under federal control and often come with strings attached. The state will be a MUCH better partner to work with.

We are hoping to deploy a state management plan that resembles that of the state of Idaho—one that has proven very successful. States are capable of not only controlling and suppressing wildland fires but under state management large catastrophic fires are expected to be reduced due to better management and quick aggressive response. The Nevada Land Management Task Force addresses this issue in its study and has confirmed that State management of fire suppression would be much more efficient, financially manageable, and environmentally friendly.

2. It wouldn't take much to sell off our treasured public lands.

State trust lands are constitutionally mandated to be managed for maximum profit. These lands are sold if they don't generate substantial revenue through resource development, or if they generate a substantial profit through sales. An independent body made up of just five state officials, known as the State Board of Land Commissioners, makes decisions about state land sales.

2.69 million acres sold

Nevada has already sold most of its 2.69-million-acre land grant.



The only lands allowed by proposed legislation to be sold are not our hunting, fishing and recreation lands but such lands as those **already now designated for disposal by the Federal agencies**, solar and geothermal zones and some lands on Nevada's Rail Road Corridor. Legislation which determines how the land will be managed after the transfer mandates no net loss of public lands on the remaining land.

If the state of Nevada were to take control of 23.4 million acres of BLM and national forest lands, it is indisputable that important lands would be sold off and closed to hunting, fishing, and public access.

This also is not true. They quote part of our State Enabling Act that says "The people inhabiting said territory do agree and declare that they forever disclaim all right and title to the unappropriated public lands lying within the boundaries thereof." This statement was to clear the legal title to the public lands to allow the federal government to transfer the land into state or private control. It was never intended that the federal government would retain title to hundreds of millions of acres across the west. The State of Nebraska's Enabling Act is identical to Nevada's and only three percent of Nebraska is federally owned. Are the citizens of NV not entitled to the same rights and opportunities as those citizens of other states? Even if NV had no legal claim to the land; we certainly have the right to petition the Congress for the transfer. We can make a strong case that it is in the best interest of the country and local citizens, including sportsmen, to allow state and local governments ownership and management of local public land. So TRCP's claim regarding this point is mostly irrelevant.

3. Public access would be at risk.

Without the resources or mandate to manage world-class hunting and fishing destinations for wildlife or recreational access, these areas important to sportsmen and the general public could be headed to the auction block:



Ruby Mountains: This important hunting destination in Elko County is known for legendary mule deer.

Spring Mountains: This and other mountain ranges surrounding the Las Vegas Valley support trophy populations of desert bighorn sheep.

Schell Creek Range: Located near Ely, the Schell Creeks and the neighboring Eagan Range provide large areas of prime, year-round elk habitat and access to some of Nevada's best elk hunting.

4. Nevada long ago relinquished any claim to America's public lands.

"That the people inhabiting said territory do agree and declare that they forever disclaim all right and title to the unappropriated public lands lying within the boundaries thereof ..."
—ENABLING ACT, March 21, 1864

THERE IS A BETTER WAY

We live in a democracy where Americans have been rolling up their sleeves and solving problems for more than two centuries. Instead of considering the unworkable idea of land seizure, it is time for stakeholders to find common ground to improve the management of our treasured public lands.

Get involved today, and tell your state and federal lawmakers that America's public lands are not for sale. Urge them to reject any proposed seizure of these lands by signing the petition at sportsmensaccess.org.

photo: Dusan Smetana

For more information, contact Carl Enquist, TRCP Nevada field representative, at carlenquist@trcp.org. For media inquiries, contact Kristyn Brady, TRCP director of communications at kbrady@trcp.org. To learn more about the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, go to trcp.org. Works cited available at sportsmensaccess.org/worksited.

Made for by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

YES- There is a Better Way!! Decades of dysfunctional federal bureaucracy is literally dismantling the environmental well being of Nevada and slowly chipping away at the amount of public land that Sportsmen and Producers have access to. Our studies have proven that local control, spearheaded by individuals who have a vested interest in the well being of our own backyards, will adopt common sense policies and procedures that will ensure access to healthier and more vibrant public lands.

Join Today!!

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