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NRA-ILA  
ATTN: Chris W. Cox, Executive Director  
11250 Waples Mill Road  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Director Cox,

As a retired Army veteran, NRA member, foot-powered hunter and angler, and fifth-generation native Coloradan, I'm asking you to rethink the NRA's position on the proposed Brown's Canyon Wilderness in Chaffee County, Colorado.

So far, the NRA has only proven itself supportive of a small percentage of the membership on this issue. I've read countless letters and emails, talked to dozens of local outdoor enthusiasts, listened to local businessmen and frequently visited the proposed wilderness. The overwhelming majority of people prefer that Brown's Canyon obtain federal wilderness designation. For the NRA to oppose or attempt to block such a designation would be a slap in the face of true hunters.

I greatly respect the support the NRA has provided for the Second Amendment since its inception. However, the NRA has strayed far away from its original mission on this particular issue. If the NRA truly represents sportsmen and women it will concentrate on supporting sound conservation policies, not politics. If we do not protect the wilderness we currently have, it will matter not that we still have firearms with which to hunt, because quality habitat is gone forever once destroyed and degraded by roads and trails.

Mr. Cox, let's do what's right for the wilderness habitat in Brown's Canyon. Let's do what's right for future generations. Don't cave in to special interest groups, such as a small handful of motorized vehicle users. I have frequented the proposed wilderness enough to tell you that there are no elderly or infirmed hunters using off-road vehicles there. Nor have I ever seen disabled military veterans using motorized access to this area. As a retired Army veteran, I find the NRA's tactic of using the elderly and disabled (to include disabled war veterans) to prop up its position both deplorable and insulting. To the contrary, studies show that the majority of persons with disabilities do not believe that the restrictions on mechanized use in the Wilderness Act diminish their ability to enjoy wilderness.

Mr. Cox, I'm asking you to listen to the rank-and-file membership on this issue. Step back and assess what's really important, long-term, for the wilderness habitat and for future generations of sportsmen and women. This is not an access issue. This is a conservation issue. Let's do what's right.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Vertrees

NRA Member

Member, Colorado Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Member, Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society

Member, Trout Unlimited

Member, American Legion Post 13

Senior Hunter Education Instructor, Colorado Division of Wildlife