



**RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2024-26**

**Opposing the Final Land Protection Plan & Environmental Assessment for the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge**

WHEREAS, Roosevelt County is a legal and political subdivision of the State of New Mexico for which the Board of County Commissioners is authorized to act; and

WHEREAS, Roosevelt County contains approximately 2,446 square miles of land situated in Eastern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Federal government currently owns more than 10,000 acres of land within the County's jurisdiction, and

WHEREAS, the health, safety, welfare, economic condition, and culture of the County, its businesses, and its citizens depend on private land ownership and the use of the resources within the County; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), has prepared the Land Protection Plan (LPP) and Environmental Assessment with the intent of establishing a limited acquisition boundary (also referred to as a Conservation Partnership Area) for Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge within the jurisdiction of Roosevelt County; and

WHEREAS, many of Roosevelt County's businesses and citizens are involved in, or otherwise, depend on industries that utilize private lands and their resources, including, but not limited to, agriculture crop production, electrical production and plants, oil and gas exploration and production, livestock grazing, recreational development, hunting and other outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, these industries are important components of Roosevelt County and the State of New Mexico's economy and are major contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of Roosevelt County and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Service claims in March of 2022, they "distributed an informal scoping pamphlet by mail and electronically, invited input, questions, and feedback on the development of the LPP claiming the feedback from local landowners and stakeholders was uniformly positive and seeking clarification on how the process works and indicating eagerness to participate if the plan is finalized."

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prepared and issued the Land Protection Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge in February 2023, but failed to notice the County or include Roosevelt County in any of the planning processes. Most landowners, citizens and Roosevelt County officials were first informed of the completed LPP in June 2024; and

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Mandi M. Park, Roosevelt Co. Clk., Roosevelt, NM



WHEREAS, the Service is proposing a 7,000,000-acre acquisition boundary for the LPP for Muleshoe and Grulla National Wildlife Refuges in West Texas and Eastern New Mexico called the Conservation Partnership Area; and

WHEREAS, within the 7,000,000-acre footprint the Service desires to acquire 700,000 acres in fee-title or conservation easements in perpetuity. Lands within Roosevelt County are designated in the LPP as Priority Area,

WHEREAS, within the land included in the acquisition area, the Service plans to directly acquire an undetermined number of acres without having noticed the county, coordinated its plans with the county, or having analyzed the economic impact on the county and its citizens; and

WHEREAS conservation easements in perpetuity reduce the tax value of the land by an average of 40 percent, and federal lands are exempt from taxation; and

WHEREAS, lands held in conservation restrict or eliminate the productive uses from the land that fuel the local economy supporting our schools, hospitals, emergency services, roads, and other necessary services; and

WHEREAS, although no parcels of land have been acquired, once approved, the Service will require a separate consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for each potential parcel adding a tremendous burden to the citizens of the County and a potential loss of income, revenue, and tax base to the County; and

WHEREAS, conservation easements held by the Refuge will be enforced by Federal Wildlife Officers and the landowners will be subject to civil or criminal charges, and these agreements will encroach on Roosevelt County's law enforcement authority; and

WHEREAS, the LPP is considered by the Service as fulfilling President Biden's "America the Beautiful" plan, better known as the "30x30 Land Grab" and will be administered under the National Wildlife Refuge System whose mission is:

"...to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

WHEREAS, the LPP will increase federal holdings within the jurisdiction of Roosevelt County, reducing the number of acres of private property, thereby reducing the tax base of Roosevelt County, Roosevelt County school districts, hospital districts, water conservation districts and other public utility districts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Roosevelt County Board of County Commissioners as follows:



1. Roosevelt County finds the creation of the Conservation Partnership Area expanding the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge violates Roosevelt County's policies and objectives and will result in substantial loss of private property and economic security.
2. Roosevelt County finds that the Service failed to notice and coordinate the Land Protection Plan & Environmental Assessment for the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge with the County; and
3. Roosevelt County directs all County agencies and departments to withhold all approvals, permits, funding or other permissions that may be required for the Service to acquire or manage fee-title lands, or an interest in lands such as a conservation easement, within the County until such time as the Service coordinates the LLP with the County to the satisfaction of the County;
4. Roosevelt County shall update the governing plans and polices to reflect it opposes and does not recognize the Federal land acquisition boundary; and
5. Roosevelt County shall send a copy of the Resolution to the [TX or NM] Parks and Wildlife Service, as well as the National Wildlife Refuge System and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED** by the governing body on this 2nd day of July, 2024.

**BODY OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ROOSEVELT COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

ATTEST:

Mandi M. Park  
Mandi M. Park, Roosevelt County Clerk

Tina Dixon  
Tina Dixon, *Chair* – District IV  
Voted:  Yes  No  Abstained

Roy Lee Criswell  
Roy Lee Criswell, *Vice Chair* – District III  
Voted:  Yes  No  Abstained

Dennis Lopez  
Dennis Lopez – District I  
Voted:  Yes  No  Abstained

Rodney Savage  
Rodney Savage – District II  
Voted:  Yes  No  Abstained

Paul Grider  
Paul Grider – District V  
Voted:  Yes  No  Abstained

*am*

