

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission Resolution - 17-02

Support for Transfer of the Medano Ranch to Great Sand Dunes National Preserve

WHEREAS, Public Law 106-530 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to establish Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve upon being signed into law on November 22, 2000, and

WHEREAS, the legislation authorized the Department of the Interior's future acquisition of additional privately-held lands, including the 12,518 acre Medano Ranch, located between Great Sand Dunes National Park and the Baca National Wildlife Refuge, and

WHEREAS, since the establishment of Great Sand Dunes National Park elk have sought refuge and established themselves on areas within the National Park, and on adjacent private lands including the Medano Ranch, resulting in resource damage to the landscape and negative impacts to other wildlife, and

WHEREAS, resource damage caused by overpopulated ungulate species in the San Luis Valley threatens not only the Great Sand Dunes ecosystem, but also represents a significant liability for the State of Colorado in the form of potential game damage claims that CPW biologists have estimated could total millions of dollars, and

WHEREAS, the Medano Ranch is adjacent to the Baca National Wildlife Refuge that manages a public hunting program to help Colorado Parks and Wildlife with elk management in the San Luis Valley, and

WHEREAS, hunting historically occurred and continues to occur on the Medano Ranch under private ownership, and

WHEREAS, Colorado Parks and Wildlife biologists have noted that hunting on the Medano Ranch is helpful in meeting management objectives approved by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission, and

WHEREAS, Colorado Revised Statutes § 33-1-101 states that the state shall utilize hunting, trapping, and fishing as the primary methods of effecting necessary wildlife harvests, and

WHEREAS, the State of Colorado's ability to effectively manage the Great Sand Dunes elk herd through a managed hunting program would be further limited by transfer of the Medano Ranch to Great Sand Dunes National Park where hunting is not allowed, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission supports the National Park Service's acquisition of the Medano Ranch, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission supports management under the jurisdiction of the Great Sand Dunes National Preserve and recognizes that doing so will provide additional management flexibility needed to achieve wildlife management objectives defined by the State of Colorado in partnership with the National Park Service.

Adopted November 16, 2017



John Howard, Acting-Chair
Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission

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