



## **National Association of Conservation Districts**

---

June 22, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary  
Department of Interior  
1849 C Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

**Re: *Action on Wilderness Issues***

Dear Secretary Salazar,

On behalf of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and America's 3,000 conservation districts, I am writing to express our support for your decision to not pursue implementation of Secretarial Order No. 3310, which directs the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to inventory, designate, and manage federal lands as wilderness independent of the United States Congress. We commend your recent announcement to work in a bipartisan way with Congress and all stakeholders on wilderness issues.

The designation of wilderness areas has a tremendous impact on the natural resource management and conservation programs and projects that are implemented by conservation districts. As well, the designation of wilderness areas has had detrimental impacts to the overall resource health due to the inability to effectively manage natural resources within these restricted areas. For instance, although fire suppression activities are permitted in wilderness areas, management of forest regeneration and succession is not permitted. As local governments, conservation districts should be fully involved as affected partners in any process to designate wilderness lands. Districts work with land managers to help make sound decisions that ensure the land's health and productivity for America's future.

We encourage you to work closely with Congress and all stakeholders on decisions that involve managing lands with wilderness characteristics, including the release of lands that are deemed not suitable for wilderness designation. We believe public lands should be managed in a way that provides the greatest benefit to the public. BLM is a small agency with a big multiple use management mission, as mandated by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, to sustain the health, productivity, and diversity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future Americans. This mission cannot be fulfilled alone, and good land stewards and broad alliances are needed so that public lands are managed wisely for all Americans to use and enjoy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gene Schmidt'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Gene' being more prominent than the last name 'Schmidt'.

Gene Schmidt  
President

---

**National Headquarters**  
509 Capitol Court, NE, Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 547-6223 Fax: (202) 547-6450  
[www.nacdnet.org](http://www.nacdnet.org)