



**Western  
Environmental  
Law Center**



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**For Immediate Release**

**Conservation Groups Win Reconsideration of the “Village” at Wolf Creek Development;  
McCombs suffers blow to plans for controversial development.**

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*Durango, Colorado* – Conservationists concerned about detrimental impacts to the environment and wildlife with the proposed “Village at Wolf Creek” development celebrated a monumental victory today. Culminating 16 months of legal wrangling, the U.S. Forest Service and developer Red McCombs agreed to go back to the drawing board and complete a fair and unbiased Environmental Impact Statement for the controversial development proposed at the top of Wolf Creek Pass in southern Colorado.

“This settlement is a tremendous victory for the environment and the citizens of Colorado and the Nation,” declared Ryan Demmy Bidwell, Executive Director of Colorado Wild. “After nine years of false starts, behind-closed-door dealings and tainted analysis, the public will finally get a fair review of the Village’s thus far unregulated impacts.”

The agreement signed today between conservationists Colorado Wild and the San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council, the US Forest Service and the developers, resolves a lawsuit brought in Federal District Court in October 2006. The non-profit Western Environmental Law Center, together with private attorneys Brad Bartlett and Travis Stills, filed the lawsuit challenging the US Forest Service’s April 2006 decision to authorize construction of two access roads across public lands for the purpose of building the proposed 10,000 person “Village” without analyzing the environmental impacts of the proposed development.

The settlement comes after US District Court Judge John Kane issued a Preliminary Injunction on October 4, 2007, stopping the project from moving forward. Rather than wait for a final ruling from Judge Kane, the Forest Service and developers agreed to fulfill plaintiff’s demands, and complete an entirely new EIS.

“This agreement gives us everything we asked for in our lawsuit,” explained Geoff Hickcox of the Western Environmental Law Center. “Beginning in 1999, we argued the Forest Service was required to conduct a complete and unbiased analysis of the development’s environmental impacts. This lawsuit, and the resulting settlement agreement, put a stop to the attempted end run around such analysis, and makes clear to the Forest Service and the developers that

whatever is proposed for this site in the future will have to be done with full public disclosure and adherence to the highest environmental protection standards."

The impacts of the agreement are significant for the local communities and Wolf Creek Pass ecosystem that would be affected by the proposed development.

"We've believed all along that the Village could not be built as proposed if the regulatory agencies involved took a hard look at the project's impacts," explained Christine Canaly, Executive Director of the San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council. "If McCombs decides to move forward with this project at all, we're hopeful that the Forest Service and other regulatory agencies will now fulfill their legal responsibility to protect the public and our resources from damage."

It is unknown at this point what form the Village at Wolf Creek will take when McCombs re-applies for permission to build roads through public forest land to access his proposed development site, or what timeline any new proposal would proceed on, but what is now clear is that as a result of this settlement agreement, the public will have a true picture of the environmental impacts of such a development and an opportunity to be involved in the new decision making process.

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