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### Campbell defends river plan

The Vail Trail


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## Strang bill would create national park

Rep. Mike Strang has introduced a new proposal to create a Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park complex.

Strang, who represents western Colorado in the U.S. House, first talked about his proposal last year, but held off on introducing it in the House until more study could be done, including work by a group of citizens from around the proposed park.

Strang told his colleagues in the House that he hopes they will support his proposal and “use this opportunity to protect and preserve for the first time a complete canyon system in the United States for future generations to enjoy.”

Strang said his proposal “can provide western Colorado with a nationally significant focal point that in time can increase regional and national tourist recognition, as well as protect vital natural resource treasures.”

The bill would combine 131,000 acres of public lands into a national park complex that would be managed by the National Park Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Bureau of Land Management. It would also designate the 20,800-acre Black Canyon National Monument, located in the center of the proposed park complex, as a national park.

A key part of the bill, Strang said, is “wild and scenic”

designation of 29 miles of the Gunnison River inside the western entrance of the canyon. The protected river corridor would include most of the previously designated BLM wilderness study area.

Strang praised two men who helped develop the park proposal. He cited Montrose resident C. Wayne Keith for his “leadership and perseverance” in leading an advisory

committee, and also mentioned the work of Bill McDonald, director of the Colorado Water

Conservation Board. McDonald was involved with about 20 other water users and

conservation groups is writing the part of the proposal that addresses water rights.