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# Bill Proposes Expansion of Black Canyon

By CRAIG KACSKOS  
Special to The Denver Post

MONTROSE — Legislation to expand the boundaries of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument near Montrose by more than 50 percent has been proposed by U.S. Rep. Ray Kogovsek.

Kogovsek and Joseph Kastellic, monument superintendent, say the expansion is needed because of the threat of development along the monument's north rim.

The legislation is aimed at protecting the "view shed" of the north rim. Visitors to the monument travel along the south rim, viewing the spectacular canyon from numerous overlooks. Development along the north rim would destroy the aesthetic resources of the monument, Kastellic said.

"No one thought about limiting development along the canyon" when the monument was established by presidential proclamation in 1933, Kastellic said.

There already is one trailer home located near the north rim of the canyon, and a developer has plans for more construction near the rim, Kastellic said.

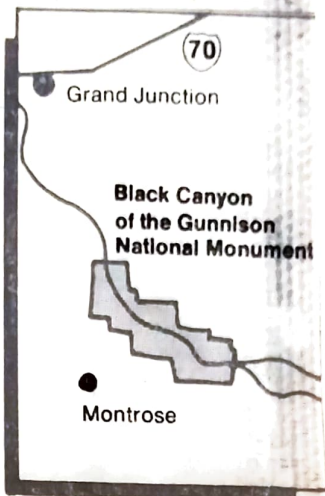
Kogovsek's bill, introduced in early August, authorizes Interior Secretary James Watt to either purchase 6,780 acres of privately owned land or the scenic easements and another 400 acres of land now held by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Under the bill, cattle grazing still would be allowed on the land by permit.

Kastellic said the cost to purchase the scenic easement for the area is estimated at \$700,000.

However, Watt's policy against acquiring additional park lands may become a hurdle in the move to enlarge the monument's boundaries.

Kogovsek, however, said that enlarging the monument's boundaries "does not establish a new national park; it improves an existing monument in keeping with the administration's policy to make the best possible use of those public assets."

The monument now includes 13,666 acres, of which 11,280 was designated as wilderness by Congress in 1976. The boundaries, particularly on the north side, closely follow the rim for about 13 miles along the canyon, which was carved out by the Gunnison River more than 2 million years ago. Although the canyon is 53 miles long, the river has been dammed upstream for water storage and power generation. Another 13.5 miles downstream of the monument has been recommended for a "wild" designation under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.



When the monument was established in 1933, it included mainly the canyon itself, a 9,300-acre area.

Kastellic said expanding the monument's boundaries along the north rim has been recommended since the 1950s, but no action has ever been taken by the National Park Service.

"During my tenure the timing has never been right, or there's been a land purchase moratorium," said Kastellic, superintendent since 1973.

Kastellic said the Park Service seemed to have the attitude that the view "would take care of itself," but water for domestic use has been piped into the area within the last three years, making development along the north rim possible.

Officials also would like to expand the monument for administrative reasons. Because the monument's boundaries closely follow the north rim so closely, Park Service employees must pass through private property along portions of the north rim, and one of the most popular major access points into the canyon itself is through private property.

Up to now that has not been a problem because of the amiable relationship between the Park Service and the private landowners. However, development of land along the north rim could change that.

Kogovsek aides began working on the legislation to protect the monument in the fall of 1982 after several of the affected landowners approached them in a move to help preserve the view of the north rim.

Kogovsek aide Marlene Zanetell said the legislation also has the support of the Montrose County commissioners and the Montrose Chamber of Commerce.

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