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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sportsmen unite to save hunting and fishing on Colorado's Roan Plateau

Over 20 state hunting and fishing organizations and chapters join effort

RIFLE— A new coalition of hunters, anglers and sporting organizations launched a statewide effort, on Tuesday, Dec. 11 to help protect public lands on Colorado's Roan Plateau.

The group, named Sportsmen for the Roan Plateau, is comprised of the state's most prominent sporting organizations, including state chapters of Trout Unlimited, the National Wildlife Federation, and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. The group's goal is to maintain the Roan's quality public hunting and fishing opportunities and traditional western Colorado lifestyle by keeping development off the top of the plateau and out of important deer and elk winter range below the rim.

"The Roan Plateau Planning Area is almost half owned or leased by the natural gas industry," said Ken Neubecker, vice president of Colorado Trout Unlimited. CTU has worked diligently to protect and enhance rare, genetically pure Colorado River cutthroat trout that swim in two streams atop the Roan. "Keeping the other half intact for deer, elk and trout is a small thing to ask of an industry that is changing the face of the region."

In the Piceance Basin, the natural gas-rich area, of which the Roan Plateau is a small part, is roughly 7,100 square miles. The public lands on the Roan Plateau are less than 67,000 acres—about 1.5 percent of Piceance Basin. Moreover, according to a 2006 government study, 90 percent of the public, BLM managed natural gas in the Uinta/Piceance is already available for leasing. Clearly there is room for balance, including protecting what remains of the Roan Plateau.

"The Colorado Wildlife Federation has consistently asserted that there should be no drilling or at least no surface disturbance on the public lands on top and the remaining good mule deer wintering habitat at the base during the current 10 year planning period, said Dennis Buechler, Director Emeritus for the Colorado Wildlife Federation. "The gas that can be obtained in these areas is indeed valuable, but that value will only increase as more gas pipelines are built and technology such as directional drilling improves the ability to reduce impacts to habitat important for fish and wildlife. With all the leasing and development happening in the region, what is the rush to sacrifice the Roan Plateau?"

Sportsmen for the Roan Plateau is not against natural gas drilling on the Western Slope. Its members realize that drilling is happening in the Roan Plateau Planning Area right now and will continue into the future. What the coalition is calling for is balance.

"This whole basin is being overrun with drilling and our wildlife is taking a beating," said Keith Goddard, owner of Magnum Outfitters and chairman of the Rifle chapter of the Colorado Mule Deer Association. "If our kids are going to have mule deer and elk to hunt and trout streams to fish, we have to take care of the

habitat, both above and below the rim. Keeping the Roan Plateau the way it is right now will help protect big game winter range and habitat in the Piceance Basin that is quickly filling up with development.”

According to Bill Dvorak of the National Wildlife Federation, Sportsmen for the Roan Plateau wants to raise awareness of the Roan Plateau and the threat posed by irresponsible energy development and unite the hunting and angling community in support of protecting the Roan’s wildlife habitat and multiple use traditions.

“Our lawmakers are listening to sportsmen and there are several avenues we can travel to ensure protection of the Roan Plateau, including potential federal legislation and Gov. Ritter’s review of the BLM’s leasing plan. Through all of these processes, Sportsmen for the Roan Plateau has one message: Keep the undeveloped lands atop the plateau and the deer and elk winter ranges below the rim free of development.”

A theme for the group is keeping true multiple use a reality on top of the Roan Plateau.

“With all of this land being leased and developed in Piceance Basin, Sportsmen for the Roan Plateau is worried that sportsmen's rights will be sacrificed and that some of the best hunting, recreation and native trout habitat in Colorado will be lost forever,” said Corey Fisher, a co-chair of Sportsmen for the Roan Plateau, along with Dvorak. “We realize that natural gas drilling brings a lot of money to Colorado and we absolutely support it, but we also believe that there are some places that should be left as they are for our sons and daughters to hunt and fish and enjoy for years to come. The Roan Plateau is such a place, especially when you consider how small of an area we are talking about.”

The group has proposed a two-pronged solution they hope will be fair to sportsmen and energy developers.

- 1.) No new oil and gas leases on public lands in the Roan Plateau Planning Area until;
- 2.) A plan is developed that allows continued, responsible drilling on existing leases and private industry lands, including directional drilling underneath undeveloped lands while protecting those undeveloped public lands in the Roan Plateau Planning Area from development-related surface disturbances.

The group said they plan to meet with elected officials in Colorado, Colorado’s congressional delegation and stakeholders.

“This is a common-sense solution that we feel is a win-win,” said Dvorak. “By taking action now, we can guarantee sportsmen will enjoy this slice of western Colorado for generations.”

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:

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| National Wildlife Federation | Cherry Creek Anglers |
| Colorado Wildlife Federation | Alpine Anglers (Estes Park) |
| Colorado Trout Unlimited | Grand Valley Anglers (Grand Junction) |
| Colorado Mule Deer Association | Cheyenne Mtn. (Colorado Springs) |
| Western Slope Outfitters Association (Glenwood Springs) | Collegiate Peaks Anglers (Salida) |
| Colorado Backcountry Hunters and Anglers | Boulder Flycasters |
| Colorado Outfitters Association | Cutthroat Chapter, TU (Castle Rock) |
| Federation of Flyfishers | Ferdinand Hayden Chapter, TU (Carbondale) |
| Colorado River Outfitters Association | Five Rivers Chapter, TU (Durango) |
| Arkansas River Outfitters Association | Gunnison Gorge Anglers (Delta/Montrose) |
| Colorado Headwaters Chapter, TU (Winter Park) | Southern CO. Greenback Chapter, TU (Pueblo) |
| | Denver Chapter, TU |
| | San Luis Valley Chapter, TU (Alamosa) |