

Vail Daily

November 21, 2005

Resort backs changes to wildlife law

Allen Best

MT. CRESTED BUTTE - The town council for Mt. Crested Butte, the more pro-development town located adjacent to the Crested Butte ski area, has come out in support of a controversial bill that would alter the Endangered Species Act.

Environmentalists are crying foul about the law, which was promoted by California congressman Richard Pombo. The proposed law would compensate landowners in cases where their rights to use their land are limited because of needs of endangered species. Existing law places the onus on the private landowners.

Chris Morgan, the mayor of Mt. Crested Butte, called the current law a "well-intended, very powerful act that really is not working very well."

Mt. Crested Butte has no particular dog of its own in the fight, although habitat for the dwindling Gunnison sage grouse is 10 to 20 miles away.

Earlier this year, reports the Crested Butte, the town council wrote a letter in support of the western Wildlife and Water Conservation Coalition, which is actively fighting the listing of the Gunnison sage grouse as an endangered species.

The group, notes the newspaper, is made up primarily of state and local home builders, real estate brokers and private landowners.