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Allard introduces Browns Canyon Wilderness bill in U.S. Senate

U.S. Sen. Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) introduced legislation Monday to designate about 12,104 acres in the Pike and San Isabel National Forests and 7,921 acres in the Royal Gorge Resource Area as wilderness.

The proposed Brown's Canyon National Wilderness Area is between Salida and Buena Vista.

Colorado 5th District Rep. Joel Hefley and 7th District Rep. Bob Beauprez introduced similar legislation last week in the House of Representatives.

"This area includes some of the most picturesque vistas in Colorado, and my bill would preserve its natural beauty," Sen. Allard said.

"It is a stunning landscape, with granite canyons stretching along the Arkansas River and merging into mixed forests and meadows.

"In addition, the legislation would improve recreational opportunities within the area, which is one of the most popular rafting spots in Colorado.

"Not only will this bill protect one of Colorado's great natural treasures, it will bring more tourists to the surrounding area and help the economies of Chaffee and Fremont counties," Allard said after introducing the bill Monday.

Allard has been working with local elected officials and citizens during the past 18 months developing the legislation.

The Bureau of Land Management recommended the area for wilderness designation in 1992, citing its "spectacular scenery and the outstanding opportunities it offers for primitive, unconfined recreation and solitude."