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Compromise reached on RMNP wilderness designation

By Coloradoan staff

Colorado congressional leaders announced today that they have reached a compromise on legislation to declare Rocky Mountain National Park a wilderness area.

The announcement came this morning in a joint press release by Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, Rep. Mark Udall, Sen. Ken Salazar and Sen. Wayne Allard.

No details of the compromise will be released until May 14, when the wilderness legislation is expected to be officially filed, spokesmen for Musgrave and Salazar said.

The wilderness designation has split northern Colorado congressional leaders since last year. Allard and Musgrave, both Republicans, filed a bill in October, after Salazar and Udall, both Democrats, had put forth their own version.

Rocky Mountain National Park has been managed as a wilderness area for more than 30 years but has never had the formal designation, which limits usage of the park.

A key sticking point in the wilderness designation has been liability protection for owners of the Grand Ditch, a 14-mile irrigation channel that runs through the park and pre-dates it.

See updates throughout the day at coloradoan.com and more details in Tuesday's Coloradoan. Also, read an editorial on this topic today on News Updates at coloradoan.com and in Tuesday's Coloradoan.
