



Because: Unitarian Universalists respect the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part;

Because: the Unitarian Universalist Association is holding its 2009 General Assembly in Utah, home to the largest intact and most pristine wild land region in the lower 48 states;

Whereas: the publicly owned wild lands of Utah, managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), belong to all Americans and all future generations;

Whereas: these wild lands are world renowned for their spectacular beauty and majesty, with serpentine slickrock canyons, soaring sandstone cliffs, and an extravagant array of arches, bridges, mesas, mountains, rivers, and desert streams;

Whereas: these wild lands provide home to endangered or sensitive wildlife, including desert bighorn sheep, cougar, and endangered desert tortoise, as well as habitat for elk, deer, bear, and many other animals;

Whereas: these wild lands contain some of the world's richest concentrations of prehistoric ruins, including cliff dwellings, rock art, ceremonial kivas, and 10,000-year-old cave sites;

Whereas: these wild lands possess nationally significant scientific, biological, geologic and paleontological value, including threatened and endangered plant species; geologic formations displaying 2.5 billion years of Earth's history; and fossilized remains;

Whereas: these lands are treasured by people around the world for their exceptional recreational opportunities, including hiking, camping, fishing, and other activities;

Whereas: these lands are deeply valued by people from many different spiritual traditions as places of spiritual inspiration, connection, renewal and solace;

Whereas: the pristine character and ecological health of Utah's public wild lands are seriously threatened by energy and mineral development, off-road vehicle damage, climate change, and other activities;

Whereas: BLM's 2008 plans dictating how these lands will be managed for the next two decades fail to protect their wilderness value, leaving significant areas vulnerable to oil and gas drilling, rampant off-road vehicle use and other harmful activities;

Whereas: the best defense against the effects of global warming (drier conditions, wildfires, diminished water resources, spread of non-native invasive plants, dust storms) on Utah's public lands is to minimize ground disturbance;

Whereas: America's Red Rock Wilderness Act would protect over 9 million acres of BLM managed Utah public lands;

Whereas: America's Red Rock Wilderness Act has received bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress, is supported by the Utah Wilderness Coalition's more than 250 national and regional conservation groups, and is fully field-checked and documented with maps and nearly 70,000 photographs, constituting one of the most comprehensive land inventories ever conducted by a non-government organization;

Therefore, be it resolved: that the 2009 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges member congregations to:

- call for passage of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, or other legislation, to protect Utah's spectacular and irreplaceable wild lands;
- call for the Department of the Interior, through the BLM, to establish administrative protections for Utah's wild lands from off-road vehicle abuse, road development, oil, gas, oil shale and tar sands development; and
- work with the Utah Wilderness Coalition and its member organizations to educate all Americans about the environmental importance of protecting Utah's wild lands.