

Wayne Allard

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Contact: Angela de Rocha at (202) 224-5944

**U.S. SENATOR WAYNE ALLARD PRAISES
NATURE CONSERVANCY, U.S. PARK SERVICE
FOR CLOSING DEAL ON BACA RANCH
TO CREATE GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK**

Transaction set to close into escrow on Friday

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) announced Thursday that the Great Sand Dunes National Monument is one final step away from becoming the country's newest national park. The transaction in which the federal government will acquire title to the Baca Ranch, site of the proposed new national park, is set to close into escrow on Friday, March 12.

“Our long journey is nearing its happy destination. This would not have been possible without the vision and cooperation of many great leaders,” Senator Allard said. “I want to commend Interior Secretary Gale Norton, the Nature Conservancy, Treasury Secretary John Snowe, and everyone else who worked so hard to preserve an area of exceptional beauty for the people of Colorado and the nation.”

Senator Allard was informed by key negotiators on Thursday that the closing into escrow will occur on Friday.

“Along the rugged Sangre de Cristo mountains rises the newest national park, preserving an unparalleled heritage of nature and offering an example of creative public-private cooperation,” Senator Allard said.

Senator Allard has helped to secure more than \$30 million for the project so far. The final appropriation for the acquisition will come this year. Senator Allard is requesting \$3.5 million in fiscal year 2005 to complete the project.

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