

Legislation to protect Mt. Hood, Oregon Caves, and Wild Rogue

June 17, 2008

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, four members of the Oregon delegation announced two new pieces of legislation that will provide a long-term stewardship plan for Mt. Hood, Oregon Caves and Wild Rogue. Reps. Earl Blumenauer, Peter DeFazio, Darlene Hooley, and David Wu introduced the "Oregon Treasures" package following several years of extensive negotiations and input from the public and stakeholders.

The Mt Hood proposal would add approximately 132,000 acres of Wilderness to the Mt. Hood National Forest, 79.6 miles of new Wild and Scenic Rivers, and approximately 34,550 acres as National Recreation Areas. The Oregon Caves and Wild Rogue legislation will add approximately 4,070 acres to the Oregon Caves National Monument and designates 142.9 miles of 40 waterways as "wild," "scenic," or "recreational" under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

"For years we've worked to create the Oregon Treasures package," **said Congressman Blumenauer**

"Thousands of committed citizens, organizations, Native Americans and businesses have made clear that we must do more to protect Oregon's treasured places. These two bills will protect Oregon's iconic Mt. Hood, renowned Rogue River and Oregon Caves. The Mt Hood bill also creates a unique transportation plan to address the challenges of getting to and from the mountain."

"Our beautiful state has so many places that are worthy of congressional recognition. The caves alone represent some of the rarest geology in the Pacific Northwest, and hide some of its greatest mysteries, like the River Styx, which flows below ground through the caves," **said Congressman DeFazio**

"I am thrilled to be able to work with my democratic Oregon colleagues to bring protection to just a few of them. From the tributaries of the Wild Rogue, to the Cave Creek watershed, to the iconic Mt. Hood, we have an historic opportunity to leave a natural legacy for the next generation. "

"Our 'Oregon Treasures' bill includes 60,265 acres of wilderness and about 45 miles of wild and scenic river in my district, which represents the majority of the bill," **said Congresswoman Hooley**. "Together, members of the delegation have worked to protect iconic landscapes and waterways significant to current Oregonians and critical to the health and quality of life of future Oregonians. In addition to preserving beautiful places, we take steps to protect the drinking water sources for millions of Oregonians, provide fish and wildlife habitat for a broad array of species, and leave a natural legacy for our children. I'm proud of what we have accomplished together, and look forward to making it law."

"Whenever we protect any part of the natural environment, we are doing so for the benefit of every single Oregonian, and every single American," **said Congressman Wu**. "Expanding Oregon's wilderness areas, scenic waterways, and National Recreation Areas will ensure that we preserve our iconic natural features for successive generations to enjoy. In addition, today's legislation provides economic development opportunities for Oregon communities. By designating more protected land and waterways, we are providing all outdoor-lovers with additional recreation opportunities and helping tourists continue to make substantial contributions to the Oregon economy."

Mount Hood Legislative outline

Wilderness/Wild and Scenic RIVERS/national recreation areas-

The legislation would add approximately 132,000 acres of Wilderness to the Mt. Hood National Forest.

The proposed Wilderness areas are:

Badger Creek Wilderness Additions: Badger Creek Additions, Bonney Butte, Boulder Lake

Bull of the Woods Wilderness Additions: Bull of the Woods Additions

Clackamas Wilderness: Big Bottom, Clackamas Canyon, Memaloose Lake, Sisi Butte, South Fork Clackamas

Mark O. Hatfield Wilderness Additions: Gorge Face, Larch Mountain

Mount Hood Wilderness Additions: Barlow Butte, Bluegrass Ridge, Elk Cove/Mazama, Richard L. Kohnstamm Memorial Area, Sand Canyon, Sandy River Additions, Twin Lakes, Tilly Jane, White River, Cloud Cap

Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness Additions: Alder Creek, Eagle Creek, Hunchback Mountain, Inch Creek, Mirror Lake, Roaring River, Salmon River Meadows, Salmon Huckleberry Keyhole

Lower White River Wilderness

The legislation would add 79.6 miles of new Wild and Scenic Rivers. They are:

South Fork Clackamas River

Eagle Creek

Middle Fork Hood River

South Fork Roaring River

ZigZag River

Fifteenmile Creek

East Fork Hood River

Collawash River

Fish Creek

The legislation would designate approximately 34,550 acres as National Recreation Areas (NRA). They are:

Mount Hood NRA

Fifteen Mile Creek NRA

Shellrock Mountain NRA

Crystal Springs Watershed Management Unit- The bill would establish a special resources management unit for the Crystal Springs Watershed to ensure protection of water quality and quantity. The Crystal Springs Watershed serves residential citizens, communities, irrigation districts, and diverse ecosystems on the north side of Mount Hood with clean water.

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Land Conveyances – The legislation would direct the Forest Service to engage in three land exchanges. The first, between Mt. Hood Meadows and the U.S. Forest Service, would facilitate the exchange of 120 acres of Forest Service managed land in Government Camp for 770 acres of private land at Cooper Spur. The legislation would require a new appraisal to be conducted, and mandate compliance with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition and Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice. In addition, the legislation would facilitate land exchanges between the Port of Cascade Locks and the Forest Service, and between Clackamas County and the Forest Service. Construction activities on lands conveyed shall comply with nationally recognized building and property maintenance codes or nationally recognized codes for development in the wildland-urban interface.

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Transportation – The legislation would direct the Secretary of Agriculture to seek to participate in the development of an integrated, multi-modal transportation plan for the Mount Hood region developed by the Oregon Department of Transportation.

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Forest Stewardship and Watershed Health – The legislation would direct the Secretary to prepare a report on and implementation schedule for a vegetation management strategy, including biomass utilization, for the Mount Hood National Forest.

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local and tribal relationships – The legislation would direct the Secretary to consult with Indian Tribes with treaty-reserved gathering rights on the Mount Hood forest to develop and implement a management plan that meets the cultural foods obligations of the United States under applicable treaties. This plan would be consistent with existing Memoranda of Understanding.

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Recreation – The legislation would permit the Secretary to establish a working group for the purpose of providing advice and recommendations to the Forest Service on planning and implementing recreation enhancements in the Mount Hood National Forest. It would further direct the Secretary to consider converting roads designated for closure or decommissioning into recreation trails. It would also encourage the Secretary to work with the public to construct a trail within the Mount Hood forest suitable for use by persons with disabilities.

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Oregon Caves

The legislation would enhance the protection of the natural resources associated with Oregon Caves National Monument, increase public recreation opportunities, expand local economic development opportunities, and protect the drinking water source of Oregon Caves National Monument from pollution and contamination by adjusting the boundary of the Monument.

President Taft created the Monument by Proclamation 876 on July 12, 1909

The Monument is currently 480 (three-quarters of a square mile) acres and encompasses only the mouth of the High Hopes, Monument Deep, Oregon, and Clay Caves

The Oregon Caves Chateau is located near the caves, and is one of the National Park's Great Lodges and a National Historic Landmark. The six-story hotel located on the monument has a fine dining room, a 1930's era coffee shop, and 23 rooms

Oregon Caves is the longest marble cave (3.5 miles) open to the public west of the Continental Divide

According to the city of Cave Junction, the economic development strategy of the Illinois Valley is tourism, and the Oregon Caves is the largest attraction that brings tourists to the area. Similarly, the Grants Pass Chamber of Commerce notes that over 25,000 visitors pass through the Grants Pass visitors center each year, with many of them headed to the Oregon Caves

Recent discoveries indicate that Oregon Caves possesses a significant collection of Pleistocene fossils, including jaguar and grizzly bear. Grizzly bones that were found in the cave in 1995 were estimated to be at least 50,000 years old, the oldest known from either North or South America

The Monument is managed by the National Park Service; the surrounding watershed is managed by the Forest Service (Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest)

Grazing in the watershed has caused water quality problems, including contamination of the Monument's drinking water supply

The NPS has formally proposed to expand the boundary of the Monument to encompass several other caves, as well as the surrounding Cave Creek Watershed numerous times, first in 1939, again in 1949, and most recently in 2000

The legislation:

- Adds approximately 4,070 acres to the Monument by transferring the land from the Forest Service to the National Park Service;

- Designates 7.6 miles of 6 waterways as "wild," "scenic," or "recreational" under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, including the first subterranean designated waterway in the country, the River Styx, which flows through the Caves;

- Encourages ecological forest restoration; and

- Permits the donation of grazing permits and leases associated with the expanded boundary.

Lower Rogue wild and scenic river additions

Pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the legislation would designate 142.9 miles of tributaries to the Rogue Wild and Scenic River (est. 1968) and classify the tributaries as either "Wild," "Scenic," or "Recreational" in order to protect the outstandingly remarkable values of these tributaries themselves as well as the benefits that these tributaries contribute to the Lower Rogue Wild and Scenic River.

In 1968, Congress protected 84 miles of the lower Rogue River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act due to the River's "outstandingly remarkable values" of high water quality, excellent fishery, and recreational opportunities. The Rogue was one of the first rivers protected under the Act

The headwaters of the Rogue River are in Crater Lake National Park, and ultimately empty into the Pacific Ocean near Gold Beach on the southwestern Oregon coast, 215 miles away

The Rogue River is Oregon's second largest producer of salmon, largely due to the clear, cold water the river's tributaries provide to the main stem of the Rogue

The Rogue River is home to runs of coho, spring and fall chinook, winter and summer steelhead, as well as being one of only a few rivers in the country with runs of green sturgeon. Rogue River tributaries provide spawning and rearing habitat for winter and summer steelhead and coho salmon

Recreation is the largest source of economic stimulus for the communities of southern Oregon, which supports dozens of outfitters, guides, and associated businesses. The Bureau of Land Management estimates that more than 25,000 people use the Rogue River every year, which generates more than \$13 million dollars annually

The famed adventure writer Zane Grey spent much of his time in the heart of Rogue River country. He owned a small cabin at Winkle Bar on the Rogue where he wrote many of his celebrated books, including *Rogue River Feud* and *Tales of Freshwater Fishing*. The cabin still stands today, and is a popular attraction for river visitors.

A large roadless area that surrounds the Rogue and its tributaries, the Zane Grey roadless area, is named after the writer.

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