



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
Governor

February 24, 2008

The Honorable Gordon Smith
United States Senate
404 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Smith:

Thank you for your efforts to date to safeguard Oregon's special places through the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. Thirty years ago today, President Jimmy Carter signed the Endangered American Wilderness Act, giving statutory protection to wild portions of national forests in 10 western states. On February 24th, 1978, treasured lands such as the Wild Rogue in southern Oregon and French Pete in the Three Sisters Wilderness were added to the nation's wilderness preservation system.

Despite the addition of approximately 273,500 acres of wilderness in 1978, Oregon is deficient, as compared to our neighboring states, in wilderness areas. Only 3.7% of Oregon land is conserved under the National Wilderness Preservation System. In contrast, California has 14.4% of its lands fully protected, Washington 10.1%, Idaho 7.6% and Nevada 4.9%.

I am writing to bring to your attention areas in Oregon that are ripe for wilderness and wild and scenic river designation during the 110th Congress, other than those places already identified for protection in the Lewis and Clark Mount Hood Wilderness bill which has been approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Presented in alphabetical order, these areas have a great deal of documental ecological value as well as local support for protection.

- **Badlands Wilderness (30,087 acres).** Only 15 miles east of the growing city of Bend, the Badlands is Bend's "backyard" wilderness. This stunningly stark and harsh terrain consists of fantastic lava flows, ancient western junipers, desert wildflowers, dry river canyons, castle-like rock formations and native American pictographs.
- **Boulder Lake Wilderness (3,800 acres).** From a distance, Boulder Lake is a stunning turquoise green; up close it is crystal clear. The surrounding roadless area includes old-growth Pacific silver fir and western hemlock and beautiful lush meadows that provide quality fawning and calving areas for deer and elk.
- **Copper Salmon Wilderness (13,700 acres)/Elk Wild & Scenic River Additions (10 miles).** I am pleased that this area is the subject of legislation in both the House and the Senate and has had a successful hearing in the Senate. The magnificent forests of the Elk River need additional protection so that the region's important salmon runs and towering stands of Port Orford-cedar are preserved for our current and future generations.
- **Kalmiopsis Wildlands (~250,000 acres)/22 National Wild & Scenic Rivers.** The Kalmiopsis Wildlands comprise the watersheds of the National Wild & Scenic Illinois,

Chetco and North Fork Smith Rivers, and twenty-one nationally outstanding tributaries. Its proximity to the Pacific Ocean, extreme topographic and soil diversity, hauntingly beautiful rivers, stark wind swept ridges and deep boulder strewn canyons, makes it an extraordinary land of national significance.

- **Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness Additions (590 acres).** Adding to the Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness will greatly enhance the recreational experiences of people using the Salmon River Trail. Of the sections proposed as new wilderness, the Salmon River Meadows is a significant block, encompassing 450 roadless acres adjacent to the existing Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness.
- **Soda Mountain Wilderness (23,000+ acres).** The proposed Wilderness lies entirely within the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, which was established to protect and restore the extraordinary biological diversity here where species common to the Siskiyou Mountains, Oregon Cascades, California chaparral, Rogue Valley Oak Savannah and Great Basin all intermingle.
- **Spring Basin Wilderness (8,286 acres).** The tapestry of rolling hills comprising the Spring Basin area provides spectacular vistas of the Wild and Scenic John Day River and surrounding high desert landscape. Several strategic land exchanges associated with this wilderness proposal would result in additional public access to the John Day River and consolidation of lands in the Pine Creek Conservation Area managed by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Indian Reservation.
- **Wasson Creek Wilderness (25,452 acres).** The Oregon Coast Range is the most developed forest region in Oregon yet there remain stands of the primeval forest, such as Wasson Creek. The extensive low-elevation old-growth forest is home to many imperiled species of fish and wildlife and within the proposed wilderness area lies Wasson Lake, a very rare habitat type.
- **Wild Rogue Wilderness Additions (58,340 acres)/Lower Rogue Wild & Scenic River Additions (98 miles).** The lower Rogue River is one of the most stunning watersheds in the United States. It provides freshwater habitat to enormous ocean-going salmon runs and the Wild Rogue Canyon is an Oregon icon.

Thank you for considering my thoughts about the worthiness of these special places for wilderness designation: As you evaluate their merits, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff for any assistance you may require. Working together, we can build upon past efforts to conserve Oregon's wild places and thus contribute to a proud legacy of wilderness protection.

Sincerely,



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
Governor