

Congressman Peter DeFazio
2134 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representative
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Ron Wyden
223 Dirksen Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Jeff Merkley
107 Russell Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Governor Theodore Kulongoski
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Portland, OR 97301

Dear Honorable Peter DeFazio, Ron Wyden, Jeff Merkley and Ted Kulongoski;

The Siskiyou Wild Rivers area needs your immediate attention to prevent the location of new mining claims and mining on claims which are not valid. These activities threaten the very essence of this extraordinary part of southwest Oregon. We respectfully ask that your office make a request to the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, and Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, to immediately reinstate the proposed 2001 Mineral Withdrawal for the Siskiyou Wild Rivers Area (66FR 6664). The need for this is twofold: 1) to prevent further destruction from mining of the unique plant diversity and salmon spawning streams from mineral exploration and mining on existing claims which may not be valid, and 2) to call a time out on the location of new claims until Congress resolves the need for permanent protection of these spectacular wildlands, and salmon filled rivers. Wilderness protection for the 534,000 acres of roadless lands that comprise the core of this globally important landscape is ultimately needed. We look forward to working with your offices to further the protection of Oregon's most ecologically important forests and rivers – the Siskiyou Wild Rivers area.

The Siskiyou Wild Rivers Area has two special cases that highlight the need for immediate action, Rough and Ready Creek and the South Kalmiopsis, and the National Wild and Scenic Chetco River. With the former the federal government has a special interest in the area and has already invested several million dollars in analyzing and contesting the validity of almost 5,000 acres of mining claims in the watershed. With the latter, legislation was introduced last year that would amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for the Chetco to upgrade classifications and withdraw the Scenic and Recreation segments. It's expected to be reintroduced next year. In 2002, the Forest Service also proposed withdrawing the Wild segments of the streams it's found eligible to be added to the National Wild and Scenic River system but has taken no action on this proposal.

The proposed 2001 Mineral Withdrawal for the Siskiyou Wild Rivers area had wide spread support from the Grants Pass Daily Courier to The Oregonian, and many others across the country (see attached Editorials). The Clinton Administration's stated purpose for the proposed withdrawal was to:

*protect the nationally significant ecologic and biologic diversity of the **Siskiyou Wild Rivers area** which also contain outstanding scenic and recreation values, and special status plant and animal species and their habitats while it is determined whether special*

management designation for the area is warranted and to assess the views of the public on such a designation (FRN: January 22, 2001 Vol 66, No. 14, pp 6664).

However, the Bush Administration canceled the withdrawal on May 21, 2002 (FRN: Vol 67, No. 98, pp 35830-35832). We look forward to working with your offices to address this unfinished business that was ignored by the Bush Administration and to protect the nationally significant Siskiyou Wild Rivers area.

Sincerely,

Shane Jimerfield, Siskiyou Project
Erik Fernandez, Oregon Wild
Joseph Vaile, Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands
Center
Dave Willis, Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Ann Vileisis, Kalmiopsis Audubon Society
Barbara Ullian, Friends of the Kalmiopsis
Jim Rogers, Friends of Elk River
Mary Camp, Deer Creek Valley Natural
Resources Conservation
Cindy Haws, Umpqua Watersheds
Brent Fenty, Oregon Natural Desert Association
Greg Dyson, Hells Canyon Preservation Council
Josh Laughlin, Cascadia Wildlands
Bob Friemark, The Wilderness Society

Bob Sallinger, Audubon Society of Portland
Scott Greacen, Environmental Protection
Information Center
Pete Nichols, Northcoast Environmental Center
Kieran Suckling, Center for Biological Diversity
Mike Petersen, The Lands Council
Jon Hunter, Endangered Species Coalition
Marty Hayden, Earthjustice
Randy Rasmussen, American Hiking Society
Tom Wolf, Oregon Council Trout Unlimited
John DeVoe, WaterWatch
John Kober, Pacific Rivers Council
Russ Pascoe, Lower Columbia Canoe and
Kayak Club