



JOHN A. KITZHABER, MD  
Governor

September 27, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Edward Shepard  
BLM Oregon State Office Director  
333 SW 1<sup>st</sup> Ave.  
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Interior Secretary Salazar and Oregon BLM Director Shepard:

I write on behalf of the State of Oregon regarding the recent Department of the Interior request for input regarding identification of "Crown Jewels" on Bureau of Land Management lands across the nation. I applaud the Department's effort to seek bi-partisan support in creating new Wilderness designations and appreciate the opportunity to submit Oregon-focused recommendations.

As governor, I recognize Wilderness embodies much of what makes Oregon special: amazing natural treasures, clean air and water, unparalleled recreation, wild places of rare solitude, economic opportunities, and protected unique habitat. Of the many special places across Oregon, I believe the following have the requisite support and attributes needed qualify for Wilderness designation during the 112th Congress.

- **Devil's Staircase Wilderness (Coos Bay BLM District):** This proposal was introduced in both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate on April 8, 2011, with a Senate hearing on May 18 of this year. The legislation would designate nearly 30,000 acres of old-growth forest as Wilderness, spanning BLM and US Forest Service lands in the Coast Range Mountains southwest of Eugene. Based on support, the proposal moved quickly through the Congressional vetting process in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress and was included in the public lands omnibus bill in late 2010. Congress adjourned before this bill received a floor vote.
- **Cathedral Rock and Horse Heaven Wildernesses (Prineville BLM District):** These proposed Wilderness areas are situated approximately four miles apart and would protect 8,200 and 8,900 acres of desert wildlands, respectively. They were both introduced in the U.S. Senate on March 17, 2011, with a Senate hearing the same day. Both proposals include land exchanges that would address problems associated with checkerboard (public / private) ownership patterns, resulting in improved management and public access to the popular John Day River in north-central Oregon. Originally introduced in January 2010, this bill received a hearing in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress and made substantial progress towards mark-up.
- **Wild Rogue Wilderness (Medford BLM District):** This proposal was introduced in two previous Congresses as a Wild & Scenic rivers package and was modified last year to address timber interest concerns. The resulting compromise includes 58,000 acres of Wilderness located in the Siskiyou Mountains of southwest Oregon in an area of the Rogue River known for world-class rafting, fishing, and renowned salmon runs. This proposal has significant support from the business community, which relies heavily on the Rogue River for its economic prosperity.

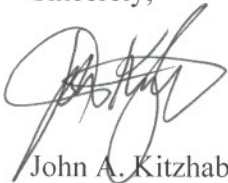
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In addition to these proposed Wilderness areas, many other places in Oregon are worthy of protection, although they have had less Congressional and public vetting. Examples I am interested in seeing discussed further include Sutton Mountain (Prineville BLM District), Crabtree Valley (Salem BLM District), Green Springs Mountain (Medford BLM District), and the Owyhee Canyonlands (Vale and Burns BLM Districts). Additionally, I am aware of support from various scientists for expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (Medford BLM District) to better safeguard protection of the area's unique biological values. I flag these as examples for continued discussion amongst Oregon's interested citizens, communities, and your Department in the context efforts beyond the current "Crown Jewels" process.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the Oregon & California Lands (O&C) situation. While O&C acreage is included in the Devil's Staircase and Wild Rogue proposals, concern over potential loss of county revenue is addressed due to the vast majority of these lands already being designated as off-limits to timber removal. That said, the situation surrounding O&C management is urgent. Along with others already engaged on this issue, it is critical that we promptly advance a long-term, sustainable solution to revenues from O&C lands in support of local infrastructure and jobs.

I believe the areas identified above--Devil's Staircase, Cathedral Rock and Horse Heaven, and the Wild Rogue—have the requisite community support and Congressional and administration input from over the years to be worthy of inclusion in your list to Congress. Wilderness designation for these lands would be a positive step in perpetuating Oregon's great natural heritage and promoting our collective quality of life. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my input. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any thoughts or questions.

Sincerely,



John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.  
Governor

c: Bob Abbey, Director, Bureau of Land Management

JAK/bb/lj