



OREGON'S SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

The Smith River National Recreation Area Expansion Act

Cosponsors: Senators Wyden, Feinstein and Padilla

Background

In 1990, Congress enacted legislation to establish the Smith River National Recreation Area (NRA) that protected the Smith River watershed in California. Unfortunately, the boundary of the NRA stopped at the Oregon border, leaving the North Fork of the Smith River and its tributaries, unprotected. The *Smith River National Recreation Area Expansion Act* expands the NRA to include 58,000 acres of the North Fork Smith River watershed including tributaries which contain coho and Chinook salmon, and Coastal Cutthroat trout.

The Smith River is home to a rich life forms – from the diverse Siskiyou Mountains forests to unique plants found nowhere else on earth to ancient, towering redwoods along the lower river. The Smith River NRA offers exceptional recreational activities, including water sports, fishing, hunting, camping, and sightseeing because the scenic beauty, world class fisheries, exceptional water quality, and abundant wildlife.

Elements of the Legislation

- **Boundary Adjustment:** The legislation would adjust the NRA boundaries to add approximately 58,000 acres of the North Fork Smith watershed in Oregon to the Smith River NRA.
- **Permanent Mineral Withdrawal:** The legislation would protect all land located inside the National Recreation Area by permanently withdrawing them from new mining claims, helping protect this sensitive area from proposed nickel strip mines.
- **Wild and Scenic River Protection:** The legislation would designate 75.22 river miles of wild and scenic rivers, including Baldface Creek, Chrome Creek and nearby streams.
- **Recreation Planning:** The legislation would direct the U.S. Forest Service to prepare an updated recreation plan to reflect the expansion of the recreation area into Oregon.
- **A Special Study:** The legislation would require a special study of streams, fens, wetlands and potentially unstable and vulnerable aquatic habitat areas.
- **Wildfire Management:** The legislation would continue to allow the Secretary to continue (in cooperation with other Federal, State, and local agencies, as appropriate) to conduct wildland fire operations within the recreation area, consistent with the purposes of this Act.
- **Travel Management Plans:** The legislation makes no changes to completed Travel Management Plans on both the Smith River NRA and in the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest where the expansion will occur.

North Fork Smith Addition to Smith River National Recreation Area

