



KS WILD

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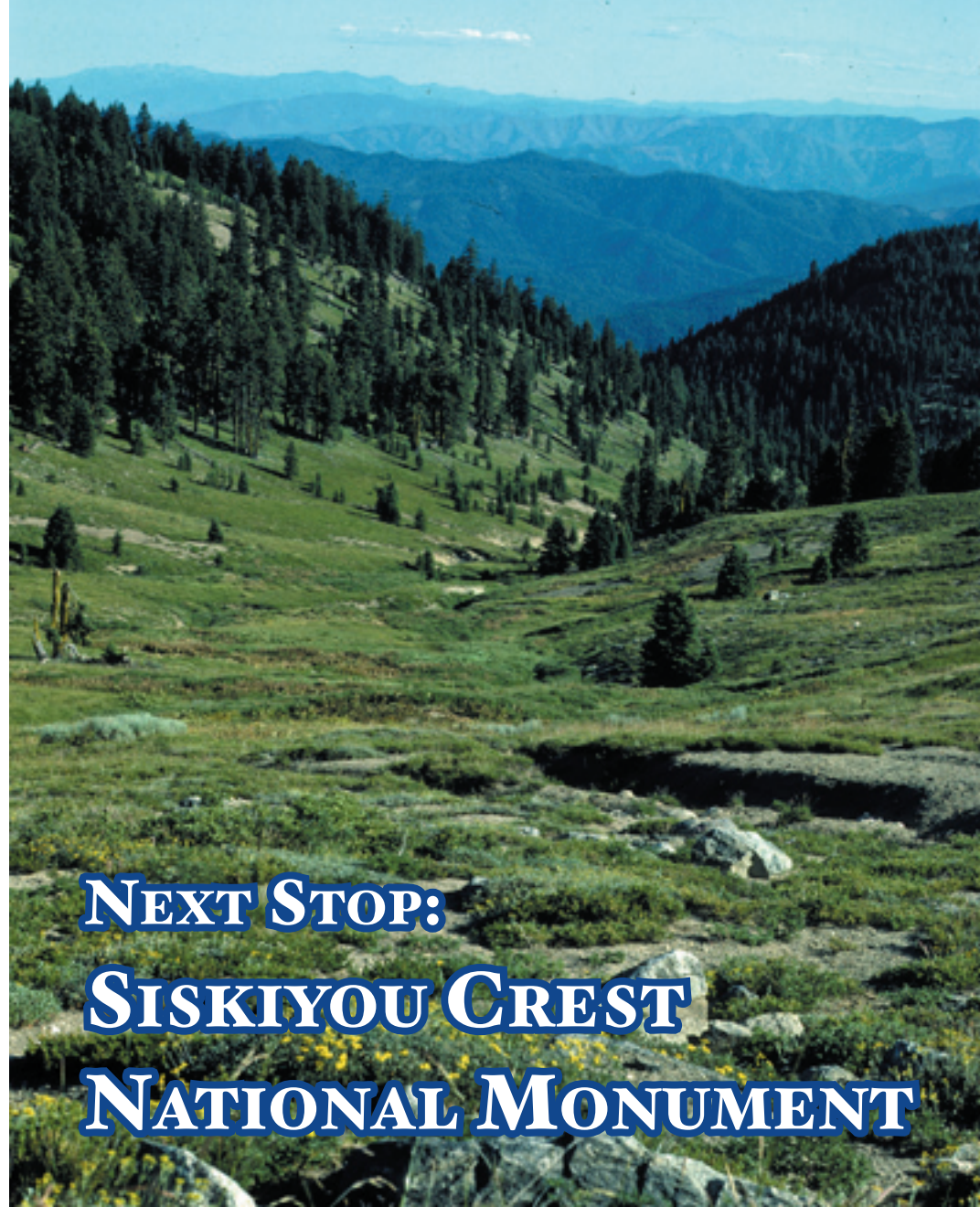
KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
Summer 2009

SPEAK UP AND TAKE ACTION

Visit www.kswild.org to view our action alerts and be a voice for the voiceless. With a few quick clicks of a button, you can help KS Wild protect wildlands and rivers in the Klamath-Siskiyou by sending automatic emails to decision-makers. Help to close unnecessary, damaging roads on the Klamath National Forest and stop a destructive Liquefied Natural Gas proposal that threatens the Rogue River.

Cover Photo: The Siskiyou Crest and Kangaroo Roadless Area from the Pacific Crest Trail. Photo by George Wuerthner.
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NEXT STOP: SISKIYOU CREST NATIONAL MONUMENT

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KS News is produced
by the KS Wild staff.

SISKIYOU CREST HIKE SERIES

As the valleys dry out in the summer, spring is just beginning its bloom on the high ridges of the Siskiyou Crest! Enjoy sweeping views, rugged beauty and outstanding biodiversity right in our backyard. We will discuss the proposal for a Siskiyou Crest National Monument (see pages 5-8).



KS Wild file photo

We will discuss the proposal for a Siskiyou Crest National Monument (see pages 5-8).

JULY 18-RED MOUNTAIN, PACIFIC CREST TRAIL

Walk through rare wildflowers, unusual geology and enjoy fantastic views in every direction. Moderate-strenuous, 5 miles.

AUG. 22-COOK AND GREEN PASS, RED BUTTES

Natural lakes are rare in the Siskiyou, but we will pass by two on the Pacific Crest Trail in the Red Buttes Wilderness. Moderate-strenuous, 8-mile loop.

SEPT. 12-MIDDLE FORK APPLIGATE, FROG POND LOOP

Visit a subalpine lake in the Red Buttes and loop around for expansive views from atop the Siskiyou Crest. Moderate-strenuous, 5 miles with a fair amount of elevation gain.

All summer hikes will meet at 9am at Evo's Cafe in Ashland. The Aug. and Sept. hikes will also have a meeting point at the Ruch Country Store at 9:45. Bring water, lunch, good shoes, appropriate clothes and binoculars if you have them.

SAVE THE DATE:

KS WILD'S ANNUAL DINNER

Saturday, September 26th, 5:30pm

Historic Ashland Armory, 208 Oak Street

KS WILD'S MISSION:

KS Wild is an advocate for the forests, waters and wildlife of the Klamath and Rogue Basins of northwest California and southwest Oregon. We use environmental law, science, collaboration and education to defend healthy ecosystems and help build sustainable communities.

MANY THANKS TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

DEEP GRATITUDE GOES TO: James Almarode, Neal Anderson, Joseph Bower, Richard Brock, Christopher Cali, Linda Connolly, Romain Cooper, Clint & Mary Driver, Shelly Elkovich & Jeff Heglie, David & Carol Gasser, Mary Heckenlaible, Brad Horwitz, Jeff Kahn, Philip Krohn, Tracy Parks Lamblin, Walter and Conny Lindley, Anne Mack, Sally Mackler, Erin Madden, Steven & Jennifer Marsden, Katherine Mechling & Jim Gurley, Lewis Nash, Tom Peil, Tom Powell & Maud Macrory, Margaret Purves, Lundy & Fredric Reynolds, Gene Rhough, Victoria Richert & Thomas Brown, Edward & Gloria Robin, Peter & Karen Salant, Melissa Schweisguth, Lynda & Steven Sirianni, Joyce Stahmann, Hans Stroo, Steven & Priscilla Weaver.

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THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS: 444S Foundation, Anne K. Millis Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation, Bullitt Foundation, Burning Foundation, Conservation Alliance, Deer Creek Foundation, Environment Now, Firedoll Foundation, Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund, Heller Charitable & Educational Fund, Jubitz Family Foundation, Kenney Watershed Foundation, Lazar Foundation, Suzan R. Mackler Fund, McKenzie River Gathering Foundation, Giles & Elise Mead Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Norcross Wildlife Foundation, Patagonia, Resource Renewal Institute, Sangham Foundation, Sperling Foundation, Weeden Foundation, Wilburforce Foundation, Zephyr Fund.

PLEASE JOIN KS WILD TODAY!

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\$20 \$35 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

Name _____ Date _____

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Mail this form along with your membership donation to: KS WILD, P.O. Box 332, Williams, OR 97544 or visit www.kswild.org/JoinNow to donate with a credit card

FOCUS ON OUR KS WILD FAMILY

SISKIYOU FIREWEED/ WILLOWHERB - *EPILOBIUM SISKIYOUENSE*



Norman Jensen

On the slopes and ridges of the Siskiyou Crest grows one of the many endemic plants for which the Klamath-Siskiyou region is known. Siskiyou fireweed, also known as Siskiyou willowherb, is a rare species of flowering plant found only in the Klamath, Siskiyou, Eddy, and Trinity Mountains. A small, clumping subshrub, Siskiyou fireweed may go unnoticed but if in bloom its showy, deep pink flowers are eye-catching.

Siskiyou fireweed is a member of the evening primrose family (Onagraceae). The genus *Epilobium* has 150-200 species and includes 4 Klamath-Siskiyou endemics. Many people are familiar with the tall, common fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*), which occurs throughout temperate North America, rapidly covering newly burned and other disturbed areas.

A serpentine endemic, Siskiyou fireweed grows in ultramafic (highly basic) soils on open or forested rocky areas at higher elevations. East of the Red Buttes Wilderness along the crest is White Mountain, so named because its ultramafic rocks are light in color. Siskiyou fireweed grows on the slopes of western white pine and Jeffrey pine forests and was first described by botanists from a specimen collected from this population.

ELIZABETH SPAULDING

KS Wild is fortunate to have summer legal interns from law schools across the Pacific Northwest. This year we are happy to welcome Elizabeth Spaulding, who just finished her second year of law school at the University of Oregon where she is completing certificates in both environmental and international law. Elizabeth is simultaneously pursuing a Masters in Conflict and Dispute Resolution.

When she is not studying, working for the City of Eugene Outdoor Program or organizing service learning trips for UO undergraduates, Elizabeth enjoys the great outdoors, yoga, music, and travel. She is working with KS Wild's Rogue Riverkeeper and Forest Watch programs performing legal research and writing. We are excited to have her in the Klamath-Siskiyou this summer and part of the KS Wild crew.



KLAMATH NATIONAL FOREST CHOOSES OFF-ROAD VEHICLES OVER WATERSHEDS

"It's a good thing to follow the First Law of Holes: If you are in one, stop digging."
- Denis Healey

"Any decision to add road mileage to the system should consider the constrained road maintenance budget and the potential conflicts that additional maintenance needs will engender." - Klamath National Forest Roads Analysis page 69.

During the logging boom of the 1970s and 80s timber planners in the Klamath National Forest (KNF) built logging roads like there was no tomorrow. Well tomorrow has come, and taxpayers are now saddled with thousands of miles of crumbling and unsafe roads that fragment habitat and dump sediment into streams every time it rains.

The deferred road maintenance backlog on the KNF exceeds \$55.5 million. And this figure grows every year.

Due to the widespread damage that Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) have caused to streams and forests nationwide, the Forest Service has been compelled to begin a process to designate where motorized use is allowed, and where it should be prohibited to protect forest and watershed values.

During its inventory, the KNF identified 470 miles of illegal roads that had been blazed by ORV users. The Forest Service is now proposing to reward their destructive behavior by adding 92 miles of these routes to the formal road system. These routes will be added to the road maintenance backlog, and the public will be on the hook to maintain even more roads in the Klamath River watershed.

While the Forest Service is proposing to add 92 miles of illegal roads to the system, it is proposing to close none of the existing roads that degrade salmon habitat. Simply put, ORVs are more important than salmon to KNF planners.

TAKE ACTION: Please take a moment to write the Forest Service requesting that their travel management plan acknowledge the value of wildlife and watersheds by closing destructive roads that harm water quality.

Comments may be sent to: comments-pacificsouthwest-klamath@fs.fed.us
For a sample letter and link to the KNF proposal: www.kswild.org/klamathroads



George Sexton

WHAT ABOUT SALMON? Roads, like this one in the Scott River watershed, channel sediment into rivers and choke salmon.



ROGUE RIVERKEEPER TACKLES GOLD MINING POLLUTION

Most Americans have heard of the 1849 Gold Rush that lured prospectors from around the world to mine for gold in California and southern Oregon. Less known are the environmental consequences left behind from the frenzied search, including a heavy toll placed on water quality and fish populations. Thick sediment choked out salmon streams, and hydraulic mining altered the morphology and hydrology of watersheds. In addition, abandoned mines long out of operation leach poisonous metals into our waterways.

In the Rogue Basin, there is no better example of mining's toxic legacy than the abandoned Almeda mine located 25 miles northwest of Grants Pass. The mine is located within the Congressionally designated Wild and Scenic Rogue River, and in winter months bright orange metal-laden water leaks out of the abandoned gold mine and into the Rogue. The Bureau of Land Management is the owner and responsible party of the Almeda mine, and Rogue Riverkeeper is watching them closely this summer to ensure that they take appropriate measures to alleviate this pollution.



Lesley Adams

GOLD'S TOXIC LEGACY: The abandoned Almeda mine northwest of Grants Pass drains heavy metals into the Wild and Scenic Rogue River.

CLEANING UP A CURRENT MESS

While the Rogue and Klamath Basins are splattered with abandoned mines, there are still active gold mining operations that threaten water quality and salmon. The largest active underground mine in Oregon is the Benton gold mine adjacent to Whisky Creek, a tributary of the Wild and Scenic Rogue River a few miles downstream of Almeda. Whisky Creek provides important spawning habitat for steelhead and threatened Coho salmon. Benton was opened in the late 19th century and closed in the 1940s.

Dutch Mining of Merlin began operating the mine again in 1994 under an exploratory permit. In 2007, Dutch Gold, a venture capital firm based in Atlanta, bought Dutch Mining and began the process to move the mine into full production. After KS Wild documented turbidity violations downstream of the Benton mine in 2008, Rogue Riverkeeper began researching the mine's activities and found they had been illegally operating for years. The mine includes two sites in the Whisky Creek watershed and a processing mill in Merlin. All three sites are violating federal environmental laws including the Clean Water Act and/or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

WILD ROGUE, OREGON CAVES LEGISLATION REINTRODUCED

On June 16, Representative Peter DeFazio and Senator Ron Wyden reintroduced legislation that will protect 143 miles of Lower Rogue tributaries and expand the Oregon Caves National Monument. The legislation also allows for the retirement of a cattle grazing allotment in the North Kangaroo Roadless Area. KS Wild has been working with outdoor industry businesses, local tourism interests and conservation allies to strengthen protections for the Rogue and the Oregon Caves. We will continue to pursue Wilderness, Wild and Scenic and Monument expansion protections for these two southern Oregon gems. Thanks to everyone who has helped raise the profile of these natural treasures. Now it's time to finish the job.



Lesley Adams

Visit www.kswild.org for updates and to learn how you can help move these bills through Congress. Visit www.savethewildrogue.org for this summer's Lower Rogue hike schedule.

GET YOUR NEW MAP OF THE KLAMATH-SISKIYOU BIOREGION

After several rounds of refinement, KS Wild's new 2X3-foot, laminated, full-color map of the Klamath-Siskiyou is now available to the public.

The high-resolution, shaded-relief portrayal of the mountains, rivers and watersheds of our region is mesmerizing in its detail, durable and attractive enough to hang in a prominent place in your home.

If you love the Klamath-Siskiyou, you will love this map. It is totally unique, beautiful to look at and full of information about this amazing corner of the world.

Purchase maps online at www.kswild.org or call 488-5789 to place an order. Maps are \$25 plus \$5 for shipping, or receive a map with a \$50 annual membership.



SUCKER CREEK: COHO STRONGHOLD OR MINING PIT?

Back in August of 2007 the unthinkable happened when a holding pond for a private gold mining operation on the banks of Sucker Creek rapidly filled with subsurface water and blasted turbid water into Sucker Creek, creating a sediment plume that fouled water quality in this salmon stronghold for days.

Now the Forest Service is considering a proposal (called Tracy Placer) to construct yet another mining pond on the edge of Sucker Creek - this time on public lands.

While the Sucker Creek mining site that blew out in 2007 contained fine grain soils and rocks, which are relatively well suited for a holding pond, the proposed site for the new mining operation consists of larger rock deposits that the Forest Service fears will be even more susceptible to sub-surface flows and discharge into Coho salmon habitat.

The Forest Service acknowledges that the proposed mining will likely harm water quality and kill threatened Coho salmon, but the agency feels compelled by the 1872 Mining Law to make our public lands available to miners for their private profit.

The 1872 Mining Law is perhaps the most archaic public lands law on the books. It limits the ability of the Forest Service to protect water or wildlife, and it authorizes mineral removal on federal lands without requiring that the taxpayer receive a royalty from the private mining profits.

For years, conservationists and fiscal conservatives have tried to reform the Mining Law to bring some fairness to public lands mining. Time and time again reasonable reform has been thwarted by the mining lobby. Most recently (in 2008) Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid blocked a compromise bill that had passed the House of Representatives.

But change is coming. A vast majority of Americans believe that miners should have to comply with reasonable rules, and that taxpayers should get a fair return for minerals removed from public lands.

Whether working for reform of the 1872 Mining Law, or standing up for the at-risk Coho in Sucker Creek, you can count on KS Wild to do everything in our power to ensure that wild salmon and healthy rivers are around forever.



George Sexton

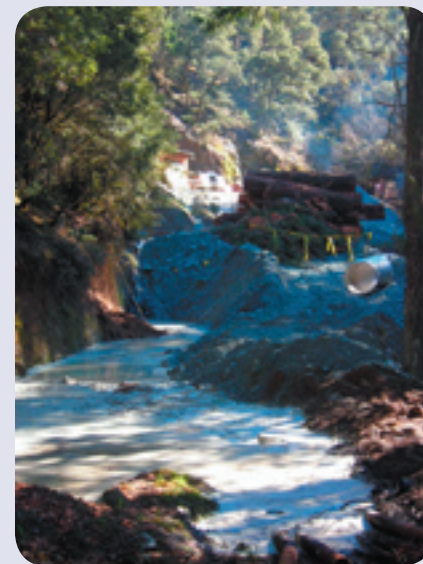
A BAD LAW FOR BAD TIMES: The 1872 Mining Law limits protections for water and wildlife while allowing private interests to profit from degrading public lands and waters.

In May, Rogue Riverkeeper and the Northwest Environmental Defense Center (NEDC) sent a 60-day notice to the owners of the Benton mine. The notice outlines more than a decade of violations, including failure to obtain permits, discharging wastewater and fill material without a permit, failure to monitor and report discharges and dumping of mining waste. Potential pollutants from the mine include sediment, oil, grease, copper, lead and other dangerous metals.

Rogue Riverkeeper and NEDC are being represented by Erin Madden of Cascadia Law in Portland. We await a response from Dutch Gold and are prepared to file suit once the 60 days have expired.

ADDRESSING THE TOXIC LEGACY

In addition to monitoring existing mining operations, Rogue Riverkeeper is researching the silent toxic legacy of abandoned mines. In some cases, abandoned mines are poisoning soil and water without any mitigation. In other cases, the exact location of abandoned mines is unknown, much less their pollution contributions to the Rogue River and its tributaries. Rogue Riverkeeper has activated a campaign to minimize the impacts of existing gold mining activities, and ameliorate the toxic legacy of those mines long left to silently pollute the Rogue.



George Sexton

DUMPING WASTE ON SALMON: Mining operations put sediment, waste rock and heavy metals into streams.

LNG UPDATE

In May, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission released its final environmental analysis for the proposal to build a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) import facility in Coos Bay and an associated pipeline to California. FERC determined that mitigation efforts were sufficient for the energy companies to proceed. FERC chose to ignore the fact that scores of interests, including the state of Oregon, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, fishing interests and private citizens have thoroughly documented the insufficient analysis of social, economic, security and environmental impacts.

Rogue Riverkeeper, the Western Environmental Law Center and allies remain engaged in the process and are assessing legal options to challenge the dangerous Jordan Cove/Pacific Connector LNG project. For more information and to learn how you can help, visit www.kswild.org/lng.



Lesley Adams

A CALL TO PROTECT A MONUMENTAL LANDSCAPE

HELP CREATE THE SISKIYOU CREST NATIONAL MONUMENT

The Siskiyou Crest is a land of superlatives, a place that evokes excitement from scientists and poets alike, attracting hikers, botanists and outdoors people from around the world to visit, research and explore.

Gaining meaningful protections for this ecological and recreational centerpiece of the Klamath-Siskiyou is a primary goal for KS Wild. We are now embarking on a journey to create the Siskiyou Crest National Monument, and we need your help.



Lesley Adams

AN ECOLOGICAL ARK: The Siskiyou Crest is worthy of our nation's highest protections.

A LAND BRIDGE AT A CROSSROADS

The Crest is geographically and geologically remarkable, consisting of high ridges of complexly varied rock types criss-crossing the Oregon/California border. While most montane systems in North America are positioned north-south, the Siskiyou Crest stretches east-west. This unusual orientation gives the Crest a vital role as the only high quality habitat corridor connecting the Coast Ranges of Oregon and California to the Cascade and Sierra Mountains, creating a "land bridge" much like the crossbar in a giant "H" on the west of the continent.

Sitting at the crossroads of so many far-flung ecosystems, the Crest contains species from all of them, leading to an exceptional array of life forms living side by side, including many endemic species found nowhere else on earth. The Crest is home to the highest concentration of plant species in one area in the state of California, making it a globally significant hotspot for botanical and butterfly diversity.

Climate scientists are adding urgency to the calls of conservationists to protect intact forest habitat immediately.

This land bridge effect acts as a travel conduit for wide-ranging mammals to migrate. Wolverine, marten, lynx, fisher, mountain lion, bear, and elk currently inhabit or have been recently sighted in the area. The cool waters flowing from the Crest into the Rogue, Klamath, Applegate, and Illinois basins are a refuge for endangered wild salmon, and provide drinking water for many local communities, including Ashland.

WILDERNESS PARADISE

The Chetco River possesses unrivaled beauty and diversity. Crystal clear water, deep pools and pristine wilderness tributaries provide critical habitat for at-risk salmonids. Rare flowers and shrubs that grow nowhere else in the world make their home in the serpentine soils that line the river. River otters outnumber human visitors. The Chetco is a vision of unspoiled wildness.

PARADISE LOST

But not everyone values the Chetco for its scenic splendor and water quality; a miner from Washington State has proposed suction dredging along a 24-mile portion of the river from Chetco Bar (in the middle of the Wilderness) downstream through the Wild and Scenic River Corridor. River dredging outside of the Wilderness boundary began in the summer of 2008, and the miner has submitted a plan of operations to the Forest Service to dredge claims within the Wilderness.

Upstream on the Little Chetco lies the only private inholding within the Kalmiopsis Wilderness. Miners have converted this inholding into a for-profit recreational mining destination where customers pay \$1,500 to be helicoptered into the Wilderness to mine within the otherwise pristine watershed. The inholding is currently subject to rampant development as the owner ignores county ordinances (including a stop work order) and continues to build resort structures in the headwaters of the Chetco watershed.

AT A JUNCTION

When camped at the remote confluence of Slide Creek and the Chetco River one has time to contemplate the mysteries, and the future, of the Wilderness. Should you ford the river and hike upstream on the Chetco River trail and visit Babyfoot Creek? Should you adventure downstream into the heart of the Wilderness? Or should you loll about all day in a swimming hole? Each option gives one plenty of opportunities to think about how rare it is to be in a watershed that is as wild and pristine as the Chetco.

The Chetco River itself is also at a crossroads. Is this river destined to become a series of suction mining sites with helicopters dropping hobby-miners into the hidden corners of the wilderness? Will the Chetco remain a refuge for wild salmon and steelhead, or will it be defined by the sediment plumes of gas-powered dredges along 24 river miles?

A Kalmiopsis Wilderness map, a solid pair of boots, and a lot of gumption will allow you to contemplate those questions for yourself, in one of the most beautiful places on the planet.



George Sexton

UNRIVALED BEAUTY: The Chetco is a vision of unspoiled wildness.

FEATURED HIKE: CHETCO RIVER AND THE KALMIOPSIS WILDERNESS

Most of the hikes that have been detailed in the *KS Wild News* over the years are relatively short and easy routes leading to areas of botanical interest that we are working to protect. While the Wild and Scenic Chetco River in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness is an at-risk botanical hot spot, there is nothing remotely short or easy about a visit to the Chetco.

FIRE AND CLEARCUTS

The trailhead at Onion Camp is a study in contrasts. The trailhead and the adjacent Babyfoot Botanical Area (set aside to protect the rare and endemic Brewer's spruce) were illegally clearcut by the Forest Service following the 2002 Biscuit Fire. The stark landscape of blackened stumps in the clearcut could not be more different than the naturally recovering post-fire forests that line the trail and define the Wilderness.

Much of the hike to the Chetco River follows the very high severity eastern portion of the Biscuit fire. While shade and live trees can be hard to come by, the panoramic views of the fire's mosaic burn pattern from the Kalmiopsis Rim are simply breathtaking. Close inspection of the post-fire ecosystem reveals botanical recovery ranging from nitrogen fixing ceanothus brush, to conifer seedlings, to wildflower meadows; all of which can be contrasted with the sterile post-logging slash fields located in the clearcut at the trailhead.

A LONG WAY TO WATER

The trail from Onion Camp to the Chetco Pass traverses four miles of ridgeline, snaking up and over Whetstone Butte and Eagle Mountain. Just off trail in the gap between the two peaks is the last reliable source of water for several miles. A darlingtonia (cobra lily) fen marks the spring.

From Chetco Gap it is about another four miles, and several thousand feet of elevation loss along an old mining road into the Wilderness and down to the confluence of Slide Creek and the Chetco River. The long slog down to the river passes a number of old gold mines littered with historic mining equipment.



George Sexton

ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME: For a remote and rugged experience, hike into the Chetco watershed.

BIODIVERSITY AT ITS BEST

The Siskiyou Crest contains ancient forests, high elevation meadows, spectacular peaks, native grasslands, oak woodlands, pine savannahs and lush streamside forests. The Siskiyou Mountain Salamander lives only in these mountains. Over 20 conifer species grow along the wildlands of the Crest, and the area is associated with numerous rare and unique plant species, including Baker cypress, Applegate gooseberry and Siskiyou fireweed (see page 13).



Lesley Adams

EPIC HIKING OPPORTUNITIES: The Siskiyou Crest offers residents and visitors sweeping views, including West Fork Ashland Creek and the South Cascades.

While hundreds of thousands of acres of the landscape surrounding the Crest remain wilderness-quality, very little of it is substantially protected. Industrial logging, road-building, intensive livestock grazing and off-road vehicle abuse have taken a toll on significant areas of the Crest.

WHY A NATIONAL MONUMENT FOR THE SISKIYOU CREST?

Climate scientists are adding urgency to the calls of conservationists to protect intact forest habitat immediately. The threats global warming presents to the survival of America's wildlife requires the protection of landscapes that connect critical habitats. While protecting the best, we should also focus on making the degraded landscape more resilient to changing conditions.

A National Monument designation would offer protection for the most pristine places, while allowing for active management and restoration on already impacted areas. Monument status provides for continued recreation use, including hiking, camping, hunting, fishing and back-country skiing. Nearly 60 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail pass through the proposed monument, and the main access roads would remain open. Visitation to the area is already a boon for gateway communities as people spend money in local stores, restaurants and hotels. Private landowners within the monument boundary would see no affect to their property rights, and may enjoy increased land value.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Visit the crest and bring your friends. Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper in favor of protecting the Siskiyou Crest. Help us pass resolutions in local governments across the region endorsing a National Monument designation. Sign up for the *KS Wild eNews* on our website, www.kswild.org, to receive updates and be alerted when folks can take coordinated action like mass letters to decision makers.

Proposed Siskiyou Crest National Monument

An Ark for Biodiversity



Rugged and geologically complex peaks



Headwater streams of the Rogue and Klamath Rivers



Diverse forests, grasslands, meadows, shrubs...

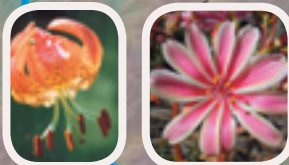


Vital habitat for carnivores



--- Pacific Crest Trail
Existing Wilderness
Oregon Caves N.M.
Cascade Siskiyou N.M.

Map by Joseph Vaile



Botanical hotspots

Siskiyou Crest Trek 2009

This August, scientific and conservation leaders convened by KS Wild will embark on a 90-mile hiking expedition to transect the proposed Siskiyou Crest National Monument using multimedia coverage to provide the public with an ecological snapshot of what we discover!

Sponsor a hiker! We are looking for folks who support permanent protection for the Siskiyou Crest to commit \$1/mile (or more or less) to help fund this outreach effort. Please contact laurel@kswild.org to sign up as a sponsor.

Visit www.kswild.org/siskiyoucresttrek for more information and updates.