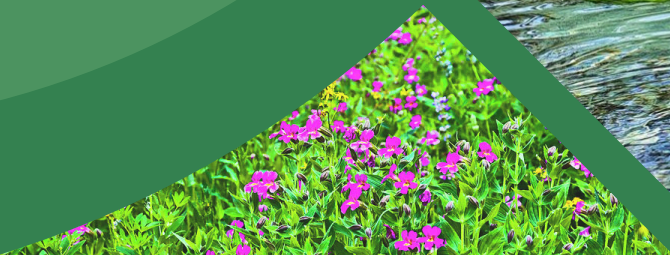


Crater Lake Wilderness Proposal

The Magic of the Crater Lake Wilderness



The Magic of the Crater Lake Wilderness

Crater Lake and its surrounding wildlands have inspired generations, providing the postcard image that captures Oregon's beauty and commitment to conservation. Every year, Crater Lake attracts half a million visitors to gaze into its pure, clean water, marvel at its unique geology, and explore its rugged backcountry.

The natural beauty of Crater Lake extends far beyond Wizard Island and the Caldera. It includes 450,000 acres of pristine roadless lands both inside and outside of the official boundaries of the park (not including the lodge or park roads). We cherish places such as the Pumice Desert, the craggy spire of Mount Thielsen, the rugged backcountry of Mount Bailey, and the headwaters of the Rogue and Umpqua Rivers.

Although Crater Lake is one of Oregon's crown jewels, the wildlands within and surrounding the National Park are not immune to threats. Logging, off-road vehicles, and destructive development schemes continue to put these wildlands - and the solitude they provide - at risk. The eruption of Mount Mazama around 5700 BCE gave us the gift that is Crater Lake. Today, it is incumbent upon us to pass this natural legacy on to future generations unspoiled. Wilderness Protection for Crater Lake and the surrounding areas is needed now more than ever.

From Natural Disaster to National Park and Beyond

Eight thousand years ago, Mount Mazama stood approximately 12,000 feet tall as the most prominent Cascades peak between Mount Shasta and the Three Sisters. The mountain formed half a million years ago as tectonic plates collided, and magma emerged at the surface. After frequent periods of volcanic activity, Mount Mazama exploded in spectacular fashion approximately 7,700 years ago.

The legend passed down from the Makalak people (whose modern descendants include the Klamath Tribe) tells a story of two great spirit chiefs with fire and red hot rocks.

The battle ultimately led to the release of 12 cubic miles of rock and ash with the mountain ultimately collapsing inward. When the ash settled, all that remained was a giant bowl (or caldera) six miles wide and 3,000 feet deep. Over time, collected rain and snow filled the caldera to a depth of 1,943 feet, making Crater Lake the deepest lake in North America.

The caldera and its stunning history and geology are not the only wonders that await adventurers in this area. When Mount Mazama erupted, it sent a column of ash into the sky and across western North America. Now called Mazama Ash, this nutrient-rich tephra has found its way as far away as Alberta, Canada. Ash layers up to twenty feet and pyroclastic (gas and rock) flows stretching dozens of miles knocked down forests and buried flora and fauna. Over time, the wildlands surrounding the collapsed mountain once again flourished.

Indigenous Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the lands surrounding Crater Lake — giiwas — are the ancestral homeland of the Klamath, Modoc, Cow Creek Tribe of the Umpqua Indians, and Yahooskin peoples, who together are now known as The Klamath Tribes. For thousands of years, these Nations have cared for this landscape, its waters, forests, wildlife, and sacred volcanic summit, and they continue to maintain deep cultural, spiritual, and ecological relationships with this place.

We recognize that Crater Lake is not only a national treasure, but a living sacred site, and that Indigenous stewardship, knowledge, and presence endure here today. We honor the resilience of the Tribal communities who have faced displacement, treaty violations, and ongoing colonial impacts, and we commit to learning from and supporting their leadership in caring for this land into the future.

This acknowledgment is offered with gratitude and humility, and with the understanding that true respect requires continued relationship-building, reciprocity, and action in solidarity with the Indigenous peoples of this region.

Introduction

Roadless lands around our parks and wilderness are the living shields that keep these wild places truly wild—where forests filter pure water, wildlife moves freely, carbon is safely stored, and people can still find true solitude.

Roadless and wilderness areas safeguard pristine rivers that provide clean drinking water for communities and sustain thriving fish populations and fisheries. They protect threatened and endangered native plant and animal species, preserve biological diversity, maintain the high carbon sequestration capacity of old-growth forests, promote climate stability, and sustain essential wildlife and plant migration corridors. Species need healthy intact ecosystems to find food, breed, shelter or migrate. A portion of the Crater Lake wildlands was given some protection by the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule. However, the Rule doesn't encompass all the roadless lands, isn't as protective as a Wilderness designation, could be undone by a future presidential administration, and allows reasonable exceptions that are vulnerable to abuse.

“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”
- Aldo Leopold

The Crater Lake Wilderness Proposal will include approximately 160,000 acres of Crater Lake National Park backcountry, and will not affect park roads and developed tourist areas. The proposal will add approximately 300,000 acres surrounding the park by including roadless areas and additions to existing wilderness areas such as Rogue Umpqua Divide and Mt Thielsen.

It will protect native forests that are genetically linked to the time of Mt Mazama's eruption approximately 7,700 years ago. These forests hold irreplaceable genetic legacies - living DNA that equips species to adapt to rapidly changing and increasingly chaotic climate conditions. The proposal protects the headwaters of major Southern Oregon Rivers - North and South Umpqua, Spring, Rogue, Klamath, Middle Fork Willamette and Little Deschutes, crucial for water

purity, conservation and drought. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) runs 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada across three states, 25 national forests, and 7 national parks. In Oregon, the trail covers 430 miles, approximately 33 of which stretch across the proposed Crater Lake Wilderness.



The Umpqua is incredibly unique biologically. It is considered one of the world's most biologically diverse regions due to its unique location at the southern end of the western High Cascade Mountains and the northern edge of the “Klamath Knot” - a geologic convergence of the Siskiyou and Klamath formations extending into California. This is an area of overlapping bioregions and a blending of species mix, where hemlock, fir and cedar grow with pine and oak, madrone and manzanita.

In wilderness, people can hunt, fish, backpack, camp, kayak, ski, and ride horses. Wilderness is designated for non-mechanized activities and equipment except for handicapped users who can use mechanized wheeled conveyance. Mechanization can be used in case of emergencies such as wildfire or other threats to humans, livestock or infrastructure. Wildfire can be combated with mechanization and fire roads. We've seen this done many times at Crater Lake National Park and the surrounding roadless areas.

These unlogged roadless areas are like banks where deposits over a Millenia have been stored and continually updated with crucial DNA information that informs the trees and shrubs how to adapt to drought or periods of ice and cold. They are like libraries where information about the region's biology is kept.

What's more, the top 10 US forests for carbon sequestration **includes 6 in Oregon** and several that are in the wilderness proposal - Umpqua, Willamette, Rogue-Siskiyou.

“Wilderness is a natural resource having the same basic relation to man's thought and culture as coal, timber and other physical resources have to his material needs.”

The Wilderness Society

As climate pressures intensify, development edges closer, and habitat becomes increasingly fragmented, the roadless lands between existing protected areas grow more valuable every year. These connected wildlands give wildlife the space to move, adapt, and survive; they protect the headwaters that keep rivers cold and clean; and they store the carbon that helps stabilize our climate. Just as importantly, they safeguard the quiet, beauty, and sense of renewal that people seek in truly wild places. Acting now to create a wilderness corridor ensures that the forests, waters, and creatures of this landscape remain whole and resilient, and future generations can inherit not isolated fragments, but a living, connected wild.

The Crater Lake Wilderness Proposal

The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System to “secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of Wilderness.”

“The purpose of the Wilderness Act is to preserve the wilderness character of the areas to be included in the Wilderness System, not to establish any particular use.” - Howard Zahniser, author of the Wilderness Act.

As a quintessential symbol of Oregon, Crater Lake was enshrined on our state commemorative quarter in 2005. Most Oregonians consider the lake and its surrounding wildlands to be inviolate. Sadly, this isn't the case. Despite their value for quiet recreation, wildlife habitat, and solitude, the wildlands within and surrounding the park continue to be threatened by mismanagement, misguided development, and destructive motorized use.

Today, the lands surrounding Crater Lake are managed mostly by the Park Service and the US Forest Service in a patchwork of protected Wilderness and other lands open to varying levels of development and logging. Much of the Wilderness that has been protected is “rock and ice,” mountaintops deemed safe for legislative designation by politicians due to the lack of resource extraction possibilities.

The remaining forested hillsides of the Cascade peaks

hold ecological, recreational, and scenic treasure and should be immune to current and future threats.

What's Included

The Crater Lake Wilderness Proposal includes approximately 160,000 acres of wild backcountry within Crater Lake National Park and approximately 300,000 acres surrounding the park with additions to existing wilderness. These roadless areas support abundant biological diversity and have not been cut and replanted with a monoculture of Douglas Fir.

These native forests are directly and genetically linked to the time of Mt. Mazuma's eruption some 7,700 years ago.

The approximately 450,000 acre Wilderness outlined in this document is a natural solution for the problems facing this revered place. Expanding protections in the region would link together a 90-mile stretch of the backcountry forestland, presenting pathways for people and wildlife. Ensuring that old-growth forests continue to stand tall will help slow global warming.

Prohibiting noisy and damaging motorized recreation in special areas will preserve opportunities for quiet, low-impact recreation for generations to come while protecting wildlife and their habitat.

It is our responsibility to protect this cherished asset.

The 90-Mile Wilderness Corridor of the High Cascades: This corridor is of incomparable and irreplaceable biological and scenic beauty. The center piece of the proposal is to designate wilderness for 160,000 acres of Crater Lake National Park backcountry. Developed tourist areas would not be affected. Fifty national parks have backcountry wilderness designation and 80% of national park land and water are managed as wilderness. This proposal will

- Create high quality wildlife and plant habitat and migration corridors.
- Protect rare native animals and plant species, biodiversity and plant DNA.
- Protect old growth forests that sequester carbon and protect essential water sources.



- Protect the headwaters of major rivers - North and South Umpqua, Rogue, Klamath, Little Deschutes, Middle Fork Willamette, and Spring River, which provide water to all of our communities.



In the proposal are creeks and ice-cold springs, grassy meadows, and scores of clear sub-alpine lakes. In the Western U.S., these mountain lakes are found to have among the most chemically pure water known of all lakes on the globe. These lakes and rivers supply the drinking water for our communities. Most of the lakes are set against a backdrop of tall trees. It is important wildlife habitat for elk herds, and the entire area supports roving populations of pine martens and fishers, black bears, cougars, and coyotes, as well as pikas and golden-mantled ground squirrels and other species of wildlife. Migrating birds pass over in the hundreds of thousands, often stopping at the high lakes. The Pacific Crest Trail traverses the Cascade Range from south to north, passing through some of its most scenic and ecologically significant landscapes.

What's more, science shows that intact, roadless forests are less prone to wildfire ignition. Large, unfragmented landscapes experience fewer human-caused ignitions and maintain more natural fire regimes.

Last Creek Poem by Bob Hoehne

Up where the trees are tall, I'm in awe
 Your secret beauty needs to be told
 To help protect what is left of your soul
 You're this earth in its grand
 So, you can count on us for a helping hand
 On this day we will be by your side
 Because our love for you we cannot hide

**"This is one of the great promises of the Wilderness Act. We can dedicate formerly abused areas where the primeval scene can be restored by natural forces. In this way, we can have a truly national wilderness system."
 - Senator Frank Church**



Wildlife Corridors and Connectivity

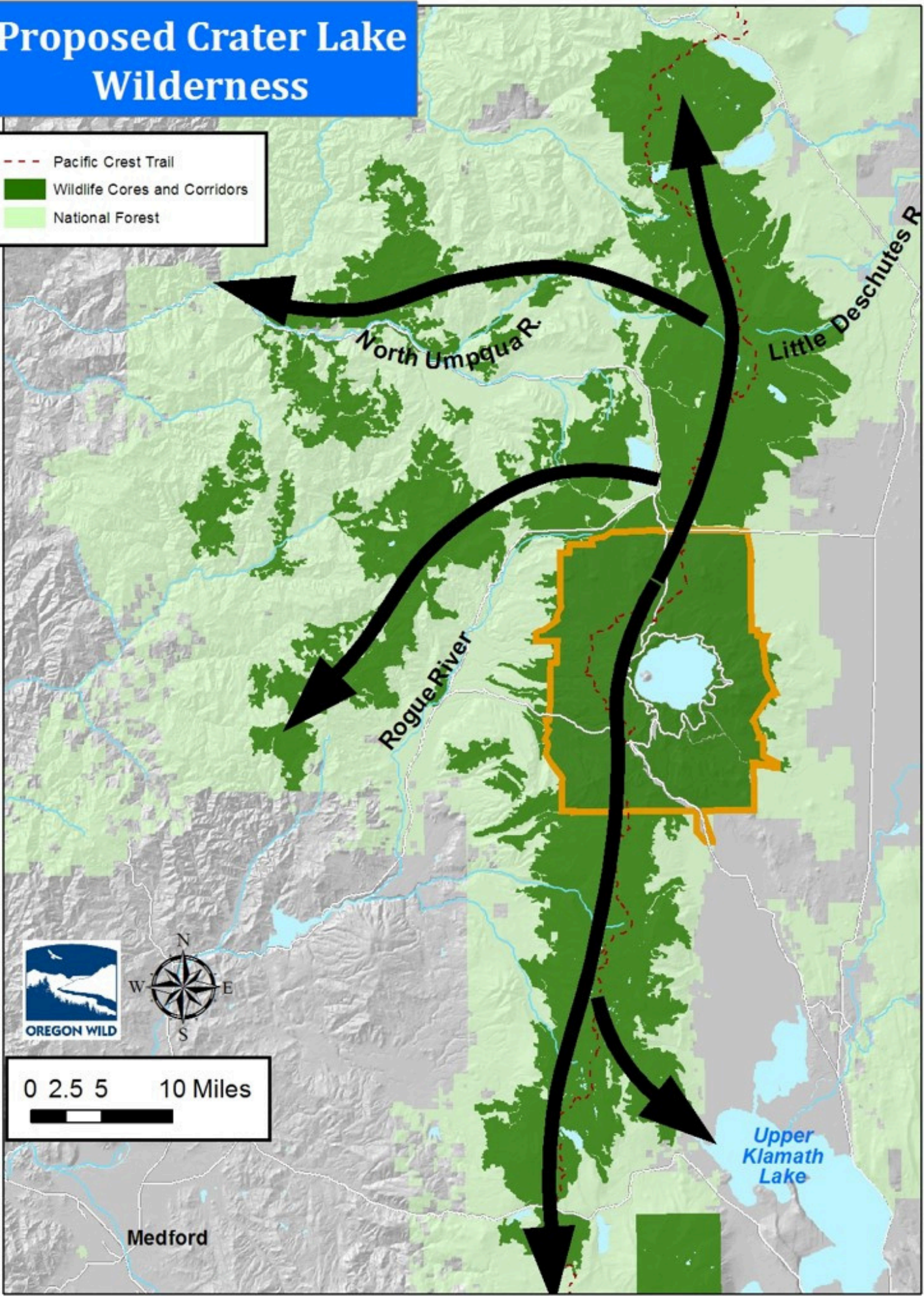
Plants and animals are losing natural habitats due to human development and the effects of climate change. To survive, they must migrate and get established in new areas. Only 14% of land in the US is protected from development in scattered islands such as parks, wilderness areas and wildlife refuges. We must conserve, expand and connect wildlands across the nation to give wildlife the needed chance. A huge threat is the consideration by the government to revoke the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule that protects over 44 million acres of intact national forest. The impacts of this action include air and water quality degradation, outdoor access restriction, and cultural site destruction. This would be devastating and the impact on wildlife disastrous.

Documented examples demonstrate that when roads are cut across intact wildlands to create energy projects and logging, natural pathways are cut off, animals are killed, and noise disturbance disrupts wildlife behavior. Wilderness Society mapping analysts gathered data that compared some existing land protected boundaries with critical habitat and migration corridors of imperiled US wildlife. The results demonstrate national monuments, roadless areas of national forests and other protected lands help to preserve vital wildlife habitat and migration needed to feed and breed.

- Wilderness Society Newsletter, Fall 2025

Proposed Crater Lake Wilderness

- - - Pacific Crest Trail
- Wildlife Cores and Corridors
- National Forest



The Economics and Non Market Values of Wilderness

The Crater Lake Wilderness proposal represents a major economic opportunity for surrounding gateway communities.

Increased home and property values, growing tourism, new business opportunities attracting innovative companies, job creation, and long-term sustainability all point to significant financial benefits. By embracing wilderness protection, local communities can secure a vibrant and resilient economy for future generations. Quality of life is enhanced, and folks choose to locate to an area to enjoy its amenity values.

Protecting landscapes for their wildland values generally has a positive net economic benefit. No evidence indicates that designation of wilderness results in job losses in logging, mining or other natural resource industries. Bringing outside money to local economies helps diversify rural communities and provides economic stability. In fact, research shows *“a serious possibility that the future economic hope for resource-dependent communities could have less to do with the consumption of natural resources than with their preservation.”*

- Counties with protected federal lands had greater job growth and higher per capita income.
- Counties that had more than 30% of their land base in federal protected lands experienced annual job growth during the last 40 years of 3.8%, while counties with no protected lands had job growth of only 1.5%.
- Per capita income in western nonmetropolitan counties with 100,000 acres of protected land was on average higher than in counties with no protected land.
- The federal government makes PILT (“In Lieu of Taxes”) payments to counties to compensate for the tax-free status of federal lands regardless of the purposes for which they are managed. Wilderness designations do not diminish the amount of PILT payments.
- Ecosystem services such as high-quality water and carbon sequestration and storage are also economic benefits.

Water source value by wilderness areas equates to a value of approximately \$3.5 billion annually.



Resource extraction has numerous negative impacts and costs that are transferred to taxpayers. There is ethical, emotional and economic cost to species loss and ecosystem degradation.

“Passive-use (non-use) benefits” reflect people’s willingness to pay simply to know wilderness is protected for its intrinsic value and for future generations – a value conservatively estimated at about \$5 billion per year.

Nonmarket benefits should be included in the economic analysis. An economic analysis must account for non-priced benefits and costs, as well as be measured in market prices. (Loomis and Walsh 1992) Wildlands conserve biological diversity, native species, and genetic material. Genetic diversity promotes increases in productivity, disease resistance and generation of new medicinal products. Wild plant and animal species are estimated to account for 4.5% of GDP.

Wildlands generate ecological services including climate moderation, pollination, seed dispersal, watershed protection, natural pest control and carbon sequestration.

Nonmarket values for the individual and social benefits of wildland recreation are expressed through personal development, such as a place to restore mental and physical health, spiritual growth, physical fitness, self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and leadership abilities. Social bonding promotes higher quality of family life. Stress reduction helps increase worker productivity and reduces illness and work absenteeism.

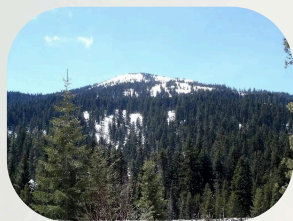
Wilderness is a place for spiritual experiences. In these quiet, untamed spaces, the mind opens and the heart listens. Wilderness awakens creativity and fuels expression, inspiring art, photography, literature, poetry, and music. It invites us to see beauty more clearly, to slow down, and to translate the wonder of the natural world into human stories, images, and songs.

The 90-Mile Wilderness Corridor – a Closer Look

This 90-mile corridor is a landscape of profound biological richness and breathtaking scenery. At its heart lies a vision to designate 160,000 acres of Crater Lake National Park's backcountry as wilderness, safeguarding the wild character of these lands while leaving developed visitor areas unaffected.

Brown Mountain Wilderness:

South of Highway 140 is the proposed Brown Mountain Wilderness at 10,000 acres. It's an interesting combination of old growth forest and lava flows. Here we find the headwaters of Little Butte Creek, which is the water supply to the communities of Eagle Point and Medford, major southern Oregon population centers.



Sky Lakes Wilderness:

Cross State Highway 140 and enter the 113,849-acre region created in 1984. There are 3 lake basins in this important eco region, encompassing the important Middle Fork Rogue River and Native American ancestral lands. Beautiful trails wind through spectacular landscapes.

Crater Lake National Park: Crater Lake National Park boasts a backcountry of 160,000 acres. The quintessential Oregon landscape, Crater Lake is far more than the rim and the caldera. The park extends into some of Oregon's most pristine lands, with forests largely unchanged. Its pumice deserts, unique forests, and rare flora draw visitors, where species such as Clark's nutcracker, fisher, Northern flying squirrel, and pika thrive.



The Mount Scott Summit Trail leads to the park's highest point and sweeping views, passing rare whitebark pines and Shasta red firs along the way. The Pacific Crest Trail crosses old-growth forests and pumice desert, offering 33 miles of backcountry travel through landscapes rich in rare plants. The park's backcountry also cradles the headwaters of the Rogue and Klamath Rivers.

Wilderness is a reservoir of normal ecological processes and of biological diversity and complexity of genetic raw material. Wild places are models of unmodified nature which science can use as criteria against which to measure the changes made by civilization.

Mt. Thielsen Wilderness: Protection of the Mt. Thielsen area additions would create a Wilderness corridor between the wild forests of the previously protected Mt. Thielsen Wilderness and the pristine forests bordering Crater Lake. This region offers beautiful rolling hills of lodgepole forest anchored above a substrate of basalt and andesitic lavas.

Across Highway 138 from the park is the proposed additions of the 54,914-acre Mt Thielsen Wilderness that goes from Hwy 138 north to



Windigo Pass FS Rd 60. This area contains the headwaters of two major rivers — the North Umpqua Wild and Scenic River and the Little Deschutes River, and spans 64,330 acres, rising from 4,200 to 7,474 feet in elevation. Diverse wildlife including migratory birds, the Miller Lake lamprey, fisher, elk, bear, and possibly wolverine call this home. The best trails include Skyline Trail to the summit of Mt. Thielsen and a view of the additions – Tipsoo Peak, Maidu Section of the North Umpqua Trail and the PCT.



Sawtooth Mt

Wilderness: At Windigo Pass Road Route 60 is the proposed 36,314-acre Sawtooth Mt Wilderness, with an

elevation range of 4900 to 7592 ft. This will connect the Mt Thielsen and Diamond Peak Wildernesses.

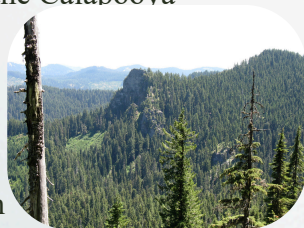
Designating this section as wilderness will connect and provide protection along the crest of the Cascades in this region, creating a 90-mile high cascades wilderness and biodiversity corridor. The headwaters of the Middle Fork Willamette River are in the vicinity.

runs past Cowhorn on its way into the Diamond Peak Wilderness. Designating this section as wilderness will connect and provide protection along the entire crest of the Cascades in this region.

There are numerous fabulous hiking trails in this region - Indigo Lake and lakes loop, Sawtooth Mt, Timpanogas Lake, PCT, Cowhorn Mt, and more.

“The value of wilderness lies not only in what we take from it, but in what it gives us simply by being.”
– Wallace Stegner

Bulldog Rock Roadless Area: This 5,500-acre roadless area lies primarily within the Umpqua National Forest, with 555 acres extending into the Willamette National Forest. About 60% of the Bulldog Rock Roadless Area forms part of an Unroaded Recreation Management Area along the divide between Steamboat Creek and the Middle Fork Willamette River in the Calapoova Mountains.



This landscape blends an unusual collection of meadow, rocky outcrops, and forested slopes, with roughly 800 acres of broad meadows scattered across the area. These range from rocky and boggy, flower-filled wetlands to meadows slowly closing in as vine maple takes hold. In one meadow, deep potholes - clear pools of water up to eight feet deep - reveal the natural progression of living, dying, and vanished lakes. Each meadow is framed by open, park-like stands of timber.

Monolithic formations - Pyramid Rock, Ranger Stone, Bulldog Rock, and Lost Prairie Rock - dominate the skyline. In Bend Canyon, the creek winds between rugged cliffs that tower on both sides.

Wildlife abounds, including black-tailed deer, Roosevelt Elk, black bear, cougar, bobcat, coyote, weasel, marten, Blue Grouse, Ruffed Grouse, Band-tailed pigeons, and eagles. Cutthroat trout, stocked brook trout, frogs, and salamanders inhabit the area's streams, ponds, and wetlands.



These meadows serve as vital elk calving grounds, and

the surrounding forests provide prime bear habitat, home to an estimated 30 animals. Protecting this area is vital for fish and anglers alike. The cold flows of Bulldog Creek feed into Big Bend, maintaining the low water temperatures necessary for healthy fish populations.



The natural forest supports Shasta Red Fir, Noble Fir, Pacific Silver Fir, Douglas Fir, and Vine Maple. The trails provide access to most of the higher elevations and are used by deer and elk hunters, berry-pickers, hikers, horsemen, and wildlife photographers. The area contains an unusual combination of meadows, rocky outcroppings and timbered slopes, and huckleberries grow along the trail in the summer. The trail passes by Bullpup Lake.

Big Bend Creek, born in this roadless area, is the coldest major tributary to Steamboat Creek in summer — often 5 to 10 degrees cooler. Its cold, high-volume flows sustain crucial steelhead resting pools and rearing habitat downstream. Without this lifeline of cold water, many summer steelhead would not survive long enough to spawn. Over the last 13,000 years, glacial activity in this area created the cirques and valleys that form the headwaters of these important tributaries of the North Umpqua.



Last Creek Roadless Area Upper South

Umpqua: This roadless area lies in the heart of the one million acre Umpqua National Forest and is classified as “Roadless Management Area”. Located about 28 miles east of Myrtle Creek in Douglas County, this steep and rocky topography encompasses 8,000-acres on the south slope.

Ranging from 2,000 to 5,000 feet, this landscape rises to a high divide crowned by Big Squaw (Vision Mountain) and Black Rock. A trail to the summit of Vision Mountain offers sweeping views across the proposal area. Most of the roadless land is forested, protecting rare cultural and biological values and some of the last remaining old-growth stands - trees up to 800 years old - where geological and ecological worlds collide in remarkable diversity.

The Last Creek Roadless Area spans the east and west forks of Last Creek, a critically important tributary that sustains the river's health and its fish. Its clean, cold waters support endangered salmon, steelhead, native cutthroat trout, and other wildlife, and the basin is recognized as a Tier 1 Watershed for rare and threatened salmon runs. Wilderness designation would safeguard these vulnerable wild fish and honor a landscape that continues to hold deep significance for Native American cultural practices and ceremonies.

Tributaries from this area feed Boulder Creek - an anadromous stream that joins the Upper South Umpqua River - supplying cold, clear water essential to the river's health and its native fish. Although parts of the Boulder Creek basin have been degraded by roads and logging, these headwaters remain vital.



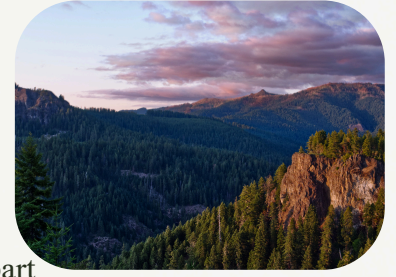
Most of Last Creek drains to the South Umpqua, while its northern fork flows to Little River and the North Umpqua, linking two major watersheds. Protecting these tributaries helps restore water quality and safeguards municipal supplies for Canyonville, Riddle, Myrtle Creek, and Winston.

The area supports abundant wildlife, including old-growth indicator species such as northern spotted owls, pileated woodpeckers, and pine marten, along with elk, deer, bear, cougar, bobcat, beaver, otter, and many others. Last Creek's backcountry showcases a rich blend of northern and southern forests, with ancient stands that shield the watershed and keep its waters cold and clean.

**"A civilization which destroys what little remains of the wild, the spare, the original, is cutting itself off from its origins."
— Paul Shepard**

The meadows and surrounding forest are important for historic cultural and current recreational use by hunters, berry pickers and campers. The Last Creek Watershed is a network of conifer-studded meadows and deep forests. Most of the surrounding forest is dominated by Douglas-fir and sugar pine with incense cedar and white fir and western hemlock.

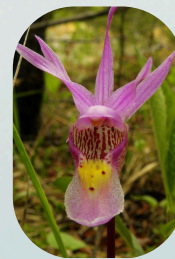
Castle Rock Fork: This major subbasin and tributary system is essential to the headwaters of the South Umpqua River. Located in a remote and rugged part of the Umpqua National Forest, it encompasses 27,212 acres. It's high-elevation features host significant biological diversity, and has been a subject of conservation efforts due to the remote rugged nature of the headwaters and is included in the proposed expansion of the Rogue Umpqua Divide Wilderness.



Geology is complex and varied in this region, featuring a mix of volcanic and sedimentary rocks that span millions of years. It supports abundant fish species, particularly threatened Spring Chinook. They rely on the cold clear water from Castle Rock Fork to the Upper South Umpqua to spawn, and face certain extinction without it.



The flora around Castle Rock is remarkably diverse due to its location at a "Botanical crossroads" between California and Vancouverian floristic provinces and the varied geology, which includes rocky, cliff environments and forested slopes. The area is known for both common Pacific Northwest species and several rare, endemic plants, such as the Umpqua mariposa lily, crinite mariposa lily, and fragrant kalmiopsis. Rock ferns, including the uncommon Woodsia scopulin, thrive in the rocky, cliff environment. Hall's Lomatium and Sierra snakeroot are some of the first flowers to bloom in the open rocky areas. Shrubs like vine maple, salal, Oregon



grape, huckleberry and rose are plentiful. Willows are typical along rivers and the numerous creeks. This is a favorite destination for botanists, with favorites such as Fairy slippers, Pacific hound's tongue and western trillium flourish.

Here the Castle Rock Fork Creek trail passes through dense forests and scenic areas and guides hikers into the Rogue Umpqua Divide Wilderness.

Preserving Roadless Areas and Protecting Headwaters of Rivers

Crater Lake National Park backcountry	160,000 acres
Brown Mountain Wilderness	10,000 acres
Mt Thielsen Wilderness additions	68,400 acres
Sawtooth Mt Wilderness	36,349 acres
Boulder Creek Wilderness additions	5,128 acres
Rogue Umpqua Divide Wilderness adds	33,369 acres
North Umpqua River roadless areas	19,210 acres
South Umpqua River roadless areas	17,990 acres
Rogue River roadless areas	3,446 acres
Roadless area buffer to Crater Lake NP Sherwood Butte	10,304 acres
Roadless area buffers to Sawtooth Mt Wilderness	2,496 acres
Steelhead Creek endangered fish habitat, geologically significant	5,922 acres
Bullpup Lake Bulldog Rock geologically significant, native forest	5,500 acres
Spring River tributary of N Umpqua, geologically significant	1,304 acres
Willamette River roadless areas Sawtooth Mt Wilderness	
Klamath River roadless areas backcountry of Crater Lake NP	

What Would Wilderness Mean for the Crater Lake Wildlands

Our public lands can be given any of a dozen different designations to guide their management – some more protective than others. Over the last 100 years of federal land management, one thing has become clear. National Scenic Areas, National Recreation Areas, Reserves, and the like all have loopholes big enough to drive a log truck through. Even National Park status allows for management decisions that permit varying levels of commercialization. When it comes to permanently protecting our public lands, the gold standard is a “Wilderness” designation. Only the U.S. Congress can designate Wilderness areas and since the 1964 Wilderness Act became law, our nation’s legislative body has never reversed itself and removed a Wilderness designation from a protected area. Because Congress has the legal authority to enact Wilderness protections, these lands remain safe despite the whims of changing presidential administrations.

Designation of the Crater Lake region as Wilderness would protect a nearly unbroken 90-mile wildlife corridor along the crest of the southern Cascade Mountains. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail traverses 80 miles. With Crater Lake at the heart, the Wilderness proposal stretches along the southern Cascade Mountain range from Brown Mountain in the

south to Sawtooth Mountain in the north. This stretch includes the backcountry of Crater Lake National Park as well as diverse wildlands beyond the park (the proposal would not include the lodge nor access roads). In total, the proposal covers approximately 450,000 acres, one third of which are in the park. The picturesque headwaters of Oregon’s famed rivers - Rogue River, Klamath River, North and South Umpqua Rivers, Middle Fork Willamette and Little Deschutes - will be protected as part of the proposal.

The proposal outlined in this document is a natural solution. Expanding protections in the region would protect major rivers, and link together a 90-mile stretch of backcountry forestland preserving pathways for people and wildlife. Ensuring that old growth forests continue to stand tall will help slow global warming and promote carbon sequestration. Prohibiting noisy and damaging motorized recreation in special areas will secure serenity for wildlife and visitors, and recreation opportunities for generations to come.

The understanding is that wilderness is a control to measure scientific research and management strategies. The act sets up areas that can be used as yard sticks and is of irreplaceable value to science as sites for fundamental research. “A science of land health needs... a base datum of normality of how healthy land maintains itself as an organism.”
- Aldo Leopold



Wilderness is not a place set aside from people

— it is a place set aside for care, restraint, and responsibility. By supporting the Crater Lake Wilderness Proposal, you help ensure that this awe-inspiring, profoundly wild landscape remains intact, resilient, and accessible — not just for us, but for all who come after.

There are special areas called **climate change refugia**, pockets of resilient habitat giving threatened species their best chance for survival in a changing climate. Because of unique geography, hydrology, elevation, or microclimates, these places remain cooler, wetter, or more stable than surrounding landscapes—allowing plants and wildlife to persist even as conditions shift.



www.umpquawatersheds.org/wilderness

About Umpqua Watersheds

Umpqua Watersheds was founded in 1986 as a grassroots volunteer group and formally incorporated as a nonprofit in 1995. UW works to protect and restore the rivers, forests, and wildlands of the Umpqua Basin through science, education, advocacy, and community collaboration. We foster lifelong stewardship by connecting people of all ages to the ecological health, resilience, and beauty of our watershed.

Conservation, restoration, education, outreach and community development.

Acknowledgements

This document was produced by the Wilderness Committee of Umpqua Watersheds. Photo Credits to Tony Cannon, Dan Amos, and Diana Pace.

Opportunities for Action

Contact your representatives! Visit www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member and type your address into the search box. A list of your representatives and their contact information will appear.

Call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to connect to your member's office.

