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Wilderness system studies four new areas

Four new areas that may be included in the National Wilderness Preservation system in the Willamette National Forest were announced Monday by Forest Supervisor Zane Smith.

The four study areas are 4,700 acres to be added to the Three Sisters Wilderness, called the Mosquito Creek tract; 530 acres to be added to the Mt. Washington Wilderness and a total of 5,650 acres: North Breitenbush and Minto Mountain, to be added to the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness.

The four areas will be managed to protect their wild and roadless condition while further land use planning of the Forest is continued.

The planned additions came after a 1972 Forest Service inventory of all roadless areas of more than 5,000 acres in the National Forests. In Oregon alone there were a total of 12 areas containing 262,020 acres, nine of which adjoin existing wilderness.

Smith said there was a possibility of some of the areas not listed in the announcement to be included in the new wilderness, but that this won't be determined until 1975. The 12 areas will remain intact from logging activities until then.

"I feel there is a need for Wilderness," Smith said. "Our environmental analysis tries to get a better distribution of wilderness with the quality of the territory being a prime consideration. We have 15 percent of our land designated as wilderness, which is more than most other forests."

He said there was a mixed reaction to the inclusion of more land into the Wilderness system. Towns near the proposed sites are negative because it cuts into the local logging industry. Smith estimates that the logging potential of the four areas is about four million board feet of timber annually. He cited concern by citizens from Eugene, Salem and Portland as positive forces in the increased Wilderness allocations.

Scientists study white-tailed deer to insure preservation of species

Oregon State University scientists are prying into the life-style of the Columbian white-tailed deer in an attempt to insure its survival.

The deer are found on the islands and tidal flats of the lower Columbia River. A 2,781-acre Columbian White-Tailed Deer National Wildlife Refuge was established by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in 1972 to help preserve the endangered species which is estimated to have fewer than 250 survivors. The refuge encompasses several Columbia River islands and part of the Washington mainland near Cathlamet.

Paul Vohs Jr., associate professor of fisheries and wildlife at OSU, is directing a study to learn more about the deer and their habits so they can be successfully managed and perhaps eventually removed from the endangered species list.

The research results will aid with development of an overall management plan being developed for the species by a committee with representatives from OSU, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon Game Commission and the Washington Department of Game.

First phase of the research, a one-year field study by Lowell Suring, masters degree candidate in the OSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, has been completed. The second phase, a three-year study by doctoral candidate Richard Vowler, is just beginning.

The researchers hope to learn why the deer are restricted to such a limited area, whether they can be transplanted to other areas, and what their relationship is with farming and livestock grazing on the diked lowlands that historically have been used for beef and dairy cattle grazing.

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