

RARE II

Conservationists propose additional forest areas

By CATHERINE SIEGNER
Of the Emerald

The fate of Oregon's last wild lands is now being written in the U.S. Forest Service's Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) process.

In June, the Forest Service published its RARE II Draft Environmental Statement including an inventory of 3.06 million acres of roadless land. The possible combinations of wilderness, non-wilderness and further study designations were presented — from A, representing no action, to J, meaning wilderness status for all areas surveyed.

Conservationists reacted swiftly to this report. The Oregon Wilderness Coalition (OWC) along with the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG) solicited ideas from other environmental organizations and submitted their own inventory of roadless areas to public scrutiny.

This report is called the Oregon Alternative. It proposes that 3.5 million acres be considered for inclusion in the RARE II process — an addition of nearly half a million acres.

This difference stems from OWC's inventory methods, and from additional areas OWC is proposing for inclusion that were eliminated from RARE II by land management plans.

All national forests in the country must complete such plans, although the Willamette National Forest near Eugene is the only one so far to have finished one.

The Forest Service will not inventory land included in the Old Cascades proposal (a 55,900 acre area north of Eugene), or Chucksney Mountain (17,300 acres east of Eugene) for RARE II because they were subjected to the land use process in Willamette's management plan. (See story on page 5.)

Hardesty Mountain, a wild area only 30 miles from Eugene, is included in RARE II, but is recommended for a non-wilderness designation. The Oregon Alternative would give Hardesty Mountain full wilderness status.

Jim Stratton, University Survival Center Director, sees a "distinguishing anti-wilderness bias" in RARE II.

"We support the Oregon Alternative because it's a grassroots proposal. People at the University are wilderness users. They don't realize their favorite areas may be carved up (under RARE II)."

Public comment on RARE II will be accepted by the Forest Service until Oct. 1. A final environmental impact statement (EIS) on the alternative will be out Jan. 1, 1979. Congress must vote on wilderness designation proposals, and hearings will likely be held on any legislation based on Forest Service recommendations.

A RARE II update report is scheduled for release Oct. 1 — the cutoff date for citizen input. The deadline could be extended, but details are unclear at this point.

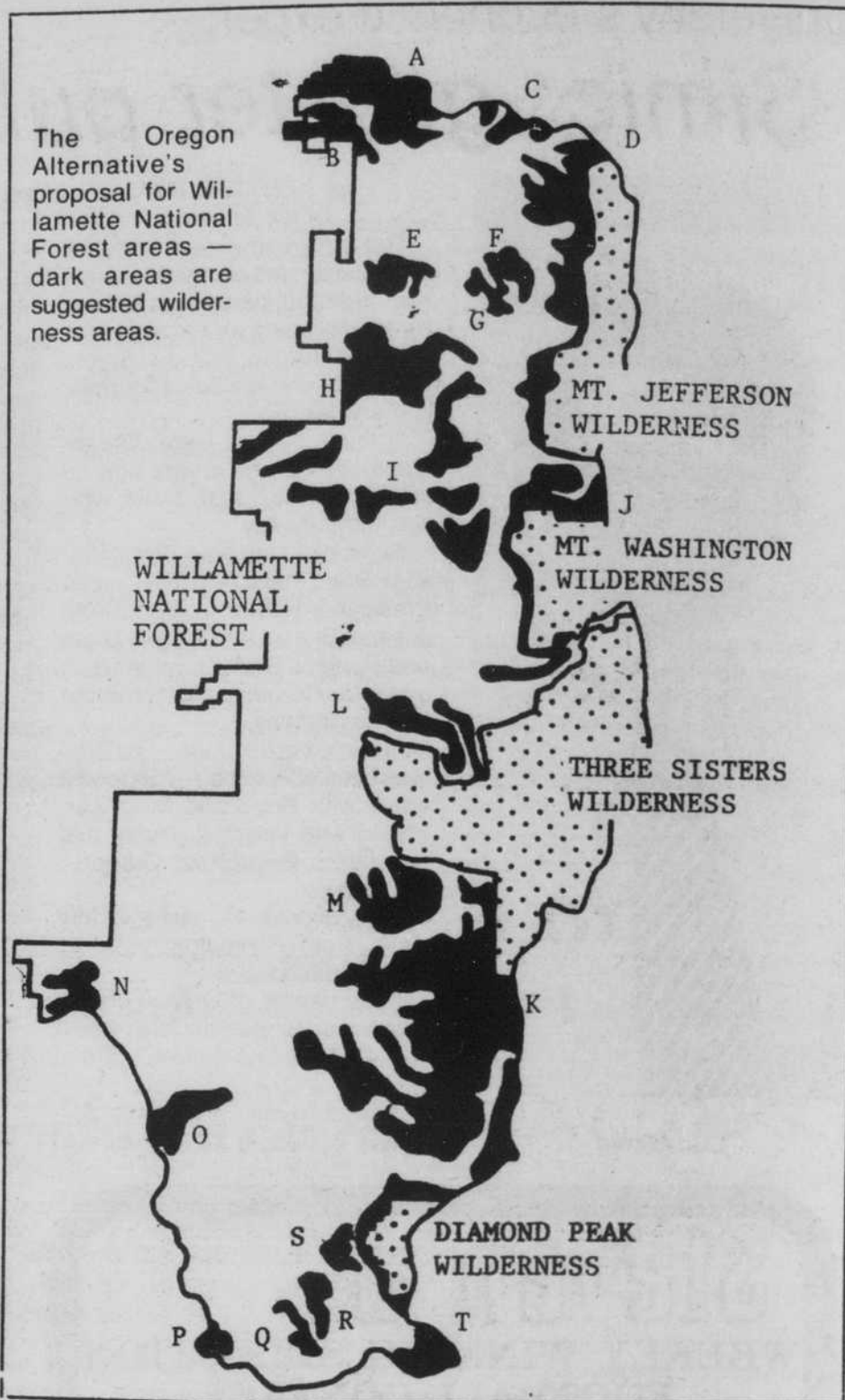
Stratton recommends concerned persons write letters to the Forest Service and to Congressmen and Senators by Oct. 1 in support of the Oregon Alternative, mentioning specific areas they would like to see protected from development.

"Under RARE II, 36 percent at the maximum would be granted wilderness status. (Alternate J, giving 100 percent wilderness status, is not considered a feasible choice.) Eighty percent would be protected with the Oregon Alternative, and it would not decrease allowable cut."

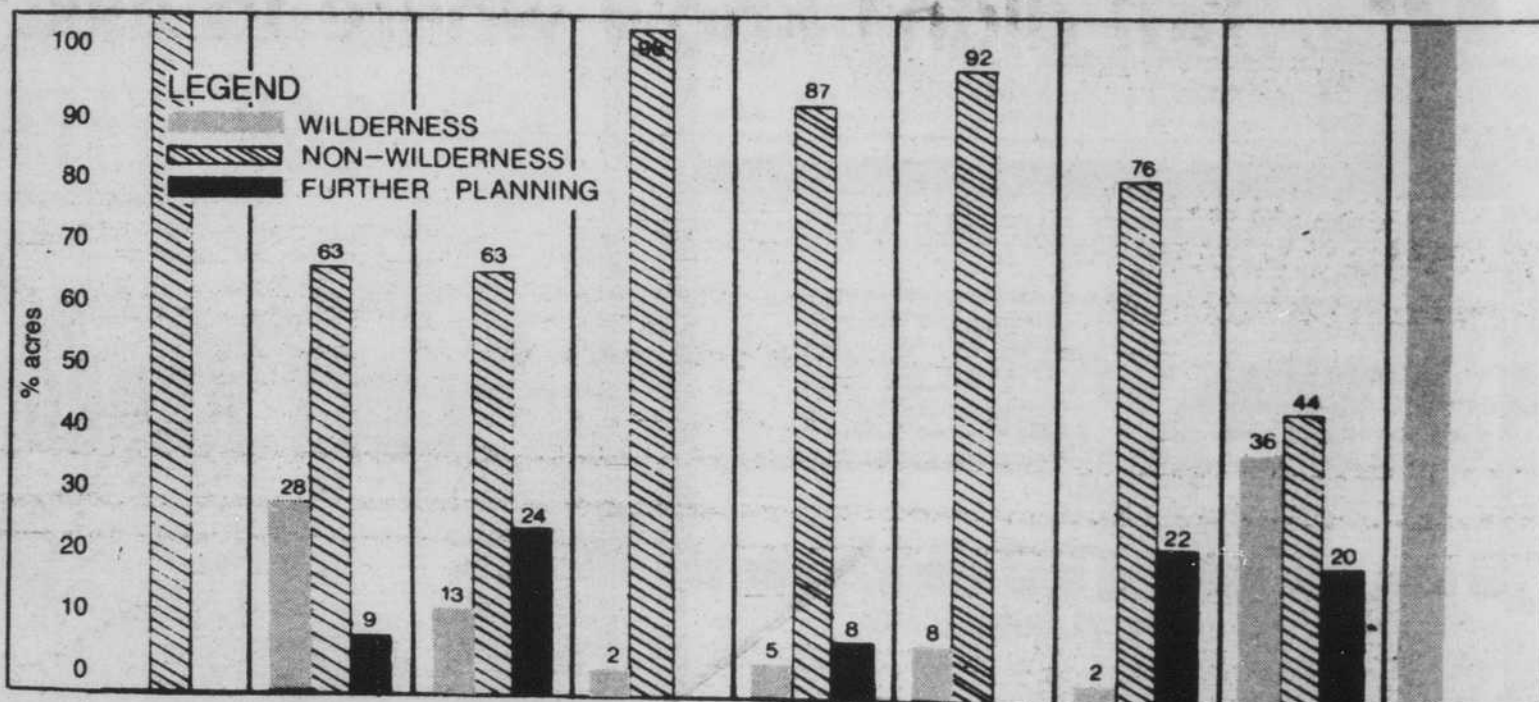
The Survival Center is presenting a slide show on RARE II and the Oregon Alternative Thursday and Friday at half-hour intervals between 11:30 and 1 p.m. in the EMU, and can use volunteers to work information tables this week. (Visit Suite 1 in the EMU or call 686-4356.)

The Willamette National Forest produces more board-feet of timber per year than any other national forest in the United States, and Lane County's economy is heavily dependent on logging. Wilderness designations, therefore, carry an economic impact and polarize community opinion.

An anti-wilderness rally last week in Roseburg organized by Douglas County commissioners and timber operators drew out 1,000 persons with the theme "No More Wilderness."



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