

The Crater Lake debate

By **EMILY HOARD**
The News-Review

The Crater Lake Wilderness proposal would designate 500,000 acres to be protected as wilderness.

Umpqua Watersheds of Roseburg and Oregon Wild of Portland created the proposal to increase protections of old-growth forests and endangered species habitat in roadless areas around Crater Lake National Park, including parts of the Umpqua National Forest, that would be blocked from timber harvest, motorized use and mechanized transportation.

Tara Brown, Crater Lake Wilderness coordinator for Oregon Wild, said as climate change and human impact lead to the destruction of forestland, it's important to implement wilderness designation so the park and natural areas near it will be protected for future generations.

"The wilderness proposal is really designed to help some of the inventory in roadless areas, old growth forests, wildlife habitat and a lot of higher elevation forests, which is really important as climate change is happening because the increasing temperature means that wildlife needs to go to higher elevations to survive," Brown said.

But according to Wayne Brady, who retired from the Forest Service after more than 35 years of working in the North Umpqua District, there are already enough protections on the land included in the proposal, and a wilderness designation would restrict public recreation and economic growth.

"They would have you believe that people will flock to the Umpqua Valleys to bask in the wonders of their wilderness," Brady said. "But the reality of wilderness is much different."

Most of these roadless areas with recreational value have been protected under a 1978 land use plan and again in a 1990 land and resource management plan, Brady said.

"They're not being impacted by anything except for recreation use and fires, so the rationale for why suddenly we need to protect them as wilderness doesn't make sense to me," Brady said.

Public access

The wilderness area would be open for public access by foot or on the back of an animal, but bicycles, snowmobiles, ATVs and vehicles would not be allowed. Groups of visitors would need to be 12 people or less, though there can be multiple groups at a time, and no new roads could be built within the limits.

"Wilderness is really important, especially around Oregon's only national park, because we're starting to see such an influx in visitation that when you go to



In this undated file photo, Wizard Island is seen in Crater Lake in this scenic view from the lodge area at Crater Lake National Park.

Crater Lake it's no longer just you out there seeing the rim and these iconic landscapes," Brown said. "It's really important to protect those places around Crater Lake so we can still get out into natural areas without seeing a whole bunch of people and still be able to experience nature."

She added that the superintendent at Crater Lake already manages the park like wilderness and all the infrastructure would remain in place so there would not be any major changes, other than the lack of trucks, chainsaws or mechanized transportation.

John Jonesburg, Diamond Lake Resort marketing director, said wilderness significantly cuts down on recreation opportunities besides hiking, and it's only a matter of time before Oregon Wild and Umpqua Watersheds try to expand their proposal to include the miles of snowmobile and ATV trails, groomed cross country ski paths and Diamond Lake itself.

"Oregon Wild is trying to make it sound better by saying they will allow the existing roads we have to remain open, but we know from past experiences that's only a short period of time," Jonesburg said. "They don't stop, they just keep going and going and trying to take and take. The land they're trying to take from us now is land we've been using for years, and it's not right."

He said it would hurt Douglas, Jackson and Klamath counties that depend on multiple-use recreation in the area.

"If you make it a wilderness area then you're limiting the recreationalists that can enjoy the area. We want it left open to all

recreationalists," Jonesburg said.

Existing protections

Many of the places included in the Crater Lake Wilderness proposal are protected as un-roaded recreation management areas, where timber harvest is restricted.

Brown said there are a lot of loopholes in that level of protection and there are still ways those areas can be logged, but wilderness would add a higher level of protection so there would be no logging or mining at all.

Oregon has about half the amount of wilderness-designated areas compared to California, Washington and Idaho, but Oregon's forests have a greater potential for carbon-sequestration, that Brown believes should be protected at the highest level.

But to Brady, the un-roaded recreation management designation is sufficient, and increased restrictions are unnecessary. Boulder Creek Wilderness, he said, doesn't meet the size and solitude criteria for wilderness, but was a political maneuver to keep the Limpy Rock Natural Research Area from becoming wilderness instead.

There are already restrictions on Steamboat Creek Reserve, as old growth timber stands are already protected and there isn't any logging except for old harvest units, according to Brady.

"It's not as if the Umpqua National Forest is out there hungrily looking at these areas with a bulldozer. It's unreasonable to have those suspicions," Brady said.

Parts of the forest that aren't designated as un-roaded recreation management areas, he added, are generally filled with steep, brush-

covered ground without maintained trails.

"This isn't like the Eagle Cap Wilderness, or the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, those are different type of size and experience there than these areas they're talking about designating as wilderness," Brady said. "They're just general forests, which is enjoyable but there's no reason why we can't enjoy it right now."

Fires

Active management and fire prevention is restricted within wilderness. Proponents said less human interaction and more natural interaction leaves the land as pristine and natural as possible.

"Historically there always were a lot of little fires that would naturally occur in natural areas, and that actually helped activate the soils, bring in new trees and new fauna and flora, so those small fires were important to the ecology of the forest," Brown said. "Unfortunately, some of our previous forest practices did a lot of fire suppression, so those natural small fires weren't happening."

These suppressed fires led to the large, threatening fires seen today, Brown said, so wilderness would work on getting the natural processes back in sync.

Jonesburg said this lack of fire suppression could lead to devastating results for Diamond Lake Resort.

"Fires are not fought in wilderness areas the same as they are on regular Forest Service land," Jonesburg said. "They tend to let them burn, and we don't think we would survive a major fire in that wilderness area if it happened

because they can't fight them like any normal fire."

Brown said fires in wilderness can absolutely be fought with any types of trucks, chainsaws and other means necessary, but traditionally it's important to let some of the natural processes go a little longer without human intervention.

Brady said he's concerned about fires in wilderness areas too, and he's not talking about the cool under-burns Native Americans used.

"These are stand-replacing fires that destroy everything. Trees, brush, red tree voles, spotted owls, Pacific salamanders and many other species the preservation groups profess they want to save," Brady said.

He said the amount of logging is never going to go back to the levels before the 1980s, but he believes there should be some logging in the area both for fire prevention and county revenue.

County government

"Locking more of the Umpqua National Forest in wilderness will never save the Douglas County government budget," Brady said. "It will just close the forest to most of the people of Douglas County and damage the Umpqua National Forest budget even more."

Property taxes in Douglas County provide only a minimal amount of the county's budget, paying for less than half the sheriff's budget, and timber receipts, which make up virtually all the county's general fund dollars, have dramatically decreased over time. Wilderness, according to Brady, will weaken that amount even more, will cut the Umpqua National Forest staff and will bring less tourism to the area.

Though Brown recognized that logging is an integral part of Oregon that will never go away, she said society is moving away from that type of labor due to changing logging practices and an increase in outdoor recreation.

"This proposal would increase wilderness in Oregon, but it wouldn't increase it to such an extent that it would affect logging practices," Brown said. "I think unfortunately the logging industry is struggling with or without these environmental protections, and it's important as we move forward we take care of local communities, but we also take care of some of the reasons we live in this area, which is to get out in nature and enjoy clean air, clean water and wildlife."

The proposal has yet to be introduced in Congress as Oregon Wild and Umpqua Watersheds reach out to stakeholders and Oregon senators. Brady said he encourages those who want to continue using the Umpqua National Forest to contact their congressmen and ask that the proposal be squashed.

With no monument, some keen for Owyhee collaborative plan

By **AMANDA PEACHER**
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PORTLAND — Last year, conservationists made a big push to convince President Obama to create a national monument in a vast area in southeast Oregon known as the Owyhee.

It's a vast, rugged sagebrush steppe landscape with red rock canyons and unusual geology. But the proposal faced fierce resistance from ranchers and other locals in Malheur County. At the end of his term, the Owyhee was left off of Obama's list of new and expanded monuments.

But the specter of a monument designation may trigger groups on opposite sides to get together and start a collaborative plan for the Owyhee. Tim Davis, with the grassroots conservation group called Friends of the Owyhee, said he believes it's possible to work with groups that opposed the monument.

"If it was a collaborative effort I think they'd be willing to sit down at the table and work it out," he said. "There are areas that both sides can agree on for protection. Jordan Craters, for example. It's a big lava field. Why not start there?"

This wouldn't be the first time that a potential presidential designation has spurred monument opponents to come to the table. On the Idaho side of the Owyhee,

the possibility of a national monument designation by President Bill Clinton kick-started a decades-long collaborative process between conservationists, off-road vehicle groups, ranchers and the government. The effort led to new wilderness and wild and scenic river designations in 2009.

A similar process led to the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area in southeast Oregon in 2000.

And more recently, the possibility of an Obama designation in Central Idaho led to the hastening of a Republican-championed wilderness area for the Boulder White Clouds mountains.

But there's no exact formula for getting diverse groups together in the wake of such proposals.

"Each place is unique," said Brent Fenty, executive director of the Oregon Natural Desert Association. ONDA has been talking about wilderness designations for the Owyhee for more than a decade, and Fenty said his group plans to hold town hall meetings across the state to further the conversation.

"That's what we're focused on — continuing that dialogue to ensure that the people who know and love this place have their voices heard," Fenty said.

Although there's no official collaborative process

in the works yet, groups that opposed the monument have hinted that they'd be willing to have such conversations.

"We're still kind of in awe that we made it past the national monument designation," said Malheur County rancher Elias Eiguren, a spokesman for the Owyhee Basin Stewardship Coalition. But with the threat of a monument behind them, he and other ranchers have been busy with calving season.

"Spring work is hitting us in the face," Eiguren said. "We're trying to just hold together at this point and really decide where we need to go from here."

Eiguren said he's yet to see a federal designation that improved a landscape. He'd like to focus on what he sees as the biggest threats to the Owyhee: invasive weeds and major wildfires. But he wouldn't necessarily try to block a wilderness designation, depending on the circumstances. He said that any collaborative process would need to start with assurances from environmental groups that litigation is off the table.

"I don't know that a wilderness designation wouldn't necessarily change what is out there already so I wouldn't necessarily understand the purpose of that," he said. "But if somebody had to have that, there's always that possibility."

Groups warn of lawsuit over logging Oregon forests

PORTLAND (AP) — Fishing and conservation groups are threatening to sue the Oregon Department of Forestry, alleging it has failed to reform logging practices in the Tillamook and Clatsop state forests that harm coho salmon.

One of the groups filing the intent to sue Thursday is the Center for Biological Diversity. It filed a similar notice three years ago, but held off on the lawsuit.

Its endangered species director, Noah Greenwald, says the group was assured by the Forestry Department in 2014 that it would work with conservationists and the timber industry on a new management plan that would potentially protect salmon and streams. He says that has not materialized.

A Forestry Department spokeswoman did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

Woman who helped launch outdoor retailer REI dies at 107

SEATTLE (AP) — Mary Anderson, a climbing enthusiast who helped start the outdoor retailer REI that has become the nation's largest

BRIEFLY

SKI REPORT

Spout Springs
Tollgate, Ore.
CLOSED FOR SEASON

Anthony Lakes
North Powder, Ore.
CLOSED FOR SEASON

Ski Fergi
Joseph, Ore.
CLOSED FOR SEASON

Mt. Hood Meadows
Government Camp, Ore.
New snow: None

Base depth: 119"
Conditions: Groom is wet pack and granular snow. Off piste is wet snow.

Ski Bluewood
Dayton, Wash.
New snow: None
Base depth: 54"
Conditions: Machine groomed, spring conditions. Open weekends only.

consumer-owned retail cooperative, has died at 107.

REI said she died March 27, the *Seattle Times* reported Tuesday.

Anderson and her husband, Lloyd, along with 21 other mountaineering friends, started the consumer cooperative in 1938 out of a desire to find high-quality, affordable climbing gear in the United States. By forming a co-op, they were able to buy outdoor gear in bulk from Europe and other places.

REI, headquartered south of Seattle, has grown to about 6.3 million active members, more than 140 retail stores and about 12,000 employees.

Anderson's "legacy is deeply engrained in REI and her contributions to the outdoor community extend far beyond the co-op," the company said in a statement.

"REI and our

employees are grateful to the Andersons for their dedication to REI and the incredible foundation they established."

In search of high-quality outdoor gear and relying on Anderson's German skills to translate gear catalogs, the couple discovered they could order ice axes from Austria and have them delivered to Seattle at better prices, according to an REI blog post. Friends heard what they were up to and wanted to get involved.

The couple and 21 other outdoor enthusiasts officially formed Recreational Equipment in 1938. Each paid for a \$1 lifetime membership fee. Mary Anderson held membership card No. 2, according to the Mountaineers, the Seattle-based nonprofit outdoor organization in which the Andersons were heavily involved.