

The Smith River National Recreation Area Expansion

October 10, 2019

Background:

- *In 1990, Congress enacted legislation to establish the Smith River National Recreation area that protected the Smith River watershed. Unfortunately, the boundary of the NRA stopped at the Oregon border, leaving the North Fork of the Smith River and its tributaries unprotected.*
- *This legislation expands the NRA to include 58,000 acres of the North Fork Smith River watershed including tributaries which contain coho, Chinook salmon, steelhead and Coastal Cutthroat trout.*
- *The Smith River is home to a rich assemblage of life forms – from the diverse Siskiyou Mountains forests to unique plants found nowhere else on earth to ancient, towering redwoods along the lower river. The Smith NRA offers exceptional recreational activities, including water sports, fishing, hunting, camping, and sightseeing because the scenic beauty, world class fisheries, exceptional water quality, and abundant wildlife.*
- **Elements of the Legislation**
 - **Boundary Adjustment.** The legislation will adjust the National Forest and NRA boundaries to add approximately 58,000 acres of the North Fork Smith watershed in Oregon to the Smith NRA.
 - **Permanent Mineral Withdrawal.** Like the NRA in California, all land located inside the National Recreation Area would be permanently withdrawn from new mining claims, helping protect this sensitive area from proposed nickel strip mines.
 - **Wild and Scenic River Protection.** The legislation would designate 74 river miles of wild and scenic rivers, including Baldface Creek, Chrome Creek and nearby streams.
 - **Recreation Planning.** The Forest Service will prepare an updated recreation plan (Recreation Action Schedule) to identify specific plans for the entire National Recreation Area.
 - **A Special Study.** A special study of streams, fens, wetlands and potentially unstable and vulnerable aquatic habitat areas is requested in the legislation.
 - **Wildfire Management.** Nothing in the legislation alters the authority of the Secretary (in cooperation with other Federal, State, and local agencies, as appropriate) to conduct wildland fire operations within the recreation area, consistent with the purposes of this Act. See Section 2 (d) and 2 (e).
 - **Travel Management Plans.** There would be no changes to completed Travel Management Plans on both the Smith River NRA and in the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest where the expansion will occur.