

Oregon Wilderness Coalition



November 7, 1977
Volume 4, #8-10

edited by James Monteith,
Coordinator

ENDANGERED ACT MOVES, BUT SNAGGED BY CRUCIAL KALMIOPSIS QUESTION!!

In what has been an incredible flurry of political activity, the House-Senate conference committee has molded the differing versions of the Endangered American Wilderness Act into a compromise package which, although not without problems, is basically a sound bill and expected to pass this year. A major hang-up is differing Kalmiopsis proposals and the commitments of both Senator Mark Hatfield and Representative Jim Weaver. As we go to press the conference committee has broken with the congressional recess and plans to meet again on November 28 or 29. Several decisions seem definite, including Oregon areas at these acreages:

Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness, Umatilla National Forest, 179,300 acres.

(Oregon portion mostly intact, including all of Timothy Meadows and Elk Flat; Washington side suffered bad boundaries and then lost crucial management language.)

Mt. Hood Wilderness Additions, Mt. Hood National Forest, 33,000 acres.

(Last-minute effort by Pacific NW Gas and other utilities to alter boundaries and allow geothermal development within boundary failed, and original proposal is intact.)

French Pete Addition to Willamette National Forest, 45,400 acres.
the Three Sisters Wilderness

(French Pete, after a 25-year fight, has been safe since the day Senator Hatfield stopped opposing it.)

The major impasse now is the decision on Kalmiopsis, which as the following new articles describe, is loaded with conflict between fourth district Congressman Jim Weaver, and Senator Mark Hatfield. Senator Hatfield, who originally proposed a 134,000 acre Kalmiopsis Addition in his Oregon Omnibus Wilderness Act, for some reason seems stuck at his 82,400 acre figure, a position which does not recognize the value of the 280,000 acre wilderness additions proposed by Representative Weaver. Perhaps it is significant that Representative Weaver has personally hiked in the proposed Wilderness extensions, and has studied the timber and other resource values and analyzed their impacts on the Southwestern Oregon economy.

The significance of the Kalmiopsis question is national in scope because the deeper question of "vastness" is a basic precept in itself. When President Carter came out in favor of Jim Weaver's 280,000 acre proposal, it was a big boost for both the concept and the Kalmiopsis in particular. It is extremely important that the perspective is clear on this question: 280,000 acres of wilderness would not be created, but 280,000 acres of existing wilderness would simply be recognized as such. A 280,000 acre area in the bill will protect a major part of a magnificent wilderness resource.

Bob Marshall, working for the Forest Service in the 1930's, proposed a Siskiyou-Klamath Mountains Wilderness which extended from north of the Rogue River south into California, enclosing nearly a million acres. In the forties the Forest Service did in-house studies on the area, and several proposals of the same magnitude were suggested. In the past thirty years upwards of 80% of the de facto Kalmiopsis Wilderness has been roaded, logged, developed and/or sold. About 320,000 acres remain, the last of the core of the great Kalmiopsis wildlands.

This is why conservationists, Representative Jim Weaver and the Carter Administration believe so strongly that the 280,000 acre Kalmiopsis Additions proposal is the most acceptable compromise. To lose more would be to lose the values of diversity, of genetic richness, as well as so many more direct losses, for example, fisheries.

The Kalmiopsis is valuable for its bigness, in contrast to most any Wilderness or proposed Wilderness left in Oregon. This size allows it to be some of Oregon's last wolverine habitat. It is of direct concern to all Oregonians that a decent boundary be drawn which protects the existing Kalmiopsis resource, for it is one of a kind in Oregon: the last of the truly wild places.



Although the Conference Committee meetings have been punctuated with rousing speeches by both Representative Weaver and Senator Hatfield, it is important that Oregonians realize just how magnificent Jim Weaver's performance has been. This perseverance and eloquence has, so far, been the saving grace for the Kalmiopsis.

Wild Rogue, 38,200 acres of the last wilderness surrounding Wild and Scenic Rogue River, has not yet received attention by the Conference Committee. Although it has little opposition, its proximity to the Kalmiopsis has resulted in a delay in its evaluation. Because it is an entirely separate issue, and because its conflicts are minimal, conservationists hope it will receive instant Wilderness designation for the entire 38,200 acres, including the river corridor, as it so richly deserves.

It is not certain when the bill will pass the Congress and be sent to the President's desk, although it will likely happen before December. Whether or not the Kalmiopsis is included in the Endangered bill depends on if Representative Jim Weaver and Senator Mark Hatfield can reconcile their differences. Even Governor Straub, seeking to retain the Kalmiopsis in the bill, publicly requested the two legislators to come to an agreement.

Both of these men deserve our thanks for their wilderness leadership during the first session of this 95th Congress. You will likely agree however, after reading the attached newsclippings, that Honorable Jim Weaver is the most dedicated, congressional friend Oregon's wildlands will likely ever have. Oregon wilderness leaders urge you to thank him for his devotion. Write him today, for he will need our support in the tough days ahead. (see page 8 of this newsletter for address)

JIM WEAVER TO RECEIVE AWARD AT OEC BANQUET, NOVEMBER 19

Well into his 2nd term, Congressperson Jim Weaver will be this year's recipient of the Oregon Environmental Council's Richard L. Neuberger award for his outstanding environmental leadership in the U.S. Congress. Mr. John Bryson, Chairperson of the California State Water Resources Control Board (and ex-Oregonian) will be the featured speaker at the OEC annual banquet, and OWC members and friends are especially invited to attend.

The Italian banquet will be held at Vittorio's Restaurant in Portland, SE 106th and Washington. No host social hour begins at 6 pm and dinner will start at 7. Dinner will cost \$9 per person. Call to make your reservations with OEC at 222-1963.