

Wilderness Bill Waits in Washington



Written by Tom Woods

Friday, 03 October 2008

After a September hearing in the Senate, the outlook for the Boxer-McKeon Wilderness bill remains uncertain. Lindsey Mask with Congressman McKeon's office reports that the Eastern Sierra San Gabriel Wild Heritage Act has been rolled up into a larger omnibus bill which combines 150 land use issues into a single piece of legislation.



Right now congress has bigger fish to fry. Mask reports that this larger piece of legislation could be back on the floor of the Senate in November. According to a [Congressional Quarterly](#) magazine article, Senator Tom Coburn, a Republican from Oklahoma, opposes the land use bill for a number of reasons including effects on oil and gas development.

The CQ article says that Democratic senators pushing the bill believe they have enough votes to pass the omnibus bill over the opposition. The November session is not certain. If Congress does meet in November it will be after the November elections, and the balance of power between Democrats and Republicans may change. According to CQ, if there is no significant change in the balance of power, the Senate meetings should continue.

With the controversial Wilderness bill that would create 438,000 acres of additional Wilderness in the Eastern Sierra rolled into this larger bill, the future of this possible law that affects local land use remains uncertain and subject to the political process in Washington.

Comments (4)

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Mary Lou Grimsley said:

We, the recreating public of California, are against any and all wilderness bills slated to close any public lands to public access. Why, you might ask?

First and foremost, we DO NOT need to lock up federal land with natural resources that this country will need in the future. Natural resources which include not only oil and gas, but land for both solar and wind energy development. We need more alternative natural ways to produce electricity, and the public lands are where these energy developments will need to be located.

Secondly, a large portion of the public lands are NOT suitable for wilderness. According to the 1964 Wilderness Act, wilderness lands must "be untramled by man", i.e., no evidence

of man shall be seen. There are roads and trails, old mines and mining camps, etc., within the proposed boundaries, and they will be closing these roads and trails to public access. In the remote counties such as Inyo and Mono Counties, the lives of outdoorsman of all sorts will be unduly affected. If you use any type of mechanized vehicle to recreate, you will be shut out. So if you own a sedan, a four-wheel drive vehicle, a motorcycle, a mountain bike, or a deer carrier, you will not be allowed on these lands. If you are handicapped, you will no longer be allowed into these wilderness areas, which have roads and trails, in a vehicle. If you cannot hike to your favorite rock hounding area, fishing hole, or hunting spot, you will be shut out. If you are a photographer, a sight-seer, a wildlife viewing enthusiast, or rock climber, who uses a vehicle for these activities, you will not be allowed into these areas.

California has millions of acres already set aside in wilderness, National Parks and Monuments, as well as State Parks. We do not need any more.

Please do you best to fight for what is right for the recreating public. Fight for what is right for all of us who use our natural resources to sustain our lives. PLEASE SAY NO NO MORE WILDERNESS.

Thank you,

Mary Lou Grimsley
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October 08, 2008

Pat L. Henderson said:

I am not in favor of rushing through a wilderness bill. It is being shown that many folks that live in or around the areas that have become wilderness areas know nothing of what is happening to their surroundings. the Parks and Recreation, Forest Service and National Parks do not publicly notify in newspapers, on radio or other publications what their intentions are. These agencies publicize articles but they are so vague, the general public doesn't understand that the future of their forest, deserts or wetlands are being taken away.

There should be outlines drafted that fully state the intentions of each agency, and ask for public input. If less that 100 people or letters are received pro or con on a decision regarding the public lands, then it should be understood that improper notification has been broadcast to the public.

October 08, 2008

scott davies said:

This land grab has to stop.The gov. can't keep taking our land and get away with it.We

need to take action now before it's too late. please gang together to stop this land grab thanks. Scott

October 08, 2008

Stewart Helmer said:

Wilderness designation, closes public lands to most of the public! I am Opposed to the creation of larger or more wilderness areas. Help keep public lands open to the public!

October 20, 2008

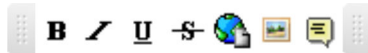
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