



Trail Advocates

of the Clackamas River Ranger District of the Mount Hood National Forest

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Wilderness Bill Stalled Yet Again

Topic: Wilderness Bill Stalled Yet Again
Author: Robert Koscik
Topic Started: 11/17/2008; 9:19:24 AM
Last Posted: 11/19/2008; 12:03:27 PM

Wilderness Bill Stalled Yet Again
Robert Koscik : 11/17/2008; 8:19:24 AM
Reads: 1192, Responses: 4 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

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Oklahoma senator once again holds up Mount Hood legislation

by Michael Milstein, The Oregonian

Saturday November 15, 2008, 4:27 PM

An Oklahoma senator who makes frequent light of what he calls examples of Oregon "pork" spending once again blocked new Mount Hood wilderness legislation Friday, despite wide support in the rest of the Senate.

Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., pledged to filibuster a massive lands bill that included about 125,000 acres of new wilderness on Mount Hood and along the Columbia River Gorge, in Idaho's Owyhee canyons and elsewhere in California, Colorado and New Mexico.

Coburn's filibuster could have forced the Senate to burn up to three days considering the bill. Senate leaders decided they didn't have those days to spare amid pressing legislation such as a rescue for the auto industry and extension of unemployment insurance benefits.

However, a top aide to Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said that although the bill may have to wait until next year, it will pass.

"Sen. Coburn is delaying the inevitable," said Josh Kardon, Wyden's chief of staff. "The new Congress with the new president will pass the wilderness bill. It's just a matter of time."

Coburn has been the nemesis of new Mount Hood wilderness over the past year, repeatedly defying attempts by Wyden and Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., to push their wilderness legislation through. He contends that the roughly \$10 million cost for mapping and surveying is wasteful federal spending.

The Oklahoma senator takes pride in making light of federal spending in a "pork report" on his Web site. On Friday, two of the eight examples in Coburn's pork report came from Oregon.

One of the examples quoted an Oregonian headline describing "arty upgrades," including new lamps, sidewalks, bike lanes and trees, on Northeast 102nd Avenue in Portland funded with \$5.4 million in federal earmarks.

Another example described a "junket to Mexico" by Umatilla School District officials to brush up on Spanish skills and absorb Latino culture. It cited an East Oregonian feature article describing the federally funded trip teachers took to Mexico so they could better support Hispanic students that make up half the school's population.

Coburn's gripe with the lands bill that includes Mount Hood wilderness is much larger. He says it includes excessive spending of nearly \$4 billion over five years and puts millions of acres off limits to oil and gas development that could earn royalties for the federal government.

Aside from Coburn, the bill had wide bipartisan support, Kardon said. He said Wyden sent a letter Friday morning signed by Wyden and 19 other senators, including five Republicans, urging Senate leaders to move the lands bill forward.

The bill packaged several wilderness bills that passed the Senate Energy panel unanimously or nearly unanimously and involved little controversy, Kardon said.

"The one conspicuous problem is why a Republican senator from Oklahoma has held everything up," said Steve Pedery of Oregon Wild. "His real problem with it, I think, is that it's a wilderness bill."

The wilderness bill would have been the largest amount of land protected since 1984, when President Ronald Reagan signed into law almost two dozen wilderness bills that added more than 10 million acres to the country's wilderness system.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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Re: Wilderness Bill Stalled Yet Again

Donald Presley : 11/17/2008; 8:40:24 PM

Reads: 839, Responses: 3 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Robert, thanks for posting that article on the wilderness bill. I had heard a blip about it on the radio on Sunday when I was coming back down off the mountain, but didn't hear the whole story.

What a terrific weekend out on the trail. I hope others managed to get out of the city for at least one day. I hadn't been out for a month, so when I heard that it was going to be dry weekend I ran off for the whole weekend.

I located another 1/4 mile or so of tread on one of "lost trails" I have been looking for since August. The trail isn't lost, it just hasn't been on any map for so long, everybody forgets about it. Working from an 70 year old map, alot of the terrain doesn't quite match up with the map, which gives you plenty of time for exploring.

When it comes to exploring I am pretty much old school with a compass and a topo in hand. I haven't converted to GPS as of yet. Hell, I am probably the only person who hasn't bought a cell phone. I do find that a digital camera is handy.

Don

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Re: Wilderness Bill Stalled Yet Again

Robert Koscik : 11/19/2008; 8:40:38 AM

Reads: 816, Responses: 1 ([↩ view responses to this item](#))

No cell or GPS for me either! We're two antiques, eh?

Looks like the winter will be back this weekend, above 4000'. It's time I guess. But what a glorious autumn! Wow!

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Re: Wilderness Bill Stalled Yet Again

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Rob Williams : 11/19/2008; 11:03:27 AM

Reads: 816, Responses: 0 ([↩ view responses to this item](#))

What "lost" trail are you looking for?

Always interested in new trails.....

Rob

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Re: Wilderness Bill Stalled Yet Again

Donald Presley : 11/19/2008; 6:23:02 PM

Reads: 820, Responses: 0 ([↩ view responses to this item](#))

After spending a couple of days out on the trail last weekend, my body feels like an antique. Climbing over and under logs that have fallen on an old trail gives you a better workout than you could ever get at the gym.













It may start snowing up on high, but we still have some low elevation trails that could use some work, or should I say a workout. The trails get the needed work and our bodies the workout.

It has been great autumn. Last weekend felt more like October instead of the middle of November. The weatherman is saying sunshine on Sunday. Maybe I can squeeze in another day out on the trail before the holidays.

Don

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