

Truth and Some Consequences

by Jon Spunaugle

Wilderness

On July 24th and 25th, 2006 the U.S. House of Representatives passed several wilderness bill designations by voice vote. They passed unanimously. One of the Bills has a similar Bill already passed by

the U. S. Senate which means its passage by Congress is very likely. The others need to gain support in the US. Senate if they are to pass Congress. There is no indication about the Presidents attitude on any of these Bills, but it seems likely that the President would sign them rather veto them if they arrive on his desk, given his reluctance to use his veto power.

The Bills passed by the U.S. House.

HR-233 "Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Act" which would designate 277,000 acres in Northern California as wilderness. The Bill numbers are HR-233 passed in the U.S. House on 7-24-2006 and S-128. passed a year earlier in the U.S. Senate on 7-26, 2005. The House passed bill has been placed on the calendar of the US Senate for a vote. It would normally be passed easily and sent to the President for signature..

HR 3817, "Mount Hood Stewardship Legacy Act" which designates 77,200 acres in seven separate parcels in the Mount Hood National Forest, Oregon as wilderness. This Bill has been sent to the U.S. Senate for consideration. There are no similar or related Bills in the U.S. Senate on this proposal and it is not known how the two Oregon Senators view this Bill. The House passed Bill was referred to the U.S. Senate and sent to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources.

HR 3603, "Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act". would designate 315,215 acres as wilderness in the Sawtooth and Challis National Forests as well as convey several parcels of BLM and National Forest land to the counties and cities of Idaho. No related Bills have been introduced into the U.S. Senate, nor do the two Idaho Senators seem to favor much of this legislation.

HR 3817, "Valle Vidal Protection Act of 2005", Though not specifically a "wilderness bill" this Bill would Withdraw 101,794 acres in the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson National Forest (New Mexico) from: (1) all forms of entry, appropriation, and disposal under public land laws; (2) location, entry, and patent under mining laws; and (3) operation of laws pertaining to mineral leasing, geothermal leasing, and mineral materials. It does not, however add these acres to the National Wilderness system. The House passed Bill was referred to the U.S. Senate and sent to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources.

Both the Idaho and the Northern California areas are likely to have hobby materials within there borders. We suggest you contact your Senators to advise them how you feel about these designations.

The America the Beautiful Pass:

Up to this point all indications seemed to point to a 2006 public input opportunity to comment on the cost and terms of the issuance of this pass. Now it looks like the process has been pushed back several months due to a conflict in the name "America the Beautiful Pass" which might be a violation of a copyright. Some new information can be found on the internet at www.govworks.gov/solic/uploads/44091_QA.pdf. The agencies are continuing to develop the procedures for issuing the passes mandated by the "Lands Recreation Enhancement Act". It is not a question of "if", but only a question of "when".

New Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG), and Forest Service Trails Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG)"

On May 22, 2006 the U.S Forest Service published new guidelines for the agency in developing and restoring recreation areas. Most of the guidelines deal with trails, toilet facility dimensions, day camping facilities and structures, parking areas and the like. These are very likely precursors to these facilities requiring a permits or passes for use by the forest visitor.

Fossil Bill

"Paleontological Resources Preservation Act" Senate Bill 263 remains in the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources without any action taken by the House or the Committee.

via February 2006 AFMS Newsletter