



STATE OF THE WILD

JANUARY 2012



Photo: Greg Burke

➤ Cathedral Rock, Oregon

“The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.”

—President Theodore Roosevelt, 1910

America's vibrant ancient forests, wildflower-filled deserts, snow-capped peaks, and colorful winding canyons are woven into our nation's character and traditions. These wild places are the envy of the world, leading other countries to emulate our goal of protecting them for future generations.

Today, 109 million acres of U.S. wilderness are permanently protected as a gift to our children,

who will be tomorrow's hikers, hunters, anglers, climbers, campers, and wildlife watchers. Yet these lands make up just 5 percent of the nation's landmass.

Fortunately, people from all walks of life across the country are building community support to have their favorite natural places added to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Small-business owners, conservationists, ranchers, teachers, members of the



Photo: John Richter

➤ San Juan Mountains, Colorado

“The preservation of wilderness areas across the country today enables us to recapture a vital part of the national experience: Like our forebears, we can journey into primeval, unspoiled land... Wilderness preservation insures that a central facet of our nation can still be realized, not just remembered.”

—President Gerald R. Ford, 1974

faith community, mill owners and workers, and hunters and anglers are making the difference in preserving wild areas for future generations to use and enjoy.

As the second session of the 112th Congress gets underway, the Pew Environment Group is working with these local residents to enact 20 pending pieces of conservation legislation. These bills would protect more than 2 million acres of wilderness across 11 states. If Congress passes the measures, places with evocative names such as Devil’s Staircase in Oregon, Sleeping Bear Dunes along the shores of Lake Michigan, the Organ Mountains in New Mexico, and the Upper Bald River in Tennessee’s fabled Cherokee Forest would be permanently safeguarded. The measures could be wrapped into larger omnibus bills this year, as occurred in 2009, when Congress passed and the president signed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act.

Despite these opportunities to pass along a lasting vestige of our natural splendor, some in Congress want to eliminate decades-old protections and take away the ability of local people to decide for themselves which places should be saved and which should be mined, logged, dammed, or paved. The Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act, introduced by Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California and Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming, would lift protection on more than 60 million acres of the country’s most pristine lands. With the loss of 6,000 acres of open space every day, now is not the time to give away America’s great outdoors.

Now is the time to act on behalf of those Americans who will follow us. Now is the time to leave them a legacy they can take pride in, as this generation has.

PENDING WILDERNESS LEGISLATION

CALIFORNIA

The **Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests Protection Act** (H.R. 113), introduced by Rep. David Dreier (R-CA). Would protect as wilderness approximately 18,000 acres of the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests near Los Angeles, two of the most widely visited forests in the nation. The bill is awaiting markup in the House.

The **Beauty Mountain and Agua Tibia Act** (H.R. 41/S. 1574), introduced by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) and Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA). Would safeguard more than 21,000 acres of wilderness in northern San Diego County adjacent to the Beauty Mountain and Agua Tibia wilderness areas. The bill is awaiting markup in the House.

The **California Desert Protection Act** of 2011 (S. 138), introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). Would protect almost 1.6 million acres of desert landscape, designate more than 346,000 acres as wilderness, and create the Desert Trails and Sand to Snow National Monuments.

The **Pinnacles National Park Act** (S. 161), introduced by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA). Would designate the area around Pinnacles National Monument in central California as a national park and expand the existing



➤ Beauty Mountain, California

Pinnacles Wilderness by nearly 3,000 acres. The bill is awaiting markup in the Senate.

COLORADO

The **Eagle and Summit County Wilderness Act** (H.R. 1701), introduced by Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO). Would safeguard nearly 166,000 acres, including 81,790 acres of wilderness, in the White River National Forest and surrounding Bureau of Land Management areas in Colorado's Summit and Eagle counties.

The **San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act** of 2011 (S. 1635), introduced by Sens. Mark Udall (D-CO) and Michael Bennet (D-CO). Would designate 33,000 acres as wilderness in southwestern Colorado.

IDAHO

The **Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act** (H.R. 163), introduced by Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID). Would protect more than 330,000 acres of wilderness in central Idaho, creating three wilderness areas: Hemingway-Boulders Wilderness, White Clouds Wilderness, and Jerry Peak Wilderness. Boulder-White Clouds is the largest unprotected wild roadless area in the national forests of the lower 48 states.



➤ Boulder-White Clouds area, Idaho

PENDING WILDERNESS LEGISLATION



➤ Rocky Mountains, Montana

“Wilderness, unspoiled by man, is deeply rooted in American history and tradition. In the past, our task was to conquer it. Today we must struggle to preserve remaining wilderness areas that still offer the rewards of solitude and unmarred natural grandeur.”

—President Richard Nixon, 1969

MAINE

The **Maine Coastal Islands Wilderness Act** of 2011 (H.R. 2984), introduced by Rep. Mike Michaud (D-ME). Would designate 13 islands of the Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness, protecting more than 3,000 acres.

MICHIGAN

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Conservation and Recreation Act (H.R. 977/S. 140), introduced by Sens. Carl Levin (D-MI) and Debbie Ann Stabenow (D-MI) and Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-MI). Would safeguard more than 32,500 acres of wilderness in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The bill is awaiting Senate action.

MONTANA

The **Forest Jobs and Recreation Act** of 2011 (S. 268), introduced by Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT). Would protect nearly 700,000 acres of wilderness across the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Lolo, and Kootenai National Forests and improve fish and wildlife habitat and fire protection for communities. The bill is awaiting Senate markup.

The **Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act** (S. 1774), introduced by Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT). Would preserve 275,000 acres of public land in western Montana, adding 50,500 acres to the Bob Marshall Wilderness and 16,700 acres to the Scapegoat Wilderness and designating 208,000 acres as Conservation Management Areas.

NEVADA

The **Pine Forest Range Recreation Enhancement Act** of 2011 (H.R. 3377/S. 1788), introduced by Sens. Harry Reid



➤ Sleeping Bear Dunes, Michigan

PENDING WILDERNESS LEGISLATION



➤ Wassen Creek, Oregon

(D-NV) and Dean Heller (R-NV) and Reps. Shelley Berkley (D-NV), Joe Heck (R-NV), and Mark Amodei (R-NV). Would designate 26,000 acres of wilderness in the Pine Forest Range of northwestern Nevada.

NEW MEXICO

The **Manzano Wilderness Addition** (H.R. 490), introduced by Rep. Martin Heinrich (D-NM). Would expand the existing Manzano Mountain Wilderness in the southern end of the Cibola National Forest by approximately 900 acres. The bill is awaiting House markup.

The **Organ Mountains-Dona Ana County Conservation and Protection Act** (S. 1024), introduced by Sens. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Tom Udall (D-NM). Would designate 241,000 acres of wilderness and create a 100,000-acre National Conservation Area around the Organ and Robledo Mountains and parts of Broad Canyon near Las Cruces. The bill is awaiting Senate markup.

The **Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act** (H.R. 1241/S. 667), introduced by Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Rep. Ben Lujan (D-NM). Would protect about 235,000 acres northwest of Taos, including more than

21,000 acres of designated wilderness. The bill is awaiting Senate action.

OREGON

The **Cathedral Rock and Horse Heaven Wilderness Act** (S. 607), introduced by Sens. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR). Would designate more than 16,000 acres of wilderness in the Cathedral Rock and Horse Heaven areas near the lower John Day River. The bill is awaiting Senate markup.

The **Devil's Staircase Wilderness Act** (H.R. 1413/S. 766), introduced by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Sens. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR). Would permanently protect nearly 30,000 acres of wilderness on Wassen Creek in Oregon's Coast Range and designate more than 14 miles of Wassen and Franklin creeks as Wild and Scenic. The bill is awaiting Senate action.

The **Rogue Wilderness Expansion Act** of 2011 (H.R. 3436/S. 2001), introduced by Reps. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Kurt Schrader (D-OR), and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Sens. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR). Would safeguard more than 58,000 acres of wilderness in the Rogue River area in southwestern Oregon and designate 143 miles of the Rogue River and its tributaries as Wild and Scenic.



➤ Organ Mountains, New Mexico

PENDING WILDERNESS LEGISLATION



Photo: Bill & Laura Hodge

➤ Bald River waterfall, Tennessee

“If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it.”

—President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1964

TENNESSEE

The **Tennessee Wilderness Act** of 2011 (S. 1090), introduced by Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Bob Corker (R-TN). Would protect nearly 20,000 acres of wilderness in the Cherokee National Forest, expanding five existing wilderness areas and adding a new one, the Upper Bald River. The bill is awaiting Senate action.

WASHINGTON

The **Alpine Lakes Wilderness Additions and Pratt and Middle Fork Snoqualmie Rivers Protection Act** (H.R. 608/S. 322), introduced by Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep. David Reichert (R-WA). Would expand the Alpine Lakes Wilderness by 22,100 acres and designate parts of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie and Pratt Rivers as Wild and Scenic. The bill is awaiting Senate action.

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