

Oregon Recreation Enhancement Act

May 2019

The Oregon Recreation Enhancement (ORE) Act includes four public lands provisions intended to boost recreation opportunities in Southwestern Oregon and in rural Clackamas County. This bill would create the Rogue Canyon Recreation Area and the Molalla Recreation Area, expand the Wild Rogue Wilderness Area, and prohibit destructive mining on pristine rivers in Southwestern Oregon. Senator Wyden introduced these designations as parts of bills in the last congress.

The ORE Act does the following:

Molalla Recreation Area: the ORE Act would establish a 30,000 acre recreation area on the banks of the Molalla River in rural Clackamas County, Oregon, adjacent to the existing Table Rock Wilderness Area. This provision is similar to the language covering this designation included in the introduced version of the Oregon Wildlands Act of 2019. The ORE Act ensures that forest management work will continue in the proposed recreation area with a focus on creating recreational opportunities. Specific attention is given to language that ensures work to help prevent wildfires while maintaining healthy forests will continue in the area.

Rogue Canyon Recreation Area: the ORE Act would establish a 98,000 acre recreation area on the banks of the Rogue River in Southwestern Oregon, adjacent to the existing Wild Rogue Wilderness Area. This provision is similar to the language included in the introduced version of the Oregon Wildlands Act of 2019. The ORE Act ensures that federal land managers can continue conducting wildfire resiliency and forest health projects within the boundaries of the proposed recreation area to prevent wildfires and enhance fish and wildlife values and recreation experiences on the Rogue River.

Wild Rogue Wilderness Expansion: the ORE Act would expand the existing Wild Rogue Wilderness Area by approximately 60,000 acres. The federal land included within the wilderness expansion has been set aside by federal land managers as land that should be protected and conserved. This language is similar to the version included in the introduced Oregon Wildlands Act of 2019. Additionally, the ORE Act ensures that federal land managers can take certain approved measures to control fire, insects, and disease in the designated area.

Southwestern Oregon Mineral Withdrawal: the ORE Act would permanently prevent mining on more than 100,000 acres of U.S. Forest Service land near the existing Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area. These areas are located at the headwaters of several National Wild and Scenic Rivers, and support clean drinking water for thousands of Oregonians. After hundreds of comments from the public and local communities, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management issued a 20-year mineral withdrawal for this area in 2016. This provision is identical to the mineral withdrawal in the Southwestern Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act of 2017.