

July 10, 2019

Rep. Deb Haaland
Chair, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests & Public Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Don Young
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests & Public Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: National Parks, Forests & Public Lands July 10 Legislative Hearing

Dear Chair Haaland and Ranking Member Young:

On behalf of the outdoor recreation community, Outdoor Alliance, The Conservation Alliance, and the Outdoor Industry Association write to express our appreciation for holding a hearing on potential new protective designations of value for conservation and outdoor recreation, as well as to share our views on the bills being considered. The outdoor recreation community is tremendously pleased by, and grateful for, the committee's work to secure the passage of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, and we believe that the committee has an opportunity to capitalize on the momentum of this success and work toward passage of similarly well-developed protective designations which have made progress in building support since this winter.

Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (H.R. 2642)

Our organizations strongly support H.R. 2642, the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The Wild Olympics legislation would protect 126,500 acres of Wilderness and 464 river miles as Wild and Scenic on the Olympic Peninsula and preserve salmon streams and wild lands adjacent to Olympic National Park. In addition to its conservation values, the bill protects hundreds of miles of trails, scores of climbing

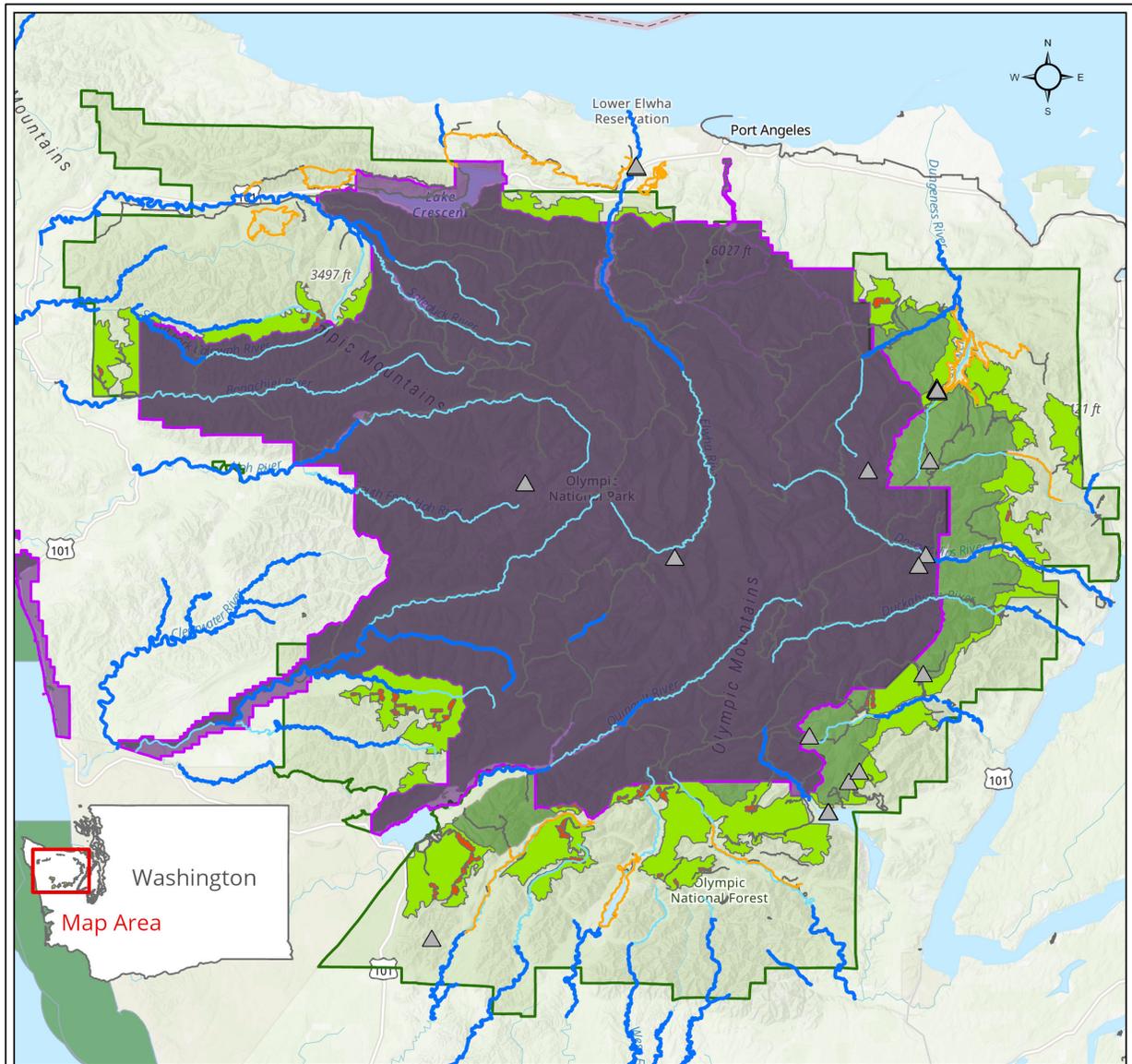
sites, dozens of whitewater paddling destinations, and valued backcountry ski terrain.

The Olympic Peninsula, with Olympic National Park and the adjacent Forest Service lands and rivers, is an important part of the outdoor recreation landscape in Washington, and preserving these iconic lands and rivers will benefit the state's growing outdoor recreation economy. Outdoor recreation in Washington generates \$26.2 billion in annual consumer spending and supports 201,600 direct jobs. Several of our member companies and partner groups have been deeply engaged in the Wild Olympics initiative, demonstrating the direct connection between protected federal lands and outdoor business.

While most of the prime Olympic Peninsula mountaineering destinations are within the Olympic National Park, several summits and crags of interest lay outside of existing Park and Wilderness boundaries on the Olympic National Forest. The Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act promises to provide lasting protection to places valued by climbers, locally and around the world. Proposed additions to the Mount Skokomish Wilderness, for example, will protect scrambling and climbing objectives such as Mt. Washington, Mt. Pershing, Jefferson Peak, Mt. Ellinor, and the nearby Ellinor Towers. In the spring, Mt. Ellinor is known as a destination for backcountry skiers.

For whitewater paddlers, the region is unique because the watersheds that radiate out from the Olympic Mountains receive several feet of precipitation each year, providing an incredible number of river miles in a small geographic area. Dozens of whitewater runs pass through towering ancient forests and moss-covered gorges. The rivers also serve as a conveyor belt for sand that forms the beaches and surf breaks on the wild Washington Coast.

Because of the collaborative approach employed in the bill's development, embracing input from local and national mountain biking stakeholders among others, the legislation enjoys broad support from the mountain biking community. We are particularly pleased to support legislation that designates Wilderness while also using other protective designations where appropriate. The mountain biking loop trail along the Dungeness River passes through ancient forests and along the banks of a wild river. By including the trail within the Wild and Scenic river corridor but outside of proposed Wilderness, a designation is applied that will protect and enhance the mountain biking experience alongside conservation values.



Wild Olympic Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

Proposed Designations

-  Proposed Wild and Scenic River
-  Potential Wilderness Area
-  Proposed Wilderness Area

Designated Areas

-  Wilderness Area
-  Olympic National Park
-  Olympic National Forest

Recreation Resources

-  Rock Climbing
-  Mountain Bike Trail
-  Trail
-  Whitewater Paddling

Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act (H.R. 2250)

Our community strongly supports H.R. 2250, the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act.

The bill was crafted after years of input from business leaders, conservationists, anglers, mountain bikers, fire management professionals, and more, and we appreciate efforts to consider the needs of a broad array of regional stakeholders in developing this legislation. Because of it, the bill benefits the region's public lands, local communities, and the millions of visitors who come to experience northwest California's storied outdoor recreation. This bill secures a vision of well-balanced, landscape-scale conservation, promotes restoration of impacted watersheds, and improves fire management.

This bill will conserve approximately 262,000 acres of public land as Wilderness, designate 379 miles of new Wild and Scenic rivers, and create a special restoration area of more than 700,000 acres. From the fog-shrouded redwood forests of Humboldt County to the sunny oak woodlands and grasslands of Mendocino, and the soaring peaks of the Trinity Alps Wilderness to the turquoise waters of the Wild and Scenic Smith River, this region is home to spectacular landscapes and world-renowned recreational opportunities.

In addition to protecting conservation values in the area, the bill would expand opportunities for sustainable recreation. With the establishment of the Elk Camp Ridge Recreation Trail, the bill would create a boon to northwest California by expanding mountain biking trails along the Elk Camp Ridge and in Del Norte County. It would permanently protect the South Fork Trinity River—a popular and valuable steelhead fishery—and study the feasibility of establishing the Bigfoot National Recreation Trail to highlight the botanical and biological diversity of the region. We greatly appreciate the bill's attention to ensuring the protection and sound management of Wilderness climbing opportunities, as well as the inclusion of Land of the Lost—the closest sport climbing to Arcata and Eureka—in a special management area.

In addition to the bill's new Wild & Scenic designations for whitewater resources on the East Fork North Fork Trinity and Canyon Creek, paddlers enthusiastically support the protection of more than 48,000 acres of public land within the

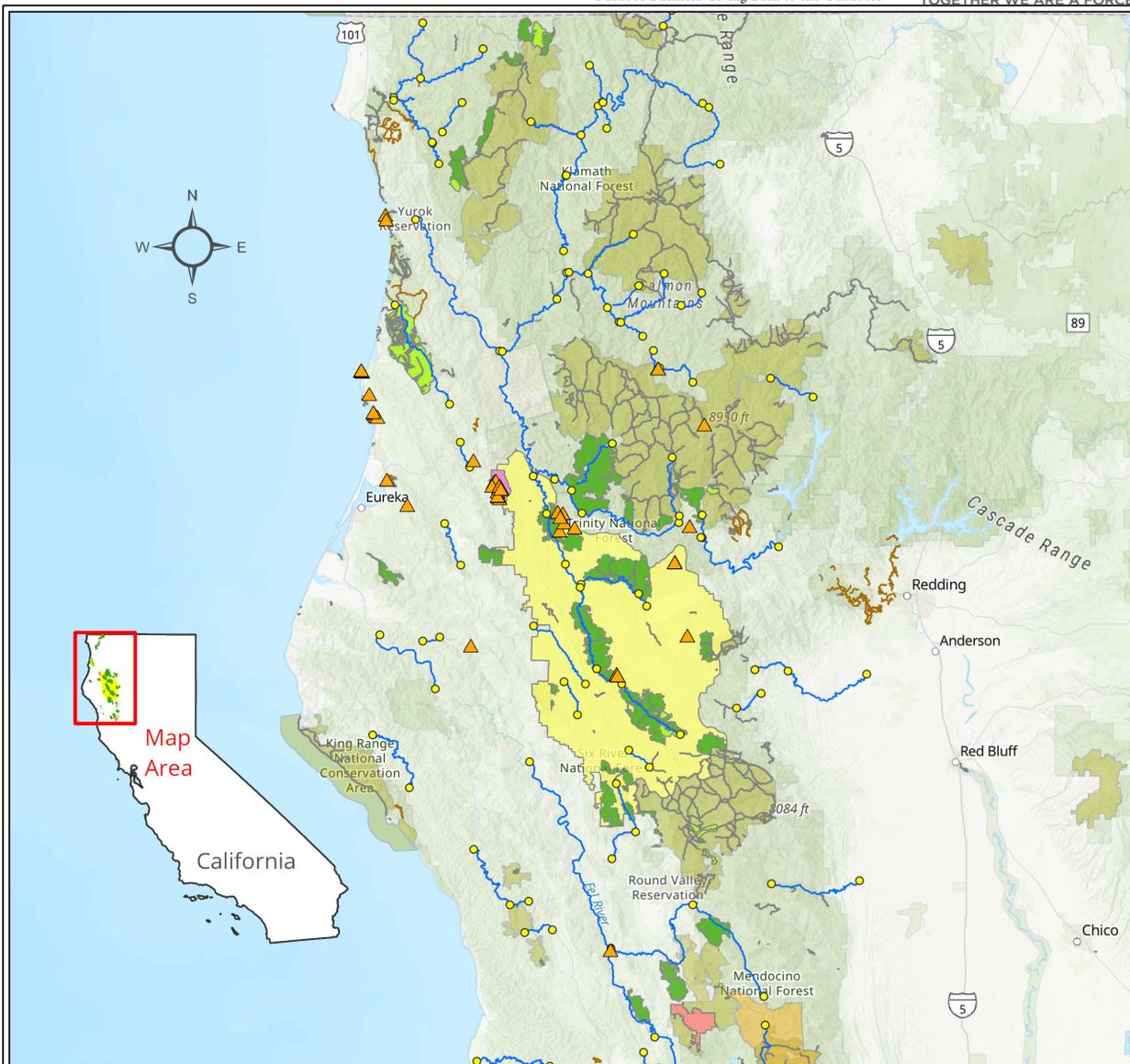
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proposed Wilderness areas surrounding already-designated Wild & Scenic watersheds on the Trinity, Eel, and Black Butte Rivers. Moreover, 25 whitewater river access points will be protected within proposed Wilderness and special restoration areas, and potential Wilderness areas will ensure boaters can continue to paddle along the banks of the lower portion of Redwood Creek surrounded by the tallest living trees in the world.

Adding lasting protections to our public land helps sustain the health of our environment and our outdoor recreation economy. In California, outdoor recreation generates \$92 billion in consumer spending and supports 691,000 jobs, \$30.4 billion in wages and salaries, and \$6.2 billion in state and local tax revenue. The Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act is an investment in California's economic future.



Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act

Proposed Designations

- Conservation Management Area
- Exclusion Area
- Potential Wilderness Area
- Proposed Wilderness Area
- Special Management Area
- Special Restoration Area

Designated Areas

- Wilderness Area
- National Monument

Recreation Resources

- Rock Climbing
- River Access
- Whitewater Paddling
- Mountain Biking Trail
- Hiking Trail



Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (H.R. 2199)

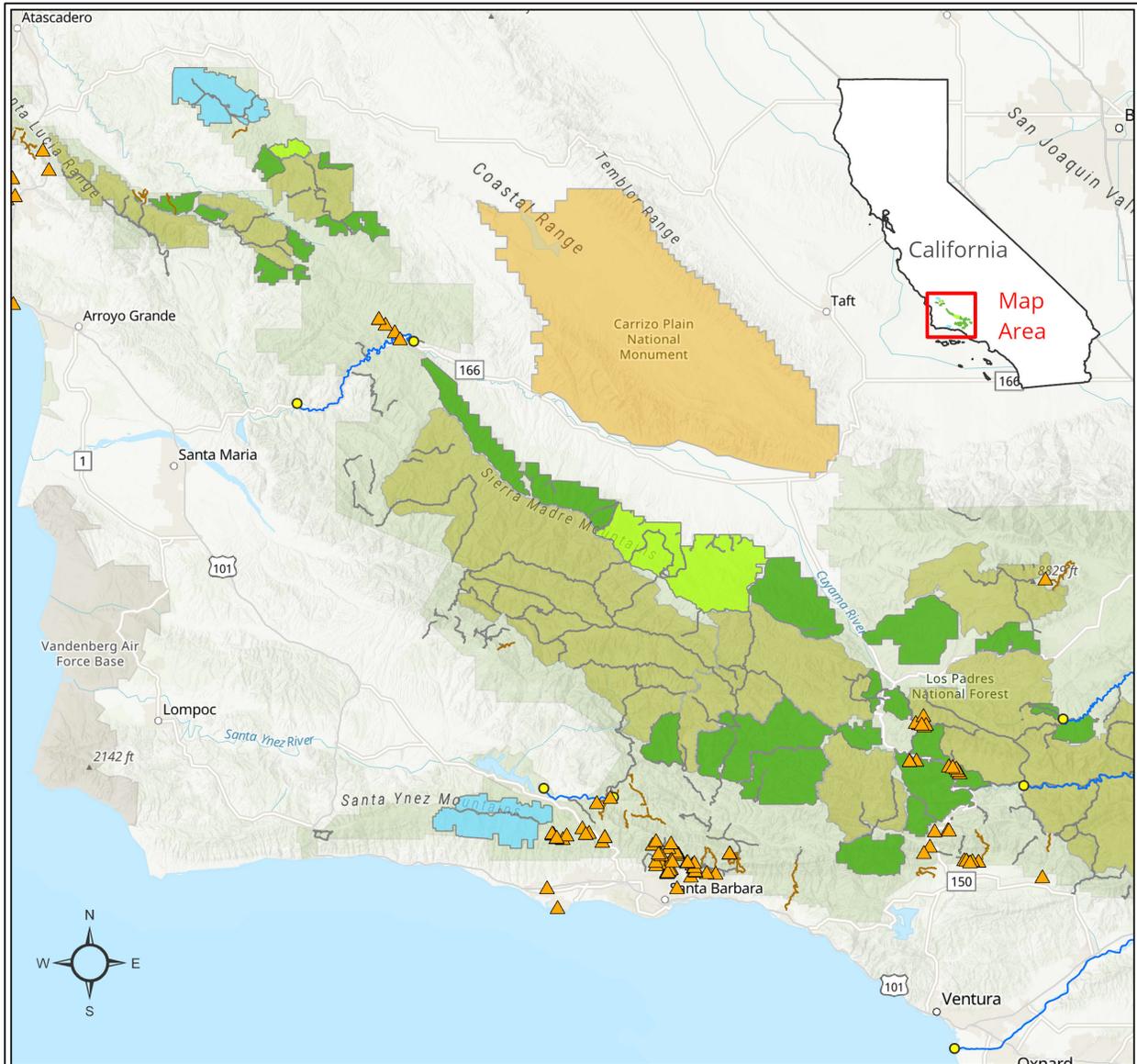
Our organizations strongly support H.R. 22199, the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act.

California's Los Padres National Forest is a popular destination for outdoor recreationists of all forms, from horseback riders, to mountain bikers, to wildlife viewers. Adding lasting protections to these areas will help sustain the health of our environment and the outdoor recreation economy.

The bill would protect more than 262,000 acres of public land within the Los Padres Forest and Carrizo Plain National Monument, designate 159 miles of river as Wild and Scenic, and create two new scenic areas, Black Mountain and Condor Ridge. Santa Barbara County's Condor Ridge is within the Santa Ynez Mountains, and its unique climate creates an area of high biodiversity and critical habitat for southern steelhead.

In addition to safeguarding clean air and water for Californians, the bill would create and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation. The bill designates a 400-mile-long Condor National Recreation Trail, supporting through-hiking and backpacking opportunities across the entire length of the Los Padres National Forest, from Los Angeles to Monterey County. The bill would also protect important and threatened wilderness characteristics around popular rock climbing areas in the Sespe Gorge along Highway 33. Paddlers support adding more miles to the Wild & Scenic Piru Creek, a waterway rare for the region that provides outstanding whitewater less than an hour drive from downtown Los Angeles.

Importantly, all proposed new wilderness boundaries were drawn in order to preserve existing mountain biking trails, and the bill would mandate that the Forest Service conduct future studies for improving mountain biking trail opportunities across the Los Padres National Forest. We greatly appreciate that the bill protects trail corridors for numerous high priority trails identified by local mountain bikers through the Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers (CCCMB), an IMBA local group, and CCCMB and IMBA have worked as part of a coalition to adjust proposed boundaries in order to protect corridors for the Mono Alamar trail, the McPherson Peak Trail, and the Rinconada Creek/Mine trails, as well as make other priority trail adjustments.



Central Coast Heritage Protection Act

Proposed Designations

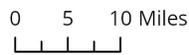
-  Proposed Scenic Area
-  Potential Wilderness Area
-  Proposed Wilderness Area

Designated Areas

-  National Monument
-  Wilderness Area

Recreation Resources

-  Rock Climbing
-  River Access
-  Whitewater Paddling
-  Mountain Biking Trail
-  Hiking Trail



San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 2215)

The outdoor recreation community supports increased land protections for the San Gabriel Mountains foothills and rivers.

Right on the edge of Los Angeles in the Angeles National Forest, the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument represents 70 percent of the open space in the Los Angeles metropolitan region and provides 30 percent of the region's drinking water. Adding lasting protections to the San Gabriel Mountains is important for the health and well-being of all Angelenos and can help sustain the health of local businesses and the broader outdoor recreation economy.

We especially appreciate the various designations included in the bill that allow for multiple recreational uses. The San Gabriel foothills represent an important urban/wild buffer zone and are the gateway to the mountains for many millions of Angelenos who otherwise have limited access to open space and outdoor recreation. The establishment of a 51,000-acre National Recreation Area along the foothills and San Gabriel River corridor and Puente Hills will not only help improve that access, but will also ensure that these highly-popular and heavily-impacted areas receive the resources they need to be managed and maintained in a sustainable manner for the safety and enjoyment of all.

The bill would increase opportunities for Angelenos to enjoy the outdoors by expanding the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument by nearly 110,000 acres to include the western portions of the Angeles National Forest. The bill would establish an 8,417-acre Condor Peak Wilderness and a 6,774 acre Yerba Buena Wilderness. Additionally, the San Gabriel Wilderness would be expanded by 2,000 acres, and the Sheep Mountain by nearly 14,000 acres. The proposed Sheep Mountain Wilderness additions include a segment of the famous Pacific Crest Trail and the popular East Fork Trail. This area is famous for its rare mountain yellow-legged frog, the California spotted owl, and the many incredible trout streams perfect for fishing.

We believe that a small change to the bill to rectify an historic mapping error could further increase the efficacy of the bill for providing access to the outdoors.

When the Sheep Mountain Wilderness area was designated in 1984, a portion of its eastern boundary north of Mt. Baldy was set to follow the Mt. Baldy Trail. Unfortunately, due to inaccurate map data, the Wilderness boundary slightly overlaps the trail for a small segment as it follows the ridge line where the trail and boundary are co-located. Because Wilderness designations preclude bicycle access, this boundary issue effectively makes a significantly longer, potentially valuable mountain biking route unrideable.

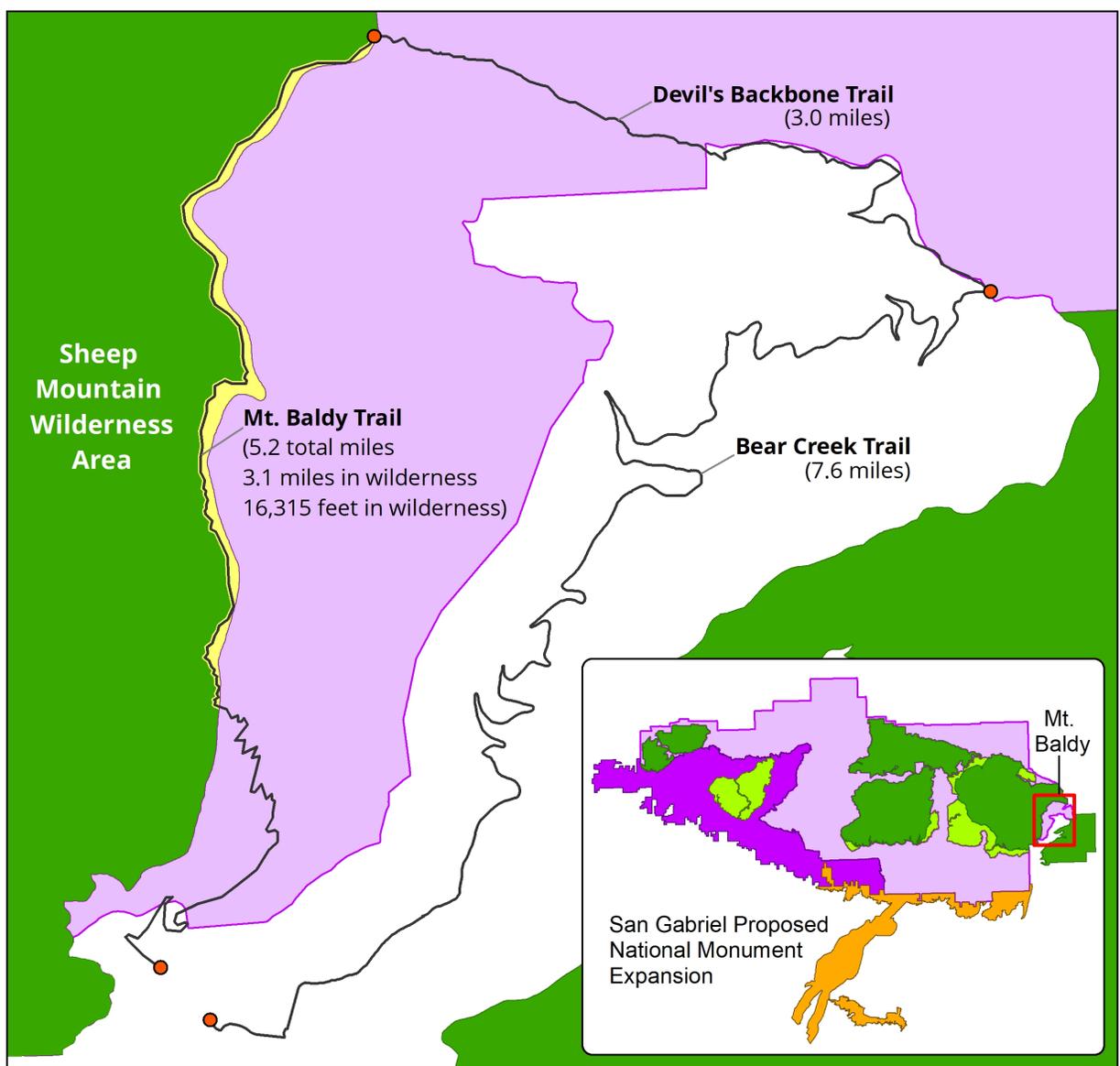
We respectfully request that the committee consider amending the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act to correct this boundary so that the Mt. Baldy trail forms the new Wilderness boundary. With the addition of this correction, we are confident the bill can garner greater support from the recreation community and Congress and set the stage for future protections of adjacent lands.

To address this change, we recommend the following amendment text:

Sheep Mountain Wilderness Boundary Adjustment.—Section 101 (a) (29.) of the California Wilderness Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-425; 98 Stat. 1619; 16 U.S.C. 1132 note) is amended as generally depicted on the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection map, by—

- (1) striking “forty-three thousand acres” and inserting “forty-three thousand three hundred and two acres”; and
- (2) striking “, dated July 1984” and inserting “and dated ___”.

The map below indicates the location and the extent of the proposed adjustment.



Modified Sheep Mountain Wilderness Area

Designation Type

-  National Monument
-  Wilderness
-  Proposed National Recreation Area
-  Proposed National Monument Expansion
-  Proposed Wilderness Area
-  Proposed/Modified Wilderness Area (74 acres)

-  Mountain Bike Trail
-  Trail Start/Finish

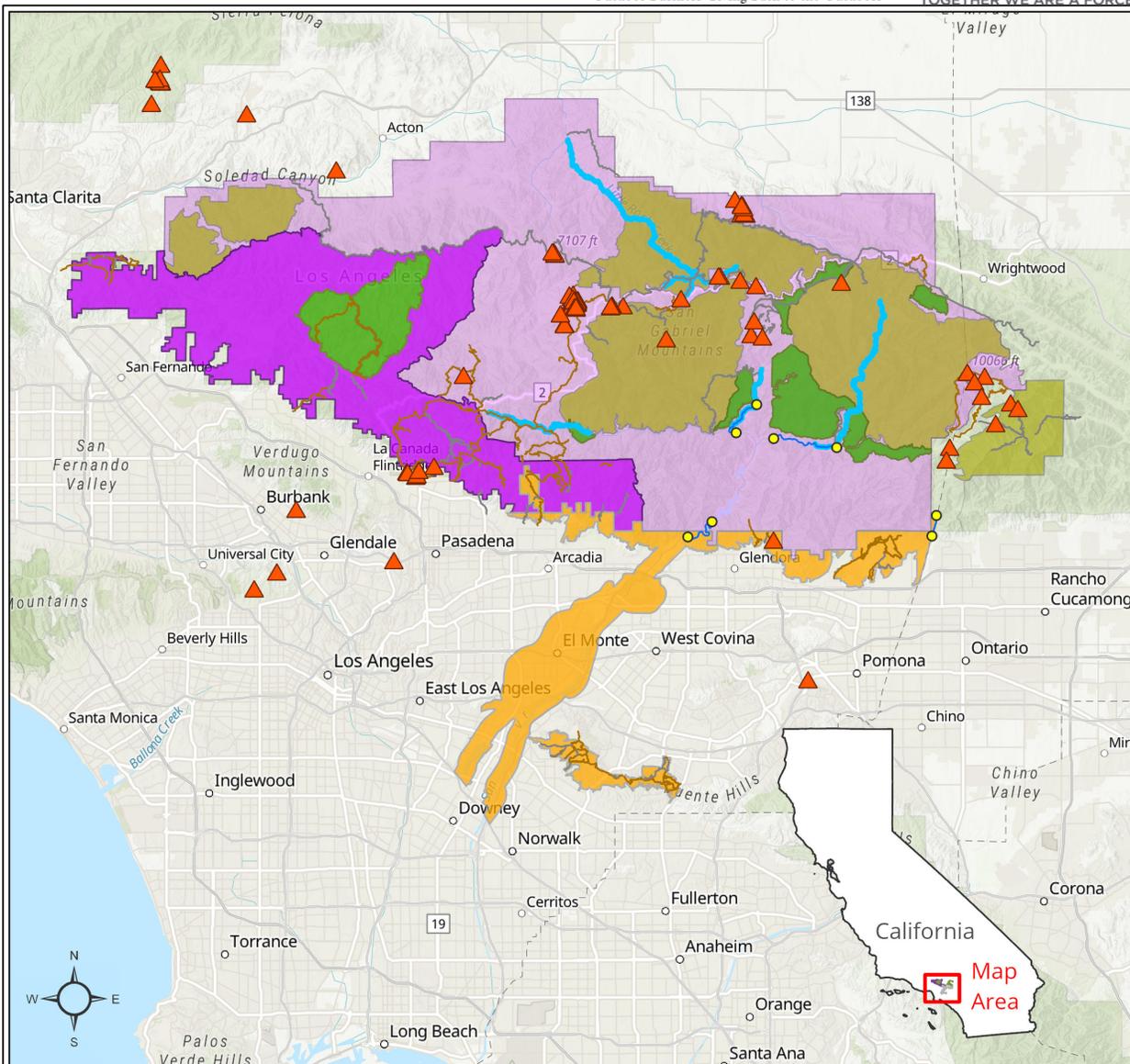


Legislatively adjusting this boundary so that it follows the trail with a standard 50-foot buffer from centerline would result in 74 acres being removed from Wilderness. This is accounted for in the recommended legislative amendment language above by removing the 74 acres from the current and official acreage total of 41,376 (rather than the original estimated acreage of 43,000 acres) for a final total of 41,302.

The Mt. Baldy trail is part of a 16-mile trail loop made up of three trails (Mt. Baldy Trail (5.2 miles), Devil's Backbone Trail (3 miles) and Bear Creek Trail (7.6 miles)). Technically, with the exception of a 3-mile section of trail that dips into and enters Wilderness along the eastern boundary of the Sheep Mountain Wilderness Area, the entire loop is open to bikes. Legislatively adjusting this boundary so that it follows the trail with a standard 50-foot buffer from centerline would restore a 16-mile loop ride. That adjustment would bring a valuable benefit to the mountain biking community and help build substantial enthusiasm for the bill in the mountain biking and recreation community.

The 74 acres of adjustment to the Sheep Mtn. Wilderness area (represented by the sliver of yellow shown on the main map image) would be offset by the San Gabriel bill adding 31,069 acres of new Wilderness (light green), 109,503 acres of expanded National Monument (dark pink), and 49,200 acres of new National Recreation Area (Orange). The map inset above provides a perspective of how the adjustment (yellow) fits into the bigger picture of the bill.

The outdoor recreation community greatly appreciates the bill's attention to conservation and recreation values in the greater Los Angeles area, and we appreciate consideration of the boundary adjustment issue raised above.



San Gabriel Mountains, Foothills, and Rivers Protection Act

Proposed Designations

- Proposed Wild & Scenic River
- National Monument Expansion
- National Recreation Area
- Proposed Wilderness

Designated Areas

- National Monument
- Wilderness Area

Recreation Resources

- ▲ Rock Climbing
- River Access
- Whitewater Paddling
- Mountain Biking Trail
- Hiking Trail



Colorado Wilderness Act (H.R. 2546)

The outdoor recreation community greatly appreciates Rep. DeGette's efforts to protect public lands in Colorado for conservation and outdoor recreation through the Colorado Wilderness Act. The bill protects important climbing resources, as well as whitewater paddling opportunities on the Dolores and other rivers. As currently proposed, however, the bill would close access to approximately 120 miles of mountain biking trails, and there are additional potential conflicts with bolted climbing areas. We have been actively engaged in vetting these conflicts, and greatly appreciate Rep. DeGette's interest in addressing the concerns of outdoor recreationists to arrive at a proposal that addresses both landscape protections and opportunities to sustainably enjoy these areas. We intend to continue working closely with local recreation advocates and with Rep. DeGette's staff to propose specific adjustments that, we are hopeful, will lead to a broadly supported resolution to the benefit of conservation and recreation values in Colorado.

* * *

On behalf of the outdoor recreation community, thank you again for holding this hearing, and we look forward to continuing to work with you in support of conservation and recreation values on our country's public lands and waters.

Best regards,



Louis Geltman
Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance



Kirsten Blackburn
Advocacy Manager
The Conservation Alliance



Patricia Rojas-Ungar
Vice President,
Government Affairs
Outdoor Industry
Association

Our Organizations

Outdoor Alliance

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of ten member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, backcountry ski and snowshoe, and enjoy coastal recreation on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes.

The Conservation Alliance

The Conservation Alliance is an organization of like-minded businesses whose collective contributions support grassroots environmental organizations and their efforts to protect wild places where outdoor enthusiasts recreate. Alliance funds have played a key role in protecting rivers, trails, wildlands and climbing areas. Membership in the Alliance is open to all companies who care about protecting our most threatened wild places for habitat and outdoor recreation. Since its inception in 1989, The Conservation Alliance has contributed more than \$21 million, helped to protect more than 51 million acres of wildlands; protect 3,107 miles of rivers; stop or remove 34 dams; designate five marine reserves; and purchase 14 climbing areas. For complete information on The Conservation Alliance, see www.conservationalliance.com.

Outdoor Industry Association

Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) is the national trade association for the outdoor industry and is the title sponsor of Outdoor Retailer, the largest outdoor products tradeshow in North America. OIA serves over 1,300 manufacturers, suppliers, and retailers through a focus on international trade and public lands and recreation policy, sustainable business innovation and outdoor participation.