



July 9, 2017

Mr. Ryan Zinke
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, Support for Retention of Current Boundary and Protections

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am Executive Director of Friends of the Inyo, a public lands conservation group based in the Eastern Sierra. I write in my professional capacity, on behalf of our 700+ members, and also as a United States Citizen, Californian, and Outdoor Recreator to support retention of the current boundary and protections for Cascade-Siskiyou National monument.

First, please consider that Cascade-Siskiyou provides critical support for the local rural economy of the area that surrounds it. The numbers prove this assertion: From 2001 (a year after the monument was designated) to 2015, in Jackson County alone, the population grew by 16%; jobs grew by 14%; real personal income grew by 30%; and real per capita income grew by 12%.

Because of the obvious economic support provided by the monument, the mayors, city councils, and chamber of commerce boards of the two towns closest to the monument unanimously support not only the retention of the current boundary and protections, but expansion of the monument. Support for expansion is also the majority position of local landowners, other local elected officials, and the Klamath Tribes. During a public comment period held by Oregon Senators Merkley and Wyden, supporters outnumbered the opposition over 3-to-1.

Second, please know that, now more than ever, citizens of the United States understand that the outdoor recreation economy in the United States is responsible for a significant portion of the GDP, provides a significant number of jobs to Americans, and a significant amount of money (in taxes) to the federal treasury. Again the numbers

provide indisputable evidence in support of this conclusion: The 2017 Outdoor Recreation Economy national report revealed that outdoor recreation is an \$887 billion industry that supports 7.6 million jobs and generates \$65.3 billion in federal tax revenue. Much of this economic activity depends upon access to recreational resources on public lands, including national monuments.

Third, Cascade-Siskiyou provides extensive recreational opportunities, enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. These include: Hiking through meadows of wildflowers along the Pacific Crest Trail; climbing the ancient volcanic massif of Pilot Rock; and pulling a rare redband trout from the translucent waters of Jenny Creek, to name a few.

Finally, the Cascade-Siskiyou landscape is recognized as one of the most biologically diverse areas in the western United States, indeed, the monument is still smaller than scientists deem necessary to fully protect its many biological treasures. Among its important biological attributes:

- ❖ Functions as a biological crossroads between the Cascade, Klamath/Siskiyou, and Great Basin ecoregions;
- ❖ Protects dense forests including old-growth oak savannas, Shasta red firs, and western junipers;
- ❖ Two hundred and two bird species have been observed and documented in the Monument;
- ❖ Protects several species of critical concern including Northern Spotted Owl, Great Gray Owl, Peregrine Falcon, and Willow Flycatcher.
- ❖ Provides habitat for an array of birds that are near their range limit in the area, including Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, California Towhee, Canyon Wren, Black-billed Magpie, Hermit Warbler, Band-tailed Pigeon, Ruffed Grouse and Rufous Hummingbird.
- ❖ Provides range for a great diversity of large charismatic vertebrate fauna including mule deer, gray wolves, black-tailed deer and Roosevelt elk;
- ❖ Streams house prized redband trout and giant Pacific salamanders;
- ❖ Provides unique habitat opportunity for Southern Alligator Lizard, the striped whipsnake, the western pond turtle and the rare boreal toad;
- ❖ Home to Tunnel Creek, a unique spring-dominated wetland area that's home to the rare Oregon spotted frog and boasts a remarkable diversity of sedges, an unusual family of grasses that grow in wet places.

In short, Cascade-Siskiyou is a unique national treasure. It's designation clearly fulfills the requirements of the Antiquities Act, and is locally supported. For all of these reasons, Friends of the Inyo's 700+ members encourage the retention of current boundaries and protections for the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.

Sincerely,

Wendy Schneider
Executive Director
Friends of the Inyo