



Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument

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Defending our national monuments

Since the Trump administration announced its review of 27 national monuments across the country in April, 2.8 million people weighed in with comments to the Department of the Interior, nearly all of which were in support of our national monuments. Despite this overwhelming support, the Trump administration released a report on August 24 that was skimpy on details, but one thing was clear—they want to change protections for an undisclosed handful of monuments.

Then, on September 17, the recommendation was leaked to the press. Behind closed doors, the Interior Department made a recommendation to significantly

“Millions of Americans have voiced their opposition to this scheme to sell out our beloved lands and waters to drilling, mining and logging interests.”

alter Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah, Katahdin Woods & Waters in Maine, Cascade-Siskiyou in Oregon, Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande del Norte in New Mexico, Gold Butte in Nevada

and marine monuments in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

At time of writing, President Trump has not yet confirmed the steps he will take to implement the recommendations, but The Wilderness Society is prepared to challenge in court any attempts to reduce protections or size of these outstanding natural and cultural wonders.

“We believe the Trump administration has no legal authority to alter or erase protections for national treasures. Millions of Americans have voiced their opposition to this scheme to sell out our beloved lands and waters to drilling, mining and logging

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The Wilderness Society
President Jamie Williams
with his two children.

DEAR WILDERNESS SOCIETY SUPPORTER,

I hope you've had a lovely fall and were able to enjoy some restorative time outdoors. There is so much splendor to explore and to protect for future generations!

Thanks to you, The Wilderness Society is doing just that. With your help, we are fighting harder than ever to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from drilling. We are working tirelessly to safeguard this treasured land as the budget process moves forward. We are standing together to protect our national monuments and to block repeated attempts to turn our public lands over to private interests. And we continue to rigorously defend bedrock environmental laws and safeguards to ensure that the victories we've won are not undone.

While the threats we face are numerous, The Wilderness Society is on the front lines of defending America's public lands—in Congress, in communities and in the courts—just as we have for more than 80 years. Protecting our national heritage is an idea that unites us, and there is strong bipartisan support for conservation of our public lands. Beyond supporting citizen action to protect the places we love, we are ensuring the voices of local communities are heard on Capitol Hill and in the administration.

Your generosity means these strategies are succeeding. For instance, The Wilderness Society played a key role in encouraging more than 2.8 million public comments in response to the Trump administration's effort to rescind or reduce some of our most cherished national monuments. The public's voice was nearly unanimous in favor of leaving these iconic places alone.

When you support The Wilderness Society, you sustain the fight to protect America's public lands from unfettered development. Thank you for your unflagging commitment during these challenging times. By working together, we will continue to prevail over efforts to undermine protections for our public lands.

Sincerely,

Jamie Williams
President

DEFENDING OUR NATIONAL MONUMENTS *continued*

interests," said Wilderness Society President Jamie Williams. "This callous proposal will needlessly punish local, predominantly rural communities that depend on parks and public lands for outdoor recreation, sustainable jobs and economic growth."



Bears Ears National Monument

© Mason Cummings



PRINTER PLEASE
UPDATE

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The Wilderness Society meets all standards as set forth by the Better Business Bureau/Wise Giving Alliance.

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Dispatches from our national monuments

What do people in the communities surrounding our national monuments think of these wild places in their backyards? We sent freelance journalist Nate Schweber out to answer this question. Since July, Nate has visited small towns and cities on the edges of seven national monuments in Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Montana and Maine, where he interviewed locals and asked them what these monuments mean to them. Here is what people had to say who are living near the monuments for which the Trump administration has recommended reduced protections.



GRAND STAIRCASE – ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT

“Wild country has defined the western United States since the beginning, and we need to keep what’s left of it, because it defines who we are. ... It’s formed our character.”

—Bob Poulton, rancher and mulepacker



BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

“It’s holy, it’s holy. Even just the sight of it, that’s home. You feel at home.”

—Dalene Redhorse, gas station clerk



ORGAN MOUNTAINS – DESERT PEAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT

“It’s important to me as a Hispanic person living here that that history is documented too. The story told here in this national monument is Hispanic history, is indigenous history.”

—Gabriel Vasquez, employee of New Mexico Wildlife Federation



ORGAN MOUNTAINS – DESERT PEAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT

“This community has been overwhelmingly supportive of the national monument. President Trump is ignoring local governments, period, as was Secretary Zinke—the big beef is he wasn’t meeting with local voices.”

—Carrie Hamblen, CEO & President of Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce



KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS NATIONAL MONUMENT

“It’s exciting because I think that maybe my 8-year-old son or 10-year-old daughter might at least have a choice that if they want to stay here someday that they’ll be able to. If we’re going to turn a corner in these communities I think this can really be a crucial piece.”

—Richard Schmidt, III, town leader, father, veteran



**TOO
WILD TO
DRILL**

© Appalachian Trail Conservancy

From Appalachia to the Arctic—these places are Too Wild to Drill

The Wilderness Society's new 'Too Wild to Drill' report highlights 15 exceptional places threatened by the Trump administration's agenda to aggressively develop our public lands. These special places span America from Alaska's pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to the Appalachian Trail that stretches from Maine to Georgia. Local communities depend on these protected public lands for jobs, recreation, clean water and other benefits. These priceless expanses are the last refuges of vanishing wildlife species from polar bears to bog turtles to red-cockaded woodpeckers.

Since 1935, The Wilderness Society has protected America's wildest landscapes for future generations. With help from The Wilderness Society's generous supporters, our dedicated staff, other conservation organizations, and the local communities that rely on these stunning landscapes, we can preserve our wildlands legacy for ours and future generations.

All 15 unique landscapes are Too Wild to Drill. Two exceptional places, one remote and one with millions of visitors a year, illustrate the grave risks of irresponsible energy development.

Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian Trail stretches 2,000 miles through 14 states along the east coast. It is one of the world's longest hiking trails. Each year, more than 3 million hikers and backpackers explore thick spruce-fir forests, wander ridgelines and pause in awe of the sweeping views from the White Mountains of Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia. The Appalachian Trail's proximity to eastern cities draws urban residents to connect with our wildland heritage and inspires many to protect these beloved landscapes.



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The Appalachian Trail is threatened by the proposed 300-mile Mountain Valley Pipeline that would carry natural gas from West Virginia across the Appalachian Mountains to Virginia. The pipeline, which would run parallel to the trail for 90 miles, would permanently scar the forest landscapes. Pipeline leaks would pollute the multitude of waterways that supply drinking water to communities.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Alaska is one of the last untouched landscapes on Earth. The 19.3-million-acre preserve spans high mountains, windswept alpine tundra and boreal forests that are home to polar and grizzly bears, wolves, beluga and bowhead whales and more than 200 bird species. It is also the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd. The massive infrastructure associated with energy development would permanently scar the ecosystem. Spills and toxic waste from oil and gas drilling would foul the air and water, destroy wildlife populations, and displace indigenous communities that rely on fishing, hunting and native plants to survive.

The indigenous Gwich'in people have lived in and around the Arctic Refuge for thousands of years and call the coastal plain of the refuge "The Sacred Place Where Life Begins." For the Gwich'in, this wilderness is a necessity to feed their families and sustain their culture.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a national treasure that both Republicans and Democrats supported for wilderness designation. Despite this support, pro-drilling members in both houses of Congress have recently put the future of the refuge on the line by hijacking the federal budget process in a sneaky attempt to open the refuge to drilling. This American treasure is too wild to drill and it needs your help now more than ever.

The Wilderness Society and our generous supporters are working tirelessly to protect the Arctic Refuge and all 15 of these threatened wildlands.

▶ **Visit wilderness.org/toowild to learn more and take action.**

Hot Issues

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ARCTIC REFUGE UNDER THREAT

The Senate just paved the way for oil drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by passing a backdoor drilling provision in its 2018 federal budget bill. The provision, passed on Oct. 19, poses a grave threat to the Arctic Refuge after nearly 40 years of bipartisan support for protections.

"Americans should be outraged at the shameless hijacking of the federal budget process. This fight is far from over. Now is the time for Americans across the country to speak out," said Wilderness Society President Jamie Williams in a statement following the vote.

The Senate's drilling provision is just the first step towards drilling in the Arctic Refuge. It requires the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to draft instructions to reduce the federal deficit through revenues created by oil and gas leasing in the refuge. The House has already passed a similar budget provision, but both houses of Congress must now work to reconcile their budget versions before final passage and delivery to the president. During that process, we need all of your help to pressure Congress to strip the Arctic provision before a final budget is voted on by Congress.

VICTORY IN THE COURTS

September 21 was a banner day in the courts for The Wilderness Society and our supporters as two important decisions went our way—one that will protect our forests and one that will protect our water.

First, the DC district court decision on the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which protected 58 million acres of national forest roadless areas from road building and logging, was a resounding win. The court dismissed the State of Alaska's lawsuit—the last of many lawsuits that were originally filed shortly after the Clinton administration adopted the Roadless Rule back in January 2001.

Second, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver issued a ruling that at least temporarily reinstates a rule to reduce contamination of groundwater from chemicals used in the process of hydraulic fracturing to drill for oil and gas on federal and tribal lands. However, this summer the Trump administration formally proposed to repeal the Fracking Rule, leaving it in serious jeopardy. We are continuing to be vigilant in protecting this important safeguard. The Wilderness Society participated in both cases as an intervenor in defense of the two conservation policies, represented by our attorneys at Earthjustice.

DEFENDING AMERICA'S FORESTS

America's national forests, a vital part of our public land system, provide haven for wildlife, deliver clean drinking water to millions and are a magnet for outdoor recreation. The Wilderness Society is working hard to maintain the health of our forests in the face of significant threats. A series of bad legislative proposals in the 115th Congress could significantly harm our national forest lands.

One such bill, the "Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017" sponsored by Rep. Bruce Westerman of Arkansas, claims to reduce wildfire risk on national forests, but instead targets bedrock laws that safeguard water, wildlife and forest health. The Westerman bill could increase timber production and drastically limit opportunities for the public to be involved in what happens to our shared national forests. Proposals like this also do little to address the urgent Forest Service funding crisis. Once fire-fighting funds are depleted, as they are in devastating fire seasons like we've had this year, they must borrow from other programs, including those that could strategically thin forests near communities and reduce the risk of future wildfires.

Wilderness and You: Michelle Friend

On the trails of Sonoma State University's nature preserves, metal signs depicting drawings of mountain lions tell you what to do if you encounter this predator in the wild. For most people, sightings of the elusive cats are a rare and fleeting privilege. But the wildlife artist who created the signs, Bay Area resident and longtime Wilderness Society member Michelle Friend, can bring you up close and personal with these majestic creatures in an instant through her graphite drawings.

Michelle never imagined that she'd become a voice for North America's largest wildcat. The daughter of a service member, she attended 13

different schools. However, Michelle recalls that "escaping into nature always gave me a sense of place." In 1971, the former Girl Scout counselor, college art minor, and interior designer married Bob Friend. A cowboy at heart, Bob enjoyed taking Michelle and their daughter, Nicole, to dude ranches and on annual horse packing trips in western Montana, a destination that shaped Michelle's passion for wilderness protection. "Wilderness is magic," she says. "I get carried away just thinking about all the teeming variety of life out there."

Michelle's fascination with mountain lions emerged almost by accident during a wildlife drawing class in

1995, when she selected an image of the cat out of a pile of magazine clippings. The graceful feline quickly became her artistic focus, but Michelle felt compelled to go deeper, diving into research and thinking about how she could use her art to help the species. Desiring to work from her own photographs, she first traveled to zoos before hiring a professional tracker to help her track wild mountain lions in Montana's Swan Valley. "I could finally show the difference between a mountain lion in captivity and one in its natural habitat. I saw it as a chance to educate others about this often-misunderstood creature and its precarious existence."



In addition to her roles as an artist and mountain lion advocate, Michelle proudly shares the title of 'grandparent' with Bob. It makes them think about the loss of open spaces, "the alarming pull of gadgets in our society," and the ability of future generations to connect to nature. It also propels their instrumental support for The Wilderness Society's efforts to protect large wild places like Northwest California – work that Michelle believes is absolutely imperative. "We didn't create nature. Nature created us, and we need to take care of it. When key species like the mountain lion have room to roam, the whole ecosystem benefits, and so do we."



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