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STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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**SECTION:** Senate

**SPEAKER:** Mr. WYDEN; Mr. SPECTER

**TEXT:** [\*11329]

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By Mr. WYDEN:

[S. 2034](#). A bill to amend the Oregon **Wilderness** Act of 1984 to designate the Copper Salmon **Wilderness** and to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the North and South Forks of the Elk River in the [\*11329]

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State of Oregon as wild or scenic rivers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, Oregon's coastal forests contain many hidden gems. Within the lush rainforests of the Siskiyou-Rogue River National Forest, we find one of these gems—the headwaters of the North Fork of the Elk River, known as the Copper Salmon area. Today I introduce a bill to protect this natural treasure, which lies adjacent to the existing Grassy Knob **Wilderness**.

During the last decade, a dedicated group of local conservationists has been working hard to protect Copper Salmon. It is one of the last intact watersheds on the southwest Oregon coast. Copper Salmon is renowned among fishermen. For anglers seeking to catch a trophy chinook salmon or winter steelhead for the barbeque or smoker in Oregon, this is the place. Few watersheds in Oregon can match the Elk River drainage. Even after torrential rainstorms, anglers are still able to fish the Elk. When 25 inches of rain fell over 18 straight days last December, the Elk was still fishable while the other rivers in southwest Oregon, Rogue, Umpqua, Coquille, were clouded with debris and mud. Copper Salmon also supports healthy populations of blacktail deer, elk, black bear and mountain lion. This beautiful gem on the southwestern Oregon coast provides great and challenging opportunities here to hunt in freedom and solitude.

Mr. President, 80 percent of the watershed in this region is still intact. The Elk has healthy wild runs of winter steelhead and chinook. It also has some coho salmon and sea-run cutthroat trout, as well as resident cutthroats and rainbow trout. Oregon State University researchers believe it is one of the healthiest anadromous fish streams in the lower 48. There is a reason why: intact habitat.

My bill would provide permanent protections to 13,700 acres of new **wilderness**. It would also designate 9.3 miles of wild and scenic rivers. **Wilderness** and wild and scenic designations will protect this watershed and ensure that hunting and fishing opportunities are protected in the Copper Salmon area. **Wilderness** designation is popular in the local area, as evidenced by resolutions in favor of it from the Port Orford Chamber of Commerce, the mayor of Port Orford, and the Curry County Commissioners. Additionally, a majority of the guides, lodges and local citizens have supported this proposal. It is time now that we all come together and permanently protect this special place.

As Oregon's population grows, I believe that we must match this growth and the corresponding development with protection of our natural heritage. Protection of these areas will ensure that Oregonians and visitors will continue to enjoy opportunities to hike in the **wilderness**, hunt healthy populations of elk, blacktail deer, black bear, mountain lion and to catch trophy-sized chinook and steelhead.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

[S. 2034](#)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Copper Salmon **Wilderness** Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that-

(1) the proposed Copper Salmon **Wilderness**, comprising 13,700 acres, includes a significant portion of an inventoried roadless area adjacent to the Grassy Knob **Wilderness** area protected by the Oregon **Wilderness** Act of 1984 ([16 U.S.C. 1132](#) note; Public Law 98-328);

(2) the proposed Copper Salmon **Wilderness** includes-

(A) the North Fork and South Fork of the Elk River;

(B) the upper Middle Fork of the Sixes River; and

(C) tributaries of the South Fork of Coquille River;

(3) the Elk River is designated as a Tier 1 Key Watershed;

(4) the fisheries of the Elk River are recognized as 1 of the best salmon and steelhead producers in the 48 contiguous States, producing more salmon per square meter than most rivers outside the State of Alaska;

(5) designation of the proposed **Wilderness** would provide permanent protection for the last remaining mammoth Port Orford Cedars in the Elk River watershed;

(6) the protection of the proposed Copper Salmon **Wilderness** is supported by the local communities near the proposed **Wilderness**, which have passed resolutions supporting the designation of the proposed **Wilderness**;

(7) the master plan for the economic stability of Curry County, Oregon, includes ecotourism and recreation as primary sources of income; and

(8) permanent protection for the proposed Copper Salmon **Wilderness** is needed to conserve the environment in southwestern Oregon.

### SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF THE COPPER SALMON **WILDERNESS**.

Section 3 of the Oregon **Wilderness** Act of 1984 ([16 U.S.C. 1132](#) note; Public Law 98-328) is amended-

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "eight hundred fifty-nine thousand six hundred acres" and inserting "873,300 acres"; and

(2) in paragraph (29), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(30) certain land in the Siskiyou National Forest, comprising approximately 13,700 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled `Proposed Copper Salmon **Wilderness** Area', to be known as the `Copper Salmon **Wilderness**'."

### SEC. 4. WILD AND SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATIONS, ELK RIVER, OREGON.

Section 3(a)(76) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act ([16 U.S.C. 1274\(a\)\(76\)](#)) is amended-

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking "19-mile segment" and inserting "29-mile segment";

(2) in subparagraph (A), by striking "; and" and inserting a period; and

(3) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

"(B) The approximately 0.4-mile segment of the North Fork Elk from the source of the North Fork Elk in sec. 21, T. 33 S., R. 12 W., of the Willamette Meridian, downstream to 0.01 miles downstream of Forest Service Road 3353, as a scenic river.

"(C) The approximately 5.3-mile segment of the North Fork Elk from 0.01 miles downstream of Forest Service Road 3353 downstream to its confluence with the South Fork Elk, as a wild river.

"(D) The approximately 0.9-mile segment of the South Fork Elk from the source of the North Fork Elk in sec. 32, T. 33 S., R. 12 W., of the Willamette Meridian, downstream to 0.01 miles downstream of Forest Service Road 3353, as a scenic river.

"(E) The approximately 4.2-mile segment of the South Fork Elk from 0.01 miles downstream of Forest Service Road 3353 downstream to the confluence with the North Fork Elk, as a wild river."