



Northwest California's MOUNTAINS & RIVERS

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DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS APPLAUD NEW LEGISLATION TO RESTORE, PROTECT AND SUSTAIN NORTHWEST CALIFORNIA RIVERS, LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES

Bill would improve forest health, wildfire resiliency, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat, and support local economies

A broad coalition of businesses, community leaders and conservationists today-applauded the introduction of legislation by Representative Jared Huffman to better protect and restore some of Northwest California's most unique lands and waters, improve the resiliency of the landscape to wildfire, and help local communities capitalize on the region's reputation as one of the best areas for fishing, hunting, hiking, and other outdoor recreation in the West.

The Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act is the product of years of dialogue involving business leaders, conservationists, sportsmen, mountain bikers, and other stakeholders interested in the use and well-being of these iconic lands. The bill would conserve approximately 262,000 acres as wilderness, designate 379 miles of new wild and scenic rivers, and create a special restoration area of more than 700,000-acres. These forests and rivers are an important part of America's natural heritage, a mainstay of the regional economy, and provide excellent public access to myriad outdoor recreation opportunities.

"Protecting our public lands is essential, because these natural landscapes are investments in the well-being of our communities," said Humboldt County Supervisor Ryan Sundberg. "Northwest California's public lands are critical to our community's quality of life and to our local economy. This legislation will help ensure that this legacy is protected for future generations."

Visitors come to this region from around the globe to fish for steelhead, salmon and trout, float the rivers, hike and mountain bike the backcountry trails, and find solitude in primeval redwood groves. The Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act will support the regional economy and enhance these and other outdoor recreation opportunities by spurring new infrastructure and upgrades to old roads, trails and camping facilities, and by improving forest health and resilience to wildfire.

"As a local business owner, I am glad to see the introduction of the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act," said Aaron Ostrom, co-owner of Pacific Outfitters. "My dad

started our business in 1968 and my brother and I have continued the family tradition of helping people get the gear they need to explore, camp, fish, and hunt across our region. These beautiful places support all of our local businesses, since people come to the area to explore and shop while they are here.”

Outdoor recreation generates \$92 billion in consumer spending and 691,000 direct jobs in California, according to the Outdoor Industry Association. Residents of California’s 2nd Congressional District spend \$1.93 billion annually on outdoor recreation, while 134 outdoor companies are based here.

“This comprehensive bill ensures more opportunities for people to enjoy the many outdoor activities available in the region,” said Herb Burton, who along with his wife, Patty, owns Trinity Fly Shop. “Fishing our beautiful lakes and rivers is a way of life for us, the backbone of our 36-year family business and, undoubtedly, there is no better way for people to unwind from the daily rigors and become well acquainted with the beauty and wonders of the outdoors.”

The legislation would enhance recreation in the region by establishing the Horse Mountain Special Management Area and designating the Elk Camp Ridge Recreation Trail for off-highway vehicles and mountain bikes. The bill also calls for developing a Regional Trails plan and studying the feasibility of establishing The Bigfoot National Recreation Trail, which would highlight the world-renowned botanical and biological diversity found here.

Susan Molyneux, President of the Trinity Trails Alliance, a local chapter of the International Mountain Bicycling Association, said, “I am thrilled that Congressman Huffman’s legislation includes a feasibility study for a trail around Trinity Lake. This project has the potential to increase recreation tourism in our county for all trail users and directly benefit the local economy.

The legislation will reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire by prioritizing projects that reduce fuels through selective harvest, which would increase public safety, and calling for unified fire management across national forests.

“The integration of restoration and fire management in this legislation is critical to the health and safety of our forests in Trinity County,” said Kenneth Baldwin, a Registered Professional Forester. “By encouraging management prescriptions such as roadside shaded fuel breaks in his legislation, Congressman Huffman is helping our communities and firefighter safety.”

The Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act is a timely and sensible measure built from the ground up. It will better protect the unique scenery, ecology and water quality of Northwest California, enhance outdoor recreation opportunities, help safeguard local residents and communities from catastrophic wildfire, restore vital fish and wildlife habitat, and boost the regional economy.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Public TV series This American Land segment on local efforts to protect Northwest California

<https://youtu.be/FClqYjm6bhY?t=89>

B-ROLL

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/pd7fp90sxoo35sj/Northern%20California%20Wilderness%20and%20Recreation%20Act.mp4?dl=1>

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The Northwest Mountains and Rivers Campaign is a coalition of conservation organizations, business owners, land owners, biologists, hunters, anglers and other community members that support Congressman Huffman's effort to protect special places, restore watersheds and fisheries, support economic development, enhance recreational opportunities, and protect communities.