

SISKIYOU CREST MONUMENT

Submitted by: Indian Creek Botanical Mission, Selma, Oregon

Background: The Siskiyou Crest is a land of superlatives. It is geographically and geologically remarkable, consisting of high ridges of complexly varied rock types criss-crossing the Oregon/California border. While most montane systems in North America are positioned north-south, the Crest stretches east-west. This gives the Crest a vital role as the only high quality habitat corridor connecting the Coast Ranges of Oregon and California to the Cascade and Sierra Mountains, creating a “land bridge - the crossbar in a giant “H” on the west of the continent.

Sitting at the crossroads of so many far-flung ecosystems, the Siskiyou Crest contains species from all of them, leading to an exceptional array of life forms living side by side, including many endemic species found nowhere else on earth. The Crest is home to the highest concentration of plant species in one area in the state of California, making it a globally significant hotspot for botanical and butterfly diversity.

This land bridge effect acts as a travel conduit for wide-ranging mammals to migrate. Wolverine, marten, lynx, fisher, mountain lion, bear and elk currently inhabit or have recently been sighted in the area. The cool waters flowing from the Crest into the Rogue, Klamath, Applegate and Illinois basins are a refuge for endangered wild salmon, and provide drinking water for many local communities, including Ashland.

Climate scientists are urging conservationists to protect intact forest habitat immediately. The threats global warming presents to the survival of America’s wildlife requires the protection of landscapes that connect critical habitats.

Monument status provides for continued recreation use, including hiking, camping, hunting, fishing and back-country skiing. Nearly 60 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail pass through the proposed monument, and the main access roads would remain open. Private landowners within the monument boundary would see no affect to their property rights, and may enjoy increased land value.

Resolution: The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs supports the creation of the Siskiyou Crest National Monument.

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