

The River Democracy Act

Section by Section Summary

Section 1 and 2 and 3. Title and Findings and Definitions

Section 4 Amendments to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act: should a Wild and Scenic River segment flow through lands managed under the National Landscape Conservation System, this ensures the stronger protection shall apply to that particular river segment. Currently, this applies to National Parks and Wildlife Refuges. This section also provides that federal land managers can enter into cooperative agreements with Native American Tribal governments to administer Wild and Scenic Rivers. Currently, federal land managers are only encouraged to enter into cooperative agreements with state and local governments.

Section 5 Administration of Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers: applies only to rivers and streams designated as Wild and Scenic under this Act; applies a savings clauses to ensure nothing in the bill affects private property rights, water rights, tribal treaty rights, wildland fire management, or private contracts affecting federal lands.

The bill would establish a flexible time frame for land managers to establish comprehensive river management plans (CRMP) for rivers and streams designated under this bill, as well as establishing interim protocols for managing the rivers and streams before the CRMP is finalized.

This section also requires federal land managers to assess wildfire risks, implement a plan to reduce risks, enter into agreements with state and local governments to help fight fires, and establish a forest restoration grant program should fires burn within a Wild and Scenic River corridor.

The bill requires land managers to improve the long term viability of culturally significant native species, such as huckleberry.

The bill allows land management agencies to do stream and forest restoration work, including work to enhance habitat for native fish species.

The bill requires land managers to enter into cooperative agreements with local stakeholders to conduct science-based forestry projects that are designed to enhance the ecological function of the river corridor.

Section 6 Boundaries and Mineral Withdrawal for Wild and Scenic Rivers in Oregon: Applying to all rivers and streams designated in Oregon on or after the date of enactment of this act, this section prevents most new mining on rivers and streams, and based on science, expands the Wild and Scenic River corridor from $\frac{1}{4}$ miles on each side to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile on each side.

United States Senator Ron Wyden
February, 2021

Section 7-9 Modifications to Existing Components, Additions to Existing Components, Designation of Existing Components

Sections 7 and 8 modify *existing* rivers and streams designations by extending them or adding important tributaries. Section 9 adds *new* additional rivers and stream segments in Oregon to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers list.

Sections 10 Protecting certain areas

This section establishes a mineral withdrawal for lands in Southwest Oregon covered by a joint Bureau of Land Management/U.S. Forest Service conservation strategy, as well as several key botanical areas.