

## Senator continues efforts to protect Mt. Hood

*by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources*

U.S. Sen. Gordon H. Smith (R-OR) continued his efforts to protect an additional 128,600 acres of wilderness surrounding Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge. During a hearing of the Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee, Senator Smith joined Oregonians John Sterling of the Outdoor Industry Conservation Alliance, Ron Suppah, Chairman Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation and Martha Schrader, Clackamas County Commissioner in championing the Lewis and Clark Mount Hood Wilderness Act of 2007.

Senators Smith and Wyden introduced the Lewis and Clark Mount Hood Wilderness Act of 2007 which would permanently preserve an additional 128,600 acres surrounding Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge.

“Mount Hood is an icon for our state,” Smith said. “As such, it is also emblematic of the conflict between various uses of and visions for public land. Oregon is at a cross roads that requires balance and long-term vision. I believe this Mount Hood legislation achieves both.”

The hearing builds on the Senator’s previous efforts to expand the Mount Hood wilderness areas. The bill cosponsored by Senators Smith and Ron Wyden (D-OR), increases existing wilderness protections by almost 90 percent. It also grants Wild and Scenic River protections to an additional 79.6 miles of Oregon Rivers and creates more than 34,000 acres of Mount Hood National Recreation Areas. These new designations will improve access for mountain biking and other recreation opportunities.

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