

The Cave Conservationist

November 2009

Volume 28, Issue 4

The Cave Conservation and Management Section of the NSS

Congress Holds Hearings on Bills to Expand Oregon Caves National Monument

Bills H.R. 2889 and S. 1270 would expand Oregon Caves National Monument and make other changes in management of the Monument. Following are selected excerpts from hearings on S. 1270 held July 22, 2009. (For hearings on H.R. 2889, go to http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/index.php?option=com_jcalpro&Itemid=32&extmode=view&extid=310)

STATEMENT OF HON. RON WYDEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON

The legislation that I have introduced would expand the monument boundary by 4,070 acres to include the entire Cave Creek watershed, management of which would be transferred from the United States Forest Service to the National Park Service. Expanding the boundary would allow for better protection of the stunning majesty of both the underground caves and the above-ground treasures found at the monument.

Because the current 480-acre boundary is insufficient to adequately protect the cave system and its water quality, the Park Service has formally proposed a boundary modification numerous times, first in 1939, then again in 1949, and most recently in 2000.

The Oregon Caves National Monument makes an extraordinary contribution to southern Oregon's economy and to the national heritage. The monument receives over 80,000 visitors annually and is the second smallest unit of the National Park System. A larger monument boundary would help us showcase more fully the recreational

opportunities on these lands within the proposed monument boundary and provide visitors more chances to enjoy them. I feel very strongly that recreation is a special economic engine for Oregon, and I certainly want to see the opportunities that would come about through a larger monument boundary for additional recreational opportunities.

Now, my legislation would additionally designate at least 9.6 miles of rivers and tributaries as Wild and Scenic or recreational, including the first subterranean Wild and Scenic River, the River Styx.

We have got to particularly get the Forest Service on track to make sure that this special treasure has the protection that is needed. Again and again, we have seen a failure to cooperate with respect to steps that are needed to protect the monument's resources.

Today the Forest Service asks for yet more time to figure out a way to work cooperatively with the Federal partners. They say that no coordinated study or formal dialog has occurred between the Departments to discuss expansion. Yet, this proposal has been discussed for years, and a hearing was held on similar legislation a year ago and the Forest Service asked for time to discuss this with the Park Service then. But the testimony that we are getting today indicates that Forest Service has not even utilized the last year to fully tap the opportunities for interagency cooperation.

[W]e are going to work on this in a bipartisan way.

(Hearing excerpts continued on page 3)



Cave Conservation and Management Section of the National Speleological Society



We're on the Web!

Visit Us At

<http://www.caves.org/section/ccms>

Links

Please contribute to *The Cave Conservationist*. You can send articles, news, photos, ideas, etc. to caveconservationist@gmail.com

Full text of hearings on Senate Bill S. 1270
http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_senate_hearings&docid=f:53002.pdf

Cave Conservation and Management Section Contacts

CHAIRMAN

Rod Horrocks
 2201 Wilson Avenue
 Hot Springs, SD 57747
 PH: 605-745-4933
 E-Mail: rod_horrocks@nps.gov

VICE CHAIRMAN

John M. Wilson
 9504 Lakewater Court
 Richmond, VA 23299
 PH: 804-740-0339
 E-Mail: wilsonjml@msn.com

SECRETARY

Jo Schaper
 46 Cedar Drive
 Pacific, MO 63069-3414
 PH: 636-271-8380
 E-Mail: joschaper@socket.net

TREASURER

Sandra A. Cowan
 HC 68, Box 117
 Friars Hill, WV 24938-9777
 PH: 304-497-3553
 E-Mail: sacowan@frontiernet.net

THE CAVE CONSERVATIONIST EDITOR

Jim O'Neill
 411 W Ontario St. # 507
 Chicago, IL 60654
 PH: 312-654-8685
 E-Mail: caveconservationist@gmail.com

HONORARY CHAIRMAN

Robert R. Stitt
 4823 Panther Lake Rd
 Snohomish, WA 98290
 PH: 360-563-9767
 E-Mail: rstitt@wingedseed.com

NSS CONSERVATION DIVISION

CO-CHAIRS

Val Hildreth-Werker & Jim Werker
 P.O. Box 207
 Hillsboro, NM 88042
 PH: 505-895-5050
 E-Mail: werks@zianet.com

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

John Hoffelt
 208 Cheatham Avenue
 Smyrna, TN 37167
 PH: 615-351-3742
 E-Mail: mossyguy@comcast.net

Brian Roebuck
 94 Magnolia Lane
 Normandy, TN 37360
 PH: 931-455-8658
 E-Mail: solow@charter.net

Jessica Snider
 3833 Montgomery NE # 534
 Albuquerque, NM 87109
 PH: 505-550-5388
 E-Mail: sniderj@unm.edu

James Wilbanks
 PO Box 34
 Rising Fawn, GA 30738
 PH: 706-462-2316
 E-Mail: jimgail69@earthlink.net

J. Judson Wynne
 2255 North Gemini Drive
 Flagstaff, AZ 86001
 PH: 928-556-7466, x238
 E-Mail: jut.wynne@nau.edu



INSIDE

PAGE

Congress Holds Hearings on Bills to Expand Oregon Caves National Monument

1, 3-5

Short Scoops

6

Hearings on Senate Bill S.1270 (continued from page 1)

STATEMENT OF DAN WENK, ACTING DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The Department supports the intent of S. 1270 as consistent with the General Management Plan (GMP) for the park, but recommends deferring action on the bill to give us the opportunity to continue exploring ways to maintain interagency coordination. DOI and USDA look forward to reporting on these discussions within 6 months.

S. 1270 would adjust the boundary of Oregon Caves National Monument to include the addition of approximately 4,070 acres to enhance the protection of resources associated with the monument and to increase quality recreation opportunities. The lands that would be added are currently managed by the U.S. Forest Service as part of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest.

S. 1270 would designate approximately 7.6 miles of these waterways as wild, scenic, or recreational under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, including the first subterranean designated waterway in the country, the River Styx, which flows through the caves as a "recreational" river. S. 1270 provides authority for the Secretary to protect the water quality -- in the caves and for public consumption -- and to administer the lands in accordance with current laws and regulations.

The Secretary is also directed to carry out ecological forest restoration activities that would establish a fire regime, manage revegetation projects, and reduce the risk of losing key ecosystem components. The land that this bill would transfer is categorized by the U.S. Forest Service as condition class 3 -- high risk of fire. Most of it is also designated as Late Successional Reserve under the Northwest Forest Plan. We understand that the Forest Service is currently working on a multi-year effort to reduce fuels under a comprehensive

forest plan which is intended to help restore the appropriate role of fire in the entire ecosystem, which in turn would benefit monument resources that are at risk from fire and fire suppression damage.

The bill also requires the Secretary to accept any grazing lease or permit that is donated by a lessee or permittee and further requires that no new leases or permits be granted.

In 1907, the Secretary of the Interior withdrew approximately 2,560 acres for the purposes of establishing a national monument. The 1909 presidential proclamation establishing Oregon Caves National Monument included only 480 acres. The monument was managed by the U.S. Forest Service until its administration was transferred to the National Park Service in 1933. The remaining withdrawal outside of the monument is administered by the USFS as part of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest. S. 1270 restores these lands to the original monument boundary.

The explorer Joaquin Miller extolled "The Wondrous marble halls of Oregon!" when speaking about the newly proclaimed Oregon Caves National Monument in 1909. Oregon Caves is one of the few marble caves in the country that is accessible to the public. This park, tucked up in the winding roads of southern Oregon, is known for its remoteness, the cave majesty and unusual biota.

The stream flowing from the cave entrance is a tributary to a watershed that empties into the Pacific Ocean. There are no human-made obstructions that would prevent salmon migration, which makes this the only cave in the National Park Service with an unobstructed link to the ocean.

The caves are nationally significant and a favorite visit for school kids and travelers alike. They remain alive and healthy because of the

(Continued on page 4)

Hearings on Senate Bill S.1270 (continued from page 3)

watershed above them. The park recognized this when developing the 1998 GMP and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement. The plan recommended the inclusion of the watershed into the park to provide for better cave protection and to protect the surface and subsurface hydrology and the public water supply.

If S. 1270 were enacted, there would be no acquisition costs associated with the boundary expansion and we estimate National Park Service's management, administrative, interpretive, resource protection, and maintenance costs to be approximately \$300,000 to \$750,000 annually. The Department has four major issues with the bill at this time:

1. Section 6 of the bill designates the River Styx as a recreational river. The recreational status does not afford any additional protection to the water or cave resources and may encumber the current management of the cave resources.

2. Section 7 of the bill requires the Secretary to ensure that forest attributes remain intact and functioning within a "historical range." However, because of environmental uncertainties, it may be more prudent to use "normal range of ecosystem variability" rather than "historical range."

3. Section 8 of the bill requires that if a grazing permittee or lessee chooses to voluntarily donate a grazing permit or lease within either the Big Grayback Grazing Allotment (managed by the U.S. Forest Service) or the Billy Mountain Grazing Allotment (managed by the BLM) the Secretary shall accept the donation, terminate those permits or leases and that those allotments shall be permanently retired. It is our understanding that the same individual runs livestock on both the Big Grayback and Billy Mountain Allotments. We note that the

Billy Mountain Grazing Allotment is approximately 15 miles from the boundary of the proposed monument expansion. We would like the opportunity to work with the Committee and sponsor to further explore these grazing provisions.

4. Section 9 of the bill discusses hunting, fishing and trapping. We support the Administrative Exceptions under subsection (b) since it provides flexibility in managing the resources within the preserve. With respect to Section 9, we would like to terminate hunting within the preserve after five years with the acreage being converted to national monument status. We base this request on the information collected during the public participation process for the General Management Plan. Of the 892 comments received on the plan, only 8, less than one percent, expressed concern about the loss of hunting should the added acres be designated as part of the national monument.

STATEMENT OF JOEL HOLTROP, DEPUTY CHIEF, NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM, FOREST SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

[T]hank you for inviting me to testify on S. 1270, the Oregon Caves National Monument Boundary Adjustment Act S. 1270 would modify the boundary of the Oregon Caves National Monument to include approximately 4,070 acres of land currently managed by the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

The USDA believes that interagency coordination and cooperation with joint public involvement to ensure that public concerns and desires are addressed is the most effective way of managing the Oregon Caves National Monument and surrounding National Forest System land.

(Continued on page 5)

Senate Bill Hearings (continued from page 4)

[Joel Holtrop statement, continued]

USDA looks forward to working together with the Department of the Interior over the next 6 months to develop interagency direction. Regardless of the outcome, our common goal is to best manage the monument and the surrounding national forest for the benefit of the public.

The land managers of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest have three priorities for this area. One is maintaining and protecting cave resources, hydrologic resources, watersheds, and view sheds. A second is improving forest health by addressing hazardous fuels, and a third is managing for multiple uses while minimizing any potential impact.

With regard to Wild and Scenic River provisions of the bill, the proposed legislation provides for the addition of six river segments to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, four of which are in the proposed expansion area or in the current Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

The Forest Service studied these four rivers and found that they did not meet criteria for eligibility and we would recommend that the four rivers that the Forest Service studied be re-evaluated for their eligibility to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Some selected questions and answers from the hearing, heavily edited for length:

Senator Wyden. Mr. Holtrop, I am just trying to figure out what is behind your opposition to my legislation. I think you understand that I am not at all satisfied with the agency's position here. . . . you keep asking for more time to somehow do something to work this out.

Mr. Holtrop. I think we have been addressing those concerns. We have not worked it all the way to conclusion for the mutual satisfaction of both of the Agencies. But as my testimony indicates, at the end of the day, it is going to be very important to both organizations to recognize whether there is a 480-acre national monument or a 4,000-acre national monument. It is, as you stated, going to be in the midst of an over million-acre national forest. Both the national monument and the national forest will be significant environmental, economic, and social drivers in that community and all the communities of interest in that area, and we want to make sure that there has been a joint effort with joint public involvement to allow us to look at what are some of the issues, what are some of the approaches that we can take to be responsive to that.

Senator Wyden. The fact of the matter is that the Park Service has asked for an expanded monument boundary going back to the 1930s. Do you not think the communities I represent have waited long enough, Mr. Holtrop?

Mr. Holtrop. There have been requests . . . , as you indicated. . . . There was an analysis done by the National Speleological Society in the earlier part of this decade considering whether the Forest Service should take over.

[W]hen there have been several studies and several analyses, my 30-plus years of experience in public land management is people do not want to do that because they enjoy doing the analysis. They do it because they find that there really are issues that are difficult to work out. I think we need to work out some issues. I think we can do that in a joint manner.

Senator Wyden. You and I just disagree on the nature of the problem. The reason it is not getting done is because there is no leadership.

Short Scoops . . .

An article in the July 2009 issue of the open access journal *PLoS Pathogens* reported that the “cumulative evidence” suggested that bats were involved in transmission of the Ebola and Marburg viruses. However, so far scientists had been unable to isolate live virus in bats. In an effort to improve available evidence, an international team of researchers collected samples from bats in Kitaka Cave in Uganda. The researchers detected Marburg virus nucleic acid in a total of 32 bats using Q-RT-PCR testing, and for the first time isolated live virus from five of the bats. Extrapolating from their findings that about 5% of captured bats were RNA-positive for the Marburg virus, the team estimated that there could be more than 5,000 infected bats within the Kitaka colony at any given time. The article also noted that “very closely related lineages” of Marburg virus had been found at widely separated geographic locations in Africa, in some cases over 2,000 kilometers apart. The researchers suggested that this was due to the mobility of the viruses’ “natural host,” the Egyptian fruit bat, and the’ “enormous meta-population” of that bat in Africa.

Vietnam’s *dtinews.vn* wrote on August 30, 2009 that Thien Duong cave, located in Quang Binh Province, would open to the public in September. The cave, first discovered by the British Royal Cave Research Association in 2005, stretches 31 kilometers and is the longest cave ever found in Vietnam. It is located within the Phong Nha-Ke Bang Park conservation area. The Quang Binh Province People’s Committee had permitted Truong Thinh Joint Stock Company to invest about 83 billion Vietnamese Dong [ed.: roughly \$ 4.6 million U.S. Dollars as of Nov. 2009] in the first phase of the Thien Duong Cave Project. The Truong Thinh Company planned to launch a tour to the Sun Spa Resort and Thien Dung and Tam Co caves early in September. Tourism is a key industry in Quang Binh Province, and visitors to the province have been increasing sharply. Nearly half of the visitors in 2009 went to Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, a UNESCO National Heritage site that boasts hundreds of caves.

On September 3, 2009, *bgdailynews.com* (Bowling Green, Kentucky) wrote that Mammoth Cave National Park had declared a war on invasive species of plants. Park Superintendent Patrick Reed was quoted as saying that the Park had assembled “an army of National Park Service staff and volunteers” to attack such “insidious plants” as Tree of heaven, kudzu, lespedeza, and princess tree. Kentucky Governor Beshear also issued a proclamation declaring September to be Invasive Plant Awareness month.

Scientists from the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency have identified a “skylight” hole on the surface of the moon that might open into a lava tube at least 370 meters across. According to an October 22, 2009 article at *newscientist.com*, a group led by Junichi Haruyama searched through images taken by Japan’s Kaguya spacecraft, which orbited the moon for almost two years before its mission ended in June 2009. The hole measures 65 meters across, and is thought to extend down at least 80 meters.

According to a new study by researchers from the University of California at Davis, within the past 20,000 years California has experienced droughts lasting centuries that coincided with the thawing of ice caps in the Arctic. The research, reported in *Science Daily* on November 15, 2009, was based on analysis of stalagmites as well as samples of air, water, soil and vegetation. For example, the researchers used the ratio of uranium to its breakdown product, thorium, to date layers within stalagmites. Within these layers, differences in isotopes of oxygen, carbon and strontium, and levels of metals, all vary as climate gets wetter or drier. Carbon isotopes reflect the amount of vegetation on the ground over the cave, while oxygen-18 isotopes vary with both temperature and rainfall. The U.C.-Davis researchers found that California became much drier at the end of the last ice age about 15,000 years ago, at the same time that climate records from Greenland show a warm period called the Bolling-Allerod period.

The Cave Conservationist

The Cave Conservationist © 2009 is the official publication of the Cave Conservation and Management Section of the National Speleological Society. The contents of the newsletter rely on contributions made by section members and others who are interested in cave conservation, cave restoration and cave management. Newsletter contributions should be submitted to the Editor, *Jim O'Neill* caveconservationist@gmail.com as E-Mail attachments formatted to MS Word. Please pitch in by passing along interesting links, pictures, stories, etc., as well. The Editor reserves the right to edit any and all submissions for length, clarity, style and/ or content. Digital photo contributions for the newsletter may be e-mailed as attachments to the Editor. Articles and unsigned materials may be attributed to the Editor. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Cave Conservation and Management Section, NSS or the Editor. Permission is granted to NSS publications to reprint articles published in *The Cave Conservationist* providing credit is given to the Author and Editor, *The Cave Conservationist* except where a copyright accompanies a specific item. Others who want to reprint material should contact the Editor.

Membership in the Conservation and Management Section

The Conservation and Management Section is open to all members of the National Speleological Society as well as those interested in cave conservation and management. Members receive the newsletter *The Cave Conservationist* and are entitled to vote at the annual meeting. Annual membership dues: \$5.00/ year to receive *The Cave Conservationist* electronically and \$10.00/year to receive *The Cave Conservationist* by regular mail. A section membership application can be found in select issues or on our website <http://www.caves.org/section/ccms> Membership dues may be sent to the *Treasurer, Sandy Cowan* sacowan@frontiernet.net Newsletter printing or postal distribution information may be obtained from *Robert Hoke* bob@rhoke.net The Section presents two annual awards to an NSS Grotto and an NSS Group that have made significant contributions towards conservation or management of cave or karst resources. For more information concerning The Cave Conservation and Management Section of the NSS please visit our website. <http://www.caves.org/section/ccms>



Cave Conservation and Management Section of the National Speleological Society Membership Form



NSS #		Date you joined the Conservation & Management Section		Membership Paid Until (Office use only)		Membership Category (Office use only)	
Title (Mr, Ms, Dr, Mrs., Miss, etc.)	First Name	Middle	Last Name		Suffix (Jr, Sr, III, PhD., M.D., etc.)		
Address Line 1							
Address Line 2 (if needed)							
City		State	Zip		Country		
Phone (Home)				Phone (Work)			
Phone (Cell)				FAX			
Primary E-mail				Alternate E-mail			

Check one:

- I wish to receive the *Cave Conservationist* electronically via email -- \$ 5.00 dues.
- I wish to receive the *Cave Conservationist* on paper via regular mail -- \$ 10.00 dues.

Checks should be made payable to Cave Conservation and Management Section and sent with this form to:

% Sandy Cowan
Lytewood Preserve, Friars Hill Road
HC 68, Box 117
Friar's Hill, West Virginia 24938-9777



**THE CAVE CONSERVATIONIST – NOV 2009 – VOL 28 – 4
THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT SECTION OF
THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

C/O Treasurer, Sandy Cowan
Lytewood Preserve, Friars Hill Road
HC 68, Box 117
Friar's Hill, WV 24938-9777

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

