

NEWS

FROM U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

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April 21, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEFAZIO APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF THE COPPER SALMON WILDERNESS ACT

WASHINGTON, DC –Congressman DeFazio (D-Springfield) was pleased today by the full House passage of his bill, H.R. 3513, the Copper Salmon Wilderness Act of 2007. The Copper Salmon Wilderness Act would permanently protect nearly 13,000 acres in the headwaters of the Elk River on the southern coast of Oregon, and designate more than 11 additional miles of the river as either Wild or Scenic under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The legislation also protects some of the last remaining stands of Port-Orford-cedar in the Elk River watershed.

“Copper Salmon is truly a rare coastal Oregon gem. It is almost entirely intact ancient forest, which supports healthy fish runs and great elk herds, blacktailed deer, bears, and other wildlife,” DeFazio said. “This is an area that deserves protection for the enjoyment of future generations and I am happy that Congress voted today to recognize that fact.” Renowned among fishermen, the Elk River watershed is one of the last intact watersheds on the southwest Oregon Coast and is widely regarded as Oregon’s last, best, coastal salmon and steelhead stream. Oregon State University researchers have concluded that the Elk River is one of the healthiest habitats in the lower 48 states for anadromous fish, and the stream is home to chinook salmon, winter steelhead, coho salmon, cutthroat trout, and rainbow trout. The watershed also has the distinction as one of the most productive salmon and steelhead rivers outside of Alaska. Diverse stakeholders have been working together for more than a decade to gain broad support for protecting the Copper Salmon area. H.R. 3513 enjoys backing from a wide array of interests including the Curry County commissioners, local elected officials, the local Chamber of Commerce, hunting and fishing groups, tribes, the timber industry, and all local conservation groups.

“I am pleased that a wide array of stakeholders was able to come together and permanently protect this magnificent wilderness,” DeFazio said. “The House action taken today is a big step toward ensuring that the Copper Salmon Wilderness will be enjoyed by generations to come.”

The Copper Salmon Wilderness Act must now be passed by the Senate before it can go to the President to be signed into law.