



# Northwest California's MOUNTAINS & RIVERS

## Legislation to protect & restore public lands



Hayfork Creek, photo Jason Smith

Northwest California is one of the most beautiful places on earth. Stretching from Humboldt County's fog-shrouded redwood forests to the sunny oak woodlands and grasslands of Mendocino, this breathtaking region reaches up to the peaks of the Trinity Alps Wilderness and across the turquoise waters of the Wild & Scenic Smith River.

Visitors from around the globe come to Northwest California to fish mountain streams, run river rapids, hike backcountry trails and find solitude in primeval redwood groves—all of which drives consumer spending in local communities and enhances the region's outdoor recreation economy. These mountains and rivers are also among the most biologically diverse areas on the planet, home to thousands of different plants and animals.

Representative Jared Huffman and Senator Kamala Harris have introduced the **Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act** to protect our wild lands and rivers and expand recreational opportunities while restoring watersheds and managing for fire.

### **Restore and Revitalize Forests and Watersheds**

The well-being of the entire region is tied to the health of its forests and watersheds. This bill would help revitalize damaged forests and watersheds and improve the region's overall water quality.

### **Conserve Ecologically-Significant Areas**

Many of Northwest California's ancient forests, clear streams, and rugged mountains lack permanent protection and are open to road construction, and other types of development, including logging, that could destroy their wild character.

Wilderness designation for our most pristine public lands and Wild & Scenic designations for local rivers and creeks would ensure that these places remain in their natural state for future generations. Protecting streams and watersheds safeguards habitat for endangered salmon and steelhead populations, and conserves vital sources of clean water for drinking, fishing, and recreation.

### **Enhance Recreational Opportunities & Support Local Economies**

Whether you enjoy hiking in wilderness, fishing, mountain biking, or riding a four-wheeler, Northwest California has it all. The legislation would boost access to recreation, which strengthens local economies. Nearby protected public lands help create desirable communities with jobs and business opportunities in recreation, tourism, and local service industries.

For more information, visit [www.mountainsandrivers.org](http://www.mountainsandrivers.org), or email [info@mountainsandrivers.org](mailto:info@mountainsandrivers.org)



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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Would the legislation create more public lands or affect private property?** No. This legislation only relates to existing federal public lands. It does not create any additional public lands, and would have no practical impact on private lands.

**How would the bill help with community fire safety?** In two ways: The legislation would require the Forest Service and the BLM to work with local residents to create a new coordinated fire management plan for all of the designated Wilderness Areas in the region; It would also help protect communities by creating a network of roadside shaded fuel breaks in the South Fork Trinity-Mad River Restoration Area, including thinning neglected plantations.

**Does the legislation address trespass marijuana grows?** The bill would help clean up public lands and waters impacted by trespass marijuana grows by creating a local, state, federal and tribal partnership to coordinate activities and provide resources and expertise.

**Would the bill close any roads?** All legally open roads would remain open.

**Would the legislation benefit local economies?** Yes, this bill would strengthen local economies and provide jobs in the woods by protecting special places, providing new opportunities for recreation and tourism, and putting people to work restoring degraded lands.

**Can I still hunt in wilderness areas?** Yes, hunting, hiking, fishing, camping, horseback riding, skiing, snowshoeing, rock climbing, and many other activities are allowed in wilderness areas.

**What does Wild & Scenic River status mean?** The wild and scenic designation prohibits the federal government from licensing, permitting, or funding new hydroelectric dams or major diversions on protected stream segments. In addition, federal land management agencies must develop management plans for protected river segments in public lands to ensure protection of the outstanding values for which the river was designated.

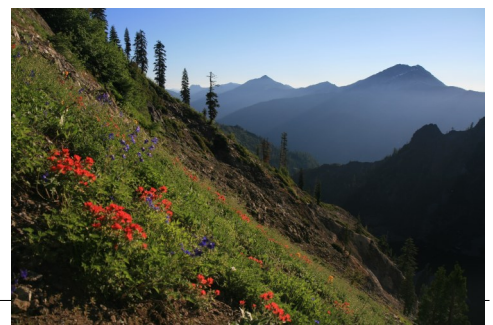
**How will it help fish?** The legislation would protect the watersheds, headwaters, rivers and streams that fish rely on, preserving the clean, cold water they need to survive. The bill also contains provisions to restore water quality and aquatic habitat within the South Fork Trinity River watershed, a vital fishery.



South Fork Trinity River, photo Jeff Morris



Wild Steelhead, photo David Lass



Bear Mountain, photo Joe Gillespie

*The Northwest Mountains and Rivers Campaign is a coalition of conservation organizations, business owners, land owners, biologists, hunters, anglers mountain bikers, and other community members who support congressional efforts to protect special places, restore watersheds and fisheries, support economic develop-*