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National *What-Have-You* Areas: Congressional Conservation of Our Public Lands

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Abstract

Approximately 28 percent of the land in the United States is owned by the federal government. The vast majority of the nation's public lands are managed by four agencies: the USDA Forest Service, the USDI Bureau of Land Management, the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service, and the USDI National Park Service. For three agencies, all lands administered by the agency are in a designated system: the National Forest System, administered by the Forest Service; the National Wildlife Refuge System, administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service; and the National Park System, administered by the National Park Service. In addition, special designations have been applied to many of the lands in the three conservation systems. In general, most of the public lands administered by the BLM are not within a designated conservation system, but areas that have received special protection by acts of Congress are incorporated into the National Landscape Conservation System. All of these designations can be seen as options for elevating the conservation status of particular areas to ensure that the goods and services most important to Americans are secured on our public lands for this and future generations.

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Introduction

For more than half a century, a variety of congressional conservation designations have been used selectively to conserve and restore ecosystems and watersheds within the federal estate, as well as species that depend on them. These designations can be seen as options for elevating the conservation status of particular areas to ensure that the goods and services most important to Americans are secured on our public lands for this and future generations. Spurred by citizen input, Congress should rapidly proceed to establish conservation designations suited to local places and circumstances.

The Most Valuable Use of Public Lands

Commodity production (timber, forage, and minerals) is the least valuable use of the federal public lands, while preservation of ecosystems and watershed goods and services—both water quality and quantity, vegetation from tall forests and vast ranges of sagebrush to unique plant species, fish and wildlife and the habitat upon which they depend, opportunities for recreation and re-creation, and chances for aesthetic and nature appreciation, to name a few—is the most valuable. Federal public lands should provide goods and services that private markets are unwilling or unable to provide.

Citizens can participate in this process of elevating conservation protections by first identifying what they want to save from what and for whom (the answer to the latter is always “for this and future generations”), then determining the best federal land and water conservation designation(s) to seek, and finally building the political support to achieve their end. Most of this

paper is a primer on the federal land management agencies and the various kinds of lands they administer, with a special focus on federal conservation designations already in place in Oregon. At the end are some suggestions about seeking national *what-have-you* area designations in order to elevate the conservation status of particular federal public lands.

The Federal Estate and Its Management

Approximately 28 percent of the 2.27 billion acres of land in the United States is owned by the federal government. To administer the vast majority of the nation's public lands, Congress has over the decades established four land conservation agencies housed in the Departments of Agriculture (USDA) or Interior (USDI):

- USDA Forest Service
- USDI Bureau of Land Management
- USDI Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDI National Park Service

Area Versus Market Value of the Federal Estate

While the federal government owns 28% of the land area of the United States, the market value of those lands is a far less percentage. A new study by the US Department of Commerce found that the 1.89 billion acres of federal land in the lower 48 United States and the District of Columbia had a market value of \$1.8 trillion. While 26% of the total land area, the federal land is only 8% of the market value.

Of the 61,514,000 acres in Oregon with a total value of \$400 billion, the federal government owns 54.9%, which comprises 28.9% of the market value. Developed lands in Oregon are 2.7% of the state's land area, while comprising 36.6% of the market value. Agricultural lands in Oregon are 26.5% of the state's land area, while 8.1% of its market value.²

Of course, by definition market value doesn't adequately capture non-market values such as water quantity, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, ecosystem and watershed goods and services, recreation opportunities, scenic beauty, et al. Public lands provide goods and services that private lands are unable to provide.

These four agencies administer 609 million acres of land. The Department of Defense manages 19.5 million acres, much of which has significant conservation value. About 5 to 10 million acres of federal lands are managed by other federal agencies such as the USDI Agricultural Research Service, the USDI Bureau of Reclamation, the US Department of Energy, and the USDC National Aeronautics and Space Administration.³

The four land management agencies manage four kinds of public lands. For three agencies, all lands administered by the agency are in a designated system:

² William Larson. 2015. [New Estimates of Value of Land in the United States](#). USDC Bureau of Economic Analysis, Office of the Chief Statistician, Washington DC.

³ Gorte, Ross, et al. 2012. [Federal Land Ownership: Overview and Data](#). Congressional Research Service, Washington DC.

- The National Forest System (193 million acres⁴), administered by the Forest Service
- The National Wildlife Refuge System (150 million acres⁵), administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service
- The National Park System (84.5 million acres⁶), administered by the National Park Service

In addition, special designations have been applied to many of the lands in the three conservation systems. A body of federal law guides the management of each of these three conservation systems.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 247.3 million acres of its own lands (surface and subsurface) along with the mineral estate on other federal public lands, as well as lands where the federal government retains only the subsurface estate.⁷ In general, most of the public lands administered by the BLM are not within a designated conservation system. (Similarly, BLM is a mere “bureau,” while the other agencies are “services”). However, if an area of land has otherwise received a certain level or kind of special protection by act of Congress, such as a wilderness, a wild and scenic river, a national conservation area, or a national monument, those lands are, by statute, incorporated into the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) and are generally known as BLM conservation lands.

National Forest System Lands Managed by the Forest Service

The Forest Service defines the National Forest System as follows:

*A nationally significant system of Federally owned units of forest, range, and related land consisting of national forests, purchase units, national grasslands, land utilization project areas, experimental forest areas, experimental range areas, designated experimental areas, other land areas, water areas, and interests in lands that are administered by the USDA Forest Service or designated for administration through the Forest Service.*⁸

National forests, purchase units, and national grasslands compose most of the National Forest System. Some of the minor classifications are quite obscure, and a few can be found in Oregon.

Proclaimed National Forests

In the beginning there were “national forests,” which are a “unit formally established and permanently set aside and reserved for National Forest purposes.”⁹ Oregon has 14 proclaimed national forests (see Table 1). Increasingly, proclaimed national forests are being jointly managed.

⁴ USDA Forest Service. 2013. [Land Areas of the National Forest System: As of September 30, 2012](#), FS-383, p. 1.

⁵ USDI Fish and Wildlife Service. 2013. [Annual Report of Lands Under Control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#).

⁶ National Park Service, Land Resources Division. 2013. [Listing of Acreage \(Summary\)](#).

⁷ USDI Bureau of Land Management. 2013. [Public Land Statistics: 2013](#).

⁸ Forest Service, FS-383, p. iii.

⁹ Ibid.

Table 1 <i>Proclaimed National Forests All or Partially Within Oregon</i>			
Name	NFS Acreage	Other Acreage	Total Acreage
Deschutes	1,596,900	257,029	1,853,929
Fremont*	1,207,039	506,852	1,713,891
Klamath**	26,334	205	26,539
Malheur	1,465,287	76,435	1,541,723
Mount Hood	1,071,446	46,475	1,117,921
Ochoco	851,033	128,056	979,089
Rogue River***	574,366	53,242	627,608
Siskiyou***	1,061,676	61,981	1,123,657
Umatilla	1,095,890	97,528	1,193,418
Umpqua	983,129	44,241	1,027,370
Wallowa****	999,786	69,382	1,069,168
Whitman****	1,266,943	50,072	1,317,015
Willamette	1,678,031	112,909	1,790,940
Winema*	1,045,548	51,438	1,096,986
Total	15,557,527	1,757,473	17,315,000
* Now jointly managed as the Fremont-Winema National Forest.			
** Most of the national forest is in California.			
*** Now jointly managed as the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.			
**** Now jointly managed as the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.			

Table 2 <i>National Forest Purchase Units in Oregon</i>				
Unit Name	Administering National Forest	NFS Acreage	Other Acreage	Total Acreage
Drift Creek	Siuslaw	1,047	818	1,865
Fifteenmile Creek	Mount Hood	555	39	594
Leeds Island	Siuslaw	0	329	329
Mount Hood	Mount Hood	354	626	980
Ramsay Creek	Mount Hood	2,278	0	2,278
Yachats	Siuslaw	18,183	4,496	22,679
Total		22,417	6,308	28,775

National Forest Purchase Units

Then Congress created “purchase units” (see Table 2), which are units “designated by the Secretary of Agriculture or previously approved by the National Forest Reservation Commission for purposes of Weeks Law acquisition.”¹⁰ (Signed into law in 1911, the Weeks Act permitted the federal government to purchase private land in order to protect the headwaters of rivers and watersheds.)

National Grasslands

Next Congress created “national grasslands,” which are “designated by the Secretary of Agriculture and permanently held by the Department of Agriculture under Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act.”¹¹ (Title III of the 1937 Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act authorizes the Secretary “to develop a program of land conservation and land utilization . . . to

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

correct maladjustments in land use.”) In Oregon, the Crooked River National Grassland (112,357 NFS acres + 61,272 other acres = 173,629 total acres) is administered as part of the Ochoco National Forest.

Our recommendation: National grasslands should be transferred to a yet-to-be successor agency to the BLM called the National Deserts and Grasslands Service and should be managed as part of a new National Deserts and Grasslands System.¹²

Special Congressionally Designated Areas on National Forest System Lands

Congress has established (or, for example, in the case of primitive areas, approved) numerous special designations for parts of the National Forest System. Some, like wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers, are designated units of an overlapping and stronger conservation system (the National Wilderness Preservation System and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System). Others, such as national recreation areas, don’t have an “organic” act like the Wilderness Act or the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act that specifies how they are to be managed. Others are one-offs (at least so far) with unique names.

The Forest Service describes the following special areas on National Forest System lands:

National forest wilderness areas. Areas designated by Congress as a part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Some or all of 39 wilderness areas are within the National Forest System (2,228,103 NFS acres + 10,625 other acres = 2,238,728 total acres).¹³

National forest primitive areas. Areas designated by the Chief of the USDA Forest Service as primitive areas. They are administered in the same manner as national wilderness areas, pending studies to determine suitability as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Only one primitive area remains: Blue Range on the Apache National Forest in Arizona.¹⁴

National wild and scenic river areas. Areas designated by Congress as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System. Some or all of 46 wild and scenic rivers are within the National Forest System (327,416 NFS acres + 27,953 other acres = 355,369 total acres).¹⁵

National recreation areas. Areas established by Congress for the purpose of assuring and implementing the protection and management of public outdoor recreation opportunities.¹⁶

¹² Kerr, Andy, and Mark Salvo. 2008. Establishing a System of and Service for U.S. Deserts and Grasslands. Larch Occasional Paper #6. The Larch Company, Ashland, OR, and Washington, DC.

¹³ Forest Service, FS-383, pp. 120–22.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 146–51.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 155–57.

National scenic-research areas. Areas established by Congress to provide use and enjoyment of certain ocean headlands and to insure protection and encourage the study of the area for research and scientific purposes. Only one NSRA has been established: Cascade Head in Oregon, administered by the Siuslaw National Forest (6,637 NFS acres + 3,033 other acres = 9,670 total acres).¹⁷

National game refuges and wildlife preserve areas. Areas designated by presidential proclamation or by Congress for the protection of wildlife. There are 21 national game areas and wildlife preserve areas (1,198,099 NFS acres + 20,891 other acres = 1,218,990 total acres).¹⁸

National monument areas. Areas including historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest, declared by proclamation or by Congress as national monuments. There are six national monuments within the National Forest System (3,666,135 NFS acres + 32,989 other acres = 3,699,124 total acres).¹⁹

National preserves. A unit established to protect and preserve scientific, scenic, geologic, watershed, fish, wildlife, historic, cultural, and recreational values; and to provide for multiple use and sustained yield of its renewable resources.

Other areas. An area administered by the Forest Service that is not included in one of the above groups.²⁰ Examples include:

- **National scenic areas.** Six Forest Service national scenic areas, including the Columbia River Gorge NSA (partially in Washington), are administered by the Mount Hood National Forest (Oregon acres: 43,697 NFS + 54,104 other = 97,801 total).²¹

- **National volcanic monument areas.** There are two national volcanic monuments in the National Forest System, one of which is in Oregon: Newbery NVM, administered by the Deschutes National Forest (54,822 NFS acres + 678 other acres = 55,500 total acres). The other is Mount Saint Helens NVM, administered by the Gifford Pinchot National Forest (112,605 NFS acres + 598 other acres = 113,203 total acres).²²

- **National historic areas.** There is only one: the Cradle of Forestry NHA in North Carolina, administered by the Pisgah National Forest (6,540 NFS acres).²³

- **National protection areas.** This is a catch-all category used by the Forest Service to note congressionally protected areas with generally unique descriptive names. There are six national protection areas in the National Forest System, three of which are in Oregon (see Table 3).

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 159–60.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 161.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. iv–v.

²¹ Ibid., p. 134.

²² Ibid., p. 163.

²³ Ibid., p. 162.

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 3 <i>National Protection Areas Within the National Forest System</i>²⁴</p>					
Area Name	Administering National Forest	State	NFS Acres	Other Acres	Total Acres
Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest	Inyo	CA	13,507	0	13,507
Bowen Gulch Protection Area	Arapaho	CO	11,600	0	11,600
James Peak Protection Area	Arapaho	CO	16,000	30	16,030
Crystal Springs Watershed Special Resources Management Unit	Mount Hood	OR	2,088	732	2,820
Cultus Creek Area	Mount Hood	OR	274	0	274
Upper Big Bottom Area	Mount Hood	OR	1,582	0	4,646
Total			45,051	762	45,813

• **Special management areas.** This is a sundry category of congressional designations that are generally about conservation but other times prescribe special uses such as snowmobiles. Ten areas (164,707 NFS acres + 8,875 other acres = 173,582 total acres) are classified as SMAs by the Forest Service.²⁵

• **National botanical areas.** Congress has designated two modest areas on the Ouachita National Forest in Oklahoma as botanical areas. The Forest Service categorizes them as *national* botanical areas.²⁶

• **Recreation management areas.** Congress has designated the Fossil Ridge Recreation Management Area on the Gunnison National Forest in Colorado.²⁷

• **Scenic recreation areas.** Congress has designated the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area on the Willamette National Forest in Oregon (12,645 NFS acres).²⁸

• **Scenic and wildlife areas.** Congress has designated the Indian Nations National Scenic and Wildlife Area on the Ouachita National Forest in Oklahoma (39,171 NFS acres + 1,880 other acres = 41,051 total acres).²⁹

Inexplicably, the Oregon Cascades *Recreation Area*³⁰ (not to be confused with a *national* recreation area) doesn't show up on the official Forest Service lists.

Public Lands Administered by the BLM

BLM lands in Oregon are administered through nine districts. All districts are further divided into resource areas. Nearly everywhere else in the country, BLM lands are administered through field offices. Table 4 lists the BLM districts in Oregon. The “westside” (generally forested) BLM districts are Coos Bay, Eugene, Medford, Roseburg, Salem, and the Klamath Resource Area

²⁴ Ibid., p. 165.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 166.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 167.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 168.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 169.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ 16 U.S.C. 4600o et seq.

(Klamath County) of the Lakeview District. The “eastside” (generally sagebrush) districts are Burns, Prineville, Vale and the remainder of the Lakeview Districts.

Table 4 <i>Administrative Units for BLM Public Lands in Oregon</i> ³¹	
BLM District	Total Acreage
Burns	3,265,217
Coos Bay	325,997
Eugene	315,323
Lakeview	3,421,743
Medford	872,218
Prineville	1,647,077
Roseburg	425,840
Salem	404,222
Vale	5,038,072
Oregon Total	15,715,709

As mentioned earlier, most of the public lands administered by the BLM are not within a designated conservation system. However, if an area of land has otherwise received a certain level or kind of special protection by act of Congress, such as a wilderness, a wild and scenic river, a national conservation area, or a national monument, those lands are, by statute, incorporated into the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) and are generally known as BLM conservation lands.

The National Landscape Conservation System

In 2000, during the Clinton administration, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt created the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) as a way to draw attention and give priority to BLM lands with high conservation importance. In 2009, Congress made the system permanent. The vast majority of NLCS units are areas already protected by Congress as wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, national monuments, national conservation areas, and the like; certain lands in the California desert are also part of the NLCS.

Unlike the National Park System, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the National Forest System, which include all lands administered by the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Forest Service respectively, the NLCS encompasses only about 30 million of the 247.3 million acres of lands administered by the BLM.

Congress has designated the following special areas on BLM lands.³²

National monuments. There are 21 national monuments on BLM lands, totaling 5,601,932 acres. Most, but not all, were established by presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act of 1906.³³ The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (~59,000 acres) on the Medford BLM District was proclaimed by President Clinton in 2000.

³¹ USDI Bureau of Land Management, Oregon State Office. 2013. [BLM Facts: Oregon and Washington 2013](#).

³² All of the figures in the following list are from the USDI Bureau of Land Management website, especially the [summary tables](#).

³³ 16 USC 431.

National conservation areas. There are 16 national conservation areas (a term used only for BLM lands), totaling 3,671,519 acres.

Wilderness areas. Congress has designated 222 wilderness areas on 8.7 million acres of BLM land in 10 western states, including in Oregon: portions of the Hells Canyon, Wild Rogue, and Lower White River wildernesses and the Soda Mountain, Spring Basin, Oregon Badlands, and Table Rock wildernesses.

Wilderness study areas. The BLM manages 523 wilderness study areas on 12.7 million acres. WSAs were designated by the BLM at the express direction of Congress. Many have gone on to become wilderness areas. In Oregon, the BLM has 87 WSAs totaling 2,645,791 acres.

Wild and scenic rivers. The BLM manages all or portions of 69 wild and scenic rivers, totaling 2,423 miles on 1,001,353 acres, including 27 in Oregon.

National scenic and historic trails. Both national scenic trails and national historic trails are part of the National Trails System. In Oregon, the BLM administers 2 miles of the California National Historical Trail, 22 miles of the Oregon National Historical Trail, and 44 miles of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.

One-offs (or nearly so, so far). Congress has also designated the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area on the Burns BLM District in Oregon, the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area on the Salem BLM District in Oregon (along with two other small outstanding natural areas in California and Florida), and the Headwaters Forest Reserve in California.

Conservation lands of the California desert. In establishing the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), Congress said that besides congressional designations and presidential national monuments, the NLCS contains “public land within the California Desert Conservation Area administered by the Bureau of Land Management for conservation purposes.” These are the only new lands conserved by the establishment of the NLCS. The BLM has a total of 10,772,600 acres in the California Desert Conservation Area and is now determining which of these lands are to be managed for conservation purposes.

Our recommendation: BLM lands in western Oregon should primarily be transferred to the National Forest System and managed by the Forest Service. Some lands should be transferred to the National Wildlife Refuge System and managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service.³⁴ BLM lands in eastern Oregon should generally be placed in a yet-to-be-established National Deserts and Grasslands System to be managed by a successor agency to the BLM named the National Deserts and Grasslands Service.³⁵

National Wildlife Refuge System Lands Administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service

The National Wildlife Refuge System consists of 560 national wildlife refuges (146,130,420

³⁴ Kerr, Andy. 2007. Transferring Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management Forests to the National Forest System. Larch Occasional Paper #2. The Larch Company, Ashland, OR, and Washington, DC.

³⁵ Kerr and Salvo, Larch Occasional Paper #6.

acres), 209 waterfowl production area counties (3,639,126 acres), and 50 coordination areas (257,488 acres), totaling 150,264,225 acres. The Fish and Wildlife Service also manages 46 administrative sites (904 acres), 71 national fish hatcheries (21,678 acres), and 6 marine national monuments (156,987,800 acres) that are not part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.³⁶

- **National wildlife refuges** include not only the areas officially so designated but also units designated as wildlife ranges, wildlife management areas, game preserves, and conservation areas.
- **Waterfowl production areas** (WPAs) are small natural wetlands and associated grasslands acquired primarily using so-called “duck stamp monies” (under the authority of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act). Most (95 percent) of the WPAs are in the Prairie Potholes Region (Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota). WPAs are grouped by county and administered by one of the 38 wetland management districts of the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **Coordination areas** are federal lands managed by states as wildlife habitat under cooperative agreements.

Some units of the National Wildlife Refuge System also have within them wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers.

Of the 590,975 acres of lands administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service in Oregon (see Table 5),

- 265,376 acres were withdrawn from the public domain for wildlife purposes (primary jurisdiction);
- 5,707 acres were withdrawn from the public domain for a non-wildlife purpose but for which the Fish and Wildlife Service has some management responsibility (secondary jurisdiction);
- 70,868 acres were acquired by another federal agency for wildlife purposes (primary jurisdiction);
- 9,913 acres were acquired by another federal agency for non-wildlife purposes but for which the Fish and Wildlife Service has some management responsibility (secondary jurisdiction);
- 230,487 acres were purchased by the Fish and Wildlife Service;
- 1,440 acres are easements purchased by another federal agency;
- 72 acres are easements purchased by the Fish and Wildlife Service;
- 42 acres are easements donated to the Fish and Wildlife Service; and
- 144 acres are by agreement or lease.³⁷

In addition to managing the units shown in Table 5, the Fish and Wildlife Service in Oregon also administers 851.46 acres of national fish hatcheries (Eagle Creek, Lookingglass, Warm Springs, and Irrigon), 4.02 acres at the Clark R. Bavin Fish and Wildlife Forensics Lab (Ashland), 13.57 acres at the Klamath administrative site, and 0.25 acres at the Lakeview administrative site.

³⁶ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2013. Annual Report of Lands Under Control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: As of September 30, 2013, [Statistical Data Tables](#).

³⁷ Ibid.

Table 5 <i>Units of the National Wildlife Refuge System in Oregon³⁸</i>	
Unit Name	Acreage
<i>National Wildlife Refuges</i>	
Ankeny	2,796
Bandon Marsh	865
Baskett Slough	2,492
Bear Valley	4,200
Cape Meares	139
Cold Spring	3,117
Deer Flat*	221
Hart Mountain	270,967
Julia Butler Hanson**	3,167
Klamath Marsh	41,045
Lewis and Clark	12,167
Lower Klamath***	6,618
Malheur	187,127
McKay Creek	1,837
McNary**	1,185
Nestucca Bay	1,193
Oregon Islands	749
Sheldon****	627
Siletz Bay	569
Three Arch Rocks	15
Tualatin River (including Wapato Lakes)	2,328
Umatilla	8,907
Upper Klamath	23,098
William L. Finley	5,706
Total	582,696
<i>Coordination Areas</i>	
Government Island	2
Ochoco Reservoir	40
Summer Lake	7,128
Total	7,169
* Also in Idaho.	
** Also in Washington.	
*** Also in California.	
**** Also in Nevada.	

Our recommendation: It is worth considering elevating the conservation status of BLM public lands—if not also portions of the National Forest System—to include them in the National Wildlife Refuge System. A transfer of National Forest System land to the National Wildlife Refuge System would take an act of Congress.

National Park System Lands Administered by the National Park Service

A veritable smorgasbord of distinctively named units exist within the National Park System.³⁹ Similarly named units usually have similar, but not necessarily identical, management. Besides often encompassing nature, NPS units also encompass history and culture. Some designations are

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ National Park Service, Land Resources Division. 2013. [Listing of Acreage \(Summary\)](#).

(so far) one-offs that addressed a compelling local political need.

forest park (1)	heritage center (1)
heritage trail route (1)	international historic site (1)
international park (1)	international peace garden (1)
mountain park (1)	national battlefield (11)
national battlefield park (4)	national battlefield site (1)
national capital park (numerous)	national heritage area (49)
national historic park (49)	national historic site (78)
national historic trail (17)	national lakeshore (4)
national memorial (29)	national military park (9)
national monument (78)	national park (59)
national parkway (10)	national preserve (19)
national recreation area (18)	national reserve (3)
national river (5)	national river and recreation area (2)
national scenic and recreational river (2)	national scenic river (1)
national scenic riverway (2)	national scenic trail (5)
national scientific reserve (1)	national seashore (10)

The national river, national river and recreation area, national scenic and recreational river, national scenic river, and national scenic riverway designations are all variations on the traditional wild-and-scenic-rivers designation, but on steroids (with perhaps wider stream buffers, more direct NPS management, cooperative management with other governments, more aggressive land acquisition and/or land regulation, and the like).

Units of the National Park System in Oregon are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 <i>National Park System Units in Oregon</i>	
Unit Name	Acreage
California National Historic Trail (also in eight other states)	<i>na</i>
Crater Lake National Park	183,224
Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (McLoughlin House, Oregon City)	<i>unknown</i>
John Day Fossil Beds National Monument	14,062
Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail (also in ten other states)	<i>na</i>
Lewis & Clark National Historic Park (also in WA)	3,410
Nez Perce National Historic Park (also in three other states)	4,565
Oregon National Historic Trail (also in five other states)	<i>na</i>
Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve	4,554

Because of the generally strong conservation standards associated with the National Park System, additional special congressional protections—save sometimes for the desirable designation of wilderness areas and/or wild and scenic rivers—are generally unnecessary.

Our recommendation: It is worth considering elevating the conservation status of BLM public lands—if not also portions of the National Forest System—to include them in the National Park System. A transfer of National Forest System land to the National Park System would take an act of Congress.

Conclusion: Just Elevate

The conservation status of both federal public lands and private lands can be elevated with appropriate designations. Particular areas of the National Forest System and BLM public lands can have their conservation status elevated by the designation of national *what-have-you* areas. These also might overlap with wilderness and/or wild-and-scenic-river designations.

Wilderness area and wild-and-scenic-river status can be overlain on portions of existing units of the National Forest System, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the National Park System, and on public lands administered by the BLM. Wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers are also then made part of the National Wilderness Preservation System and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. If wilderness areas or wild and scenic rivers are designated on BLM lands, they also become part of the National Landscape Conservation System.

Important natural areas and habitats on private lands can be added to the National Park System through one of a variety of conservation designations or established as national wildlife refuges. In addition, small amounts of private land can be included within areas given designations that generally elevate the status of federal public lands, with an eye toward eventual acquisition if the seller is willing.

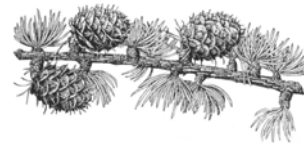
Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Not Enough

Though wilderness and wild-and-scenic-river designations are the bedrock of a sound public lands conservation network, often neither designation provides comprehensive landscape conservation. Many national what-have-you areas are underpinned by lands designated as wilderness and streams designated as wild and scenic rivers. The most enduring conservation protection is afforded by overlapping designations of wilderness and wild and scenic rivers with an overarching national what-have-you area designation.⁴⁰ Many of Oregon's congressionally designated special management areas⁴¹ have both wilderness and wild and scenic rivers designated within them.

⁴⁰ Kerr, Andy, and Mark Salvo. 2008. [Overlapping Wilderness and Wild & Scenic River Designations Provide Maximal Conservation Protection for Federal Public Lands](#). *Environmental Law* 38:1.

⁴¹ Kerr, Andy. 2012. [Special Congressional Conservation Designations in Oregon](#). Larch Occasional Paper #12. The Larch Company, Ashland, OR, and Washington, DC.

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