

CASCADE-SISKIYOU NATIONAL MONUMENT

MYTHS and **FACTS**

There has been a lot of talk about the recent expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM) in Southern Oregon and Northern California. While the American Forest Resource Council (AFRC) continues to engage in a healthy public dialogue about the impacts of the monument to the environment and local communities, it is important to stick to the facts. Below are common myths we hear about the designation, followed by a fact check.

Myth: The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM) in Southwest Oregon and Northern California was expanded by President Obama in January 2017 after extensive public outreach.

FACT: The first and only public meeting on the proposed expansion was held in October 2016, more than 2,600 days after President Obama was elected and sworn into office. The President never visited the area during his eight years in office. The Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell did not make a public visit or attend the public meeting in October. The final announcement was made in January 2017, eight days before President Obama's second term expired. No legislation was introduced. No congressional hearings were held. No congressional study was completed on the expansion.

Myth: I read that Senator Merkley's office received over 4,000 comments in favor of the monument and only 1,175 comments opposed. The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument has broad public support.

FACT: The monument does enjoy *some* public support, but it remains highly controversial. The monument is opposed by Oregon and California Members of Congress (including Rep. Greg Walden and Rep. Doug LaMalfa), Oregon state representatives and senators, and the local County Commissioners who collectively represent hundreds of thousands of individuals directly and indirectly impacted by the designation. The monument is also opposed by chambers of commerce, local private businesses, and neighboring land owners – just to name a few.

It is also worth bearing in mind that even if all 5,000+ comments were from Oregonians, those combined comments represent 0.001 percent of the Oregon population and an infinitesimally small fraction of the American public. Further, those who took the time to raise legitimate concerns about the monument, such as AFRC, never received a response from any elected official or the Obama Administration addressing a single point of objection.

Myth: The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument will adequately preserve unique public lands for future generations.

FACT: Most of the monument is at risk of catastrophic fire, disease, insect infestations, drought, and/or impacts from climate change. According to analysis from the Bureau of Land Management¹ and even a study completed by The Nature Conservancy², the best way to

¹ Environmental Assessment for Howard Forest Management Project. 2014. Bureau of Land Management.

² "A new approach to evaluate forest structure restoration needs across Oregon and Washington, USA." 2014.

prevent those threats from becoming reality is through science-based, active management. Ironically, the monument now explicitly prohibits the very activities required to ensure the landscape is healthy, resilient, and sustainable for future generations.

Myth: The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument will create local jobs and bring financial prosperity to rural communities.

FACT: While data is sparse, one of the best ways to track local economic conditions is to examine the number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. The number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch is a key indicator of poverty levels in a county or school district. In 1999 (the year before the original Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument was created by President Clinton), 37.1 percent of students in Jackson County (home of the monument) were eligible for free or reduced lunch. In 2017, the year the monument was expanded by President Obama, 54.1 percent of students in Jackson County are eligible for free or reduced lunch.³ While the CSNM may or may not bring more *seasonal* visitors to rural Southwest Oregon, it does not appear to be improving the overall quality of life of those living next to the monument.

Myth: Anyone opposed to the monument is opposed to conservation of Oregon's special places.

FACT: Nothing could be further from the truth. Most of the local opposition to the monument comes from individuals who live near, work with, or recreate on these lands. They want to leave these lands in better shape for their kids and grandkids. In fact, the renewable forest products industry depends on the responsible management, ecological health, and long-term sustainability of these very forests. If the forest goes away, so do the mills and workers that have helped managed these lands for generations. The national monument undermines this long-term relationship by prohibiting responsible, active forest management; restricting public access by closing roads; and exposing neighboring forest lands to significant risks like fire, disease, and insect outbreaks.

Myth: The Antiquities Act allows the President to designate any lands as a national monument so the CSNM and its expansion are legal.

FACT: This is false. While the Antiquities Act indisputably allows the President to designate *some* public lands as a national monument, the Act puts specific sideboards on those designations. Federal law requires designated areas to be “in all cases...confined to the *smallest* area compatible with proper care and management of the objects protected.” There is serious question if dynamic forest systems are “objects” as originally envisioned by the Antiquities Act. But in no case does the Antiquities Act allow the President to override congressional mandates or intent. Because Congress has already designated the lands in question for a specific purpose— permanent forest production on all lands – under the O&C Act of 1937, the designation of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument directly conflicts with existing Federal law.

³ Oregon Department of Education, Free and Reduced Lunch Reports. 1999 and 2017. Found at: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/sfda/reports/r0061Select2.asp>