Springtime wildflowers abound in the meadows around Bigelow Lakes, now within the expanded Oregon Caves National Monument. Photo courtesy of Shane Jimerfield.
KS Wild's Mission
The Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center is an advocate for the forests, wildlife and waters of the Klamath and Rogue River Basins of southwest Oregon and northwest California. We use environmental law, science, collaboration, education and grassroots organizing to defend healthy ecosystems and help build sustainable communities.

Upcoming Hikes

Saturday, March 28: Rogue River Trail Wildflowers
Enjoy a moderate 6 mile spring wildflower hike along the Wild & Scenic Rogue River from Grave Creek to Whisky Creek. Carpool leaves from the Northwest Nature Shop at 8:30am.

Saturday, April 11: Mudd Springs Trail Hike
We'll follow Rough & Ready Creek into wild areas of the South Kalmiopsis rarely visited since the Biscuit Fire. Carpool leaves from the Grants Pass Albertson's parking lot at 8am and from Coffee Heaven in Cave Junction at 9am.

Sunday, April 26: Wildflowers at Table Rock Botanical Area
Table Rock is a unique geologic formation, like an “island in the sky” it offers spectacular views of the Rogue Valley and is one of the best places to seek early spring wildflowers. Carpool leaves the Northwest Nature Shop in Ashland at 8:30am.

Sunday, May 3: Grizzly Peak Wildflowers
Enjoy a trip to this beloved peak east of Ashland to see early wildflowers in bloom. Carpool leaves the Northwest Nature shop in Ashland at 9am.

Saturday, May 23: Biscuit Hill Trail Hike
Join us for a great adventure into the heart of the South Kalmiopsis Roadless area exploring the Bald Face Creek watershed. Carpool leaves the Grants Pass Albertson’s parking lot at 8am and the O'Brien Store at 9am.

Sunday, May 31: McDonald Basin Meadows
Explore meadows in the McDonald Basin. This moderate hike includes both a short off-trail pitch and fording a small creek. Carpool meets at Ray’s parking lot in Talent at 9:30am.

For all hikes: Bring plenty of water, sturdy shoes, warm layers, and a lunch. Call Morgan at (541) 488-5789 or visit www.kswild.org/hikes for more information, directions, and to RSVP.

News Around the KS

Covering nearly 11 million acres, the Klamath-Siskiyou region stretches from the Umpqua in the north to California’s wine country in the south, from the Pacific Ocean to the mighty Cascades. The mountain ranges and river valleys that define this region harbor renowned biological diversity and are some of the most spectacular in America.

1) Gas Export
Input Needed
Visit rougueriverkeeper.org to see the latest update and help prevent the construction of the Jordan Cove liquified natural gas export terminal and pipeline.

2) Kalmiopsis Rivers At Risk
Mining companies want to develop industrial nickel strip mines in the headwaters of the Smith and Illinois Rivers.

3) Streams Need Trees
The Oregon Department of Forestry is not doing enough to protect streamside forests on private land. See Page 6.

4) Westside Salvage Logging
The Klamath National Forest is proposing to log over 40,000 acres of forest after fire. See page 5.

5) Oregon Caves Featured Hike
This magical spot in the newly expanded Oregon Caves National Monument is blanketed by thousands of acres of old-growth forests while boasting soaring peaks, alpine meadows, and pristine watersheds. See page 12.

6) Botanical Spotlight: Rough & Ready Creek
Adopt-a-Botanical Area volunteer Christie Nelson helped lead an expedition to explore a scenic botanical area and learn about the region. Many thanks to Kristi Mergenthaler and Rich Nawa for lending their expertise. See page 11.
Spring in the Klamath-Siskiyou is my favorite time of year. Wild rivers like the Smith, Chetco and Salmon are filled with snowmelt...or what we have left of it. The area’s waterfalls are gushing and the migratory birds are fluttering about.

At KS Wild, this spring is about ‘newness’ — new faces, new campaigns and fresh energy in our mission to protect and restore the natural treasures and clean water found in southern Oregon and northern California.

In this edition of KS Wild News, we highlight campaigns to protect some of the wildest rivers in the West—the Illinois, Smith and Pistol Rivers—from industrial nickel mining. We also report to you on how the campaign to prevent a fracked gas export pipeline is building momentum. We patiently await new management plans for Oregon BLM forests that offer to put out a restoration and recreation vision for our beloved public lands.

First, let’s celebrate! After a decade of work with our partners, this December KS Wild celebrated the ten-fold expansion of the Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve to include the breathtaking landscape surrounding the caves. We also have an opportunity to permanently retire the 30,000 Grayback grazing allotment on public forestland in the neighboring Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity forever protects the spectacular wildflower meadows on the Siskiyou Crest, a real springtime paradise, and the drinking water source for visitors to the monument.

**Congress Takes A Step Backward**

It has only been a couple of months since Republicans took over Congressional leadership, and we are already busy defending safeguards for our public lands and waters. It is likely going to be a challenging period, as we have already seen an onslaught of bills threatening to make it more difficult to protect national parks and open space, as well as to hold on to existing protections. The Senate voted on a series of amendments to a bill approving the Keystone XL pipeline, which was vetoed by Obama.

Thankfully, Oregon and California Senators Wyden, Merkley, Feinstien and Boxer all voted against the efforts, including efforts to withdraw protections for millions of acres of public lands. These same Senators also led the charge to renew the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which is used to protect public lands. They had the bi-partisan votes to pass this fund, but failed as a result of other Senators changing their votes. While the vote didn’t pass, there is still time to renew LWCF before the 50 year-old program expires this fall.

**Southern Oregon Deserves Better**

The Canadian gas company Veresen continues to push for construction of a massive fossil fuel infrastructure plan called Jordan Cove on the Oregon Coast. KS Wild’s Rogue Riverkeeper Program is focused on stopping plans to export fracked gas (LNG) from Canada and the Rockies through southern Oregon and onto ships bound for Asia. If built, Jordan Cove would become the largest greenhouse gas emitter in Oregon.

But communities are pushing back. Hundreds of local residents are rallying in opposition to the pipeline at public hearings and asking tough questions. We are banding together to protect our communities from this fossil fuel plan that will help investors but leave our communities and our environment suffering.

**Backyard Forests Need Our Help**

While Congress failed to act on legislation that would shape the management of forests managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Western Oregon, the BLM is moving ahead with their own plans. Draft documents are set for release later this spring, which include a management plan for 2.6 million acres of public forests. These forests are the ‘backyard’ of many farms and communities, with many right here in southern Oregon’s Rogue and Applegate Valleys.

**Marble Mountain Wildlands**

In the Klamath National Forest, one of the largest timber sales in recent history has been proposed in the wake of last year’s fires. Fortunately, local community members, Tribal Governments, and stakeholders are asking that logging plans be focused around roads and ridges to provide for future firebreaks. We don’t need to clearcut the backcountry and convert wildlands into dense fire-prone tree plantations.

**Community Matters**

There are real and urgent threats to our region’s remaining wild forests and rivers. But I am hopeful. With fresh energy and effective advocacy we cannot only defend our natural treasures in the Klamath-Siskiyou, but we can also protect deserving places that are the anchor of our travel, tourism and local farming communities. Our community of supporters tie all these campaigns together.

From our work against the LNG pipeline to our BLM Backyard Forests campaign, it takes people to save places and advance policies that are in the best interest of our communities and our natural world. I am inspired by our community activism. I hope you are too.

- a note from KS Wild’s Executive Director, Joseph Vaile
Following last summer’s wildfires, timber planners on the Klamath National Forest are ignoring science in a rush to “salvage log” thousands of acres of otherwise protected late successional old-growth reserves in some of northern California’s wildest places.

**Beloved Wildlands At Risk**

Several of the most ecologically important watersheds in the Klamath National Forest are targeted for post-fire clearcut logging and conversion into tree plantations that will increase, rather than decrease, fire hazard in the planning area.

The iconic Grider Creek watershed provides a crucial unlogged wildlife habitat corridor between the Marble Mountains and the Red Buttes Wilderness area. The Beaver Creek watershed is a critical cold water refugia for at-risk Klamath salmon stocks. The Russian Creek wildlands are a recreational and botanical hotspot. Yet all three of these special places would be subjected to thousands of acres of intensive logging under the Forest Service’s proposed action.

We’ve Seen This Movie Before

Over the past four decades the Klamath National Forest has repeatedly exploited wildfire (and arson fires) as a mechanism to log otherwise protected forests with horrific results. Natural recovery has been short-circuited, soils have been severely damaged, stressed watersheds have been degraded, wildlife habitat has been slogged off, and flammable fiber plantations have replaced roadless wildlands. We must ensure that the Forest Service does better this time around.

Throwing Out the Rulebook

Unfortunately, the Forest Service has no intention of learning from past experience or paying attention to the mountain of peer-reviewed science indicating that clearcut logging does not “recover” post-fire forests and watersheds. Rather, agency timber planners are fast-tracking their salvage logging plans to evade outside review and public debate. The Forest Supervisor intends to start clearcutting as soon as the decision is signed thereby precluding any meaningful review of the legality or wisdom of logging these public lands.

Please join with KS Wild and our allies to demand real restoration and oppose the Forest Service’s fast-track clearcutting plans. Learn more at [www.kswild.org](http://www.kswild.org).

**Blackberry Buttes Wilderness area. The Beaver Creek**

**Fish Need Shade:** Streamside vegetation is critically important to keep water cool and full of oxygen that fish need to thrive.

Retaining trees in streamside areas is incredibly important to keeping streams cool and water clean. A healthy riparian buffer where logging is limited adjacent to streams serves a number of important functions. The shade from trees prevents the water from getting warmer, something that will be more and more important in the face of climate change. An intact riparian area filters runoff as it flows into the stream, removing sediment, bacteria and other pollutants that often come from adjacent roads and logging units. Riparian forests provide critical wildlife habitat for species that make the forest their home, and as trees age, die and fall into streams they contribute to freshwater ecosystems by creating important cover for fish and other aquatic creatures.

Sadly, Oregon’s rules don’t adequately protect our streams and riparian forests during logging operations. Oregon’s standards have fallen behind those of California and Washington, and don’t meet minimum standards or avoid harm to imperiled salmon. For example, our rules allow harvest that removes shade trees necessary to prevent stream heating beyond the limits set by state and federal law. Most streamside forests may be clear-cut as close as 20 feet from a fish-habitat stream and those along our smallest streams may be completely removed. These practices cannot continue if Oregon wants to reach its goals for healthy stream habitats and fisheries.

Because our riparian protection rules are so weak, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and NOAA Fisheries recently denied approval of Oregon’s program to protect important coastal watersheds from impacts to water quality. Specifically, the federal agencies and scientists call out Oregon’s failures to protect riparian areas from logging along all small and medium-sized streams, reduce the sediment impacts of logging roads, adequately protect against increased landslide risk from tree removal, and ensure that herbicides are not sprayed directly into streams.

Oregon has a clear opportunity to protect our waterways and satisfy federal requirements for the state to continue receiving millions of federal water quality restoration dollars. The Oregon Department of Forestry is currently evaluating new stream buffer rules for some small and medium fish-bearing streams that could meet some key federal demands, so now is the perfect time to make sure your voice is heard!

You Can Help! Letters are needed to the Board of Forestry urging them to draft a rule that will protect both fish and non-fish bearing streams with substantially larger protected buffers from logging, herbicide application, and to ensure that the Rogue Basin is included in any proposal. Visit our website at roguekeeper.org/action for more details or to send a letter online.

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Campaign Against Gas Export Heats Up

Since 2006, people have been fighting to stop the Jordan Cove Energy Project proposed for southern Oregon. The project proposes to build a 230-mile long, 36” pipeline from Malin to Coos Bay Oregon to transport fracked gas from the Rockies to our coast to then be liquefied and shipped overseas to Asian markets. Rogue Riverkeeper became involved because of the impacts this project would have on the nearly 400 waterways along the pipeline route, several of which are located within the Rogue Watershed.

This project would cause a myriad of negative impacts, from stealing private property for corporate gain, to raising our gas rates here at home by sending America's resources overseas. Recently, the Oregonian reported that this project, if built, would quickly become the largest greenhouse gas emitter in Oregon, which goes against all efforts the Governor, and other state leaders have proposed to curb greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon. The Jordan Cove project is not in the best interest of Oregon and its citizens and people are beginning to get the picture.

Huge Turnout at Local Hearing

On November 7th, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) released the long anticipated Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Jordan Cove project opening up a 90-day comment period on what they consider the environmental impacts of this project. Public hearings were held in all four impacted counties and turnout was huge! In Jackson county over 300 people stuffed themselves into a room that only sat 100. Nearly 70 comments were given over a period of 4 hours and 85% of them were against the project. No LNG hats and buttons were visible throughout the room and the energy was high and heated. Local media captured the event and it became clear that southern Oregon, especially Jackson County does not want this project.

Lots of Press

Shortly after the FERC hearing, the Mail Tribune newspaper began a series of articles addressing many of the issues involved with this project. The five-day series attempted to cover the top issues including jobs & the economy, safety, private property rights, impacts to waterways & fish (specifically the Rogue), and impacts to public lands. The articles helped bring the issue to the forefront and people now know that this is a big deal here in southern Oregon.

The paper has been flooded with letters to the editor opposing the project and the paper itself editorialized that this is not a good idea. Momentum continues and Jackson County has become the hotspot for opposition to this project thanks to an active, organized and growing coalition.

Another Huge Turnout at Water Quality Meeting

On Thursday January 22nd, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) held a public informational session so as to allow for concerned citizens to ask questions regarding the impacts to public waterways along the pipeline route. Nearly 350 people attended this meeting and again energy was heated and high. Turn out for this meeting was a huge success and means a lot as the DEQ is the state agency that will or won’t issue an important water quality certificate called the 401 certification. The DEQ is responsible for evaluating all impacts to waterways affected by this project and will be paying close attention to how the impacts will or won’t violate Oregon’s water quality standards under the Clean Water Act.

But the fight is far from over! Over the next year or so we will be faced with more opportunities to speak up, submit comments, rally in opposition and defend southern Oregon from corporate interests and fossil fuel exports. Stay tuned for important dates and events, contact us to volunteer, or simply write a letter to the editor of the Mail Tribune. Your voice and involvement is crucial and the time is now!
Our Backyard Forests

Last fall, Congress failed to pass legislation that would shape the future of forests managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Western Oregon. Now the BLM is moving ahead with their own plans. This spring the BLM will detail a draft management plan for 2.6 million acres of public forests addressing how the BLM will manage old forests, streams and salmon habitat, and if the BLM will return to clear-cutting.

Congress was very close to acting on the so-called O&C BLM forests, which span from northern Oregon to southern, often in a checkerboard pattern. Competing bills to reform the management of these lands from the Senate and House of Representatives did not move at the end of the Congressional session, and Senator Ron Wyden’s plan was rejected by the House leadership, particularly from representative Greg Walden.

BLM managed forests in southern Oregon—as compared to more remote public forests managed by the US Forest Service—are often right in resident’s backyards, and provide recreation opportunities throughout the region. Some conservation measures included in the Senate version of bill on these lands would have protected some very special areas, such as the Wild Rogue Wilderness and National Recreation Area, the Illinois Valley Salmon and Botanical Area and primitive backcountry areas in the Applegate Valley.

It remains to be seen how these special designations will play out in the upcoming BLM process, and if Congress will again take up this issue. KS Wild remains committed to protecting BLM forests while advocating for fire hazard reduction and restoration projects on this landscape that is embedded in our communities. Some of the last best ancient forests are found on these lands and they provide important sources of clean, cool water. Stay tuned and take action on the BLM’s management plans when they are announced later this spring.

Our Forests: Southern Oregon residents live next to and get clean water from BLM land.

More Southern Oregon Wolves!

Two new wolves, a male and a female have been confirmed to be hanging out just west of Klamath Falls near the Oregon-California border. This makes two groups of wolves in southern Oregon. Southern Oregon’s famous wolf OR-7 and his family now have an official name, the Rogue Pack. We think the name makes a good fit for the first confirmed pack here since the 1940s.
Exploring Our Botanical Areas: Rough & Ready and French Flat

Undaunted by the rainy forecast, a group of 22 hikers explored the Rough and Ready Wayside trail to the Seats dam, and then the French Flat Botanical Area. These two botanical areas, though not geographically distant, display a disparity of human impact.

The start of our adventure began on a well-sculpted trail along Rough and Ready Creek, home to the highest diversity of wildflowers in Oregon. Guided with the help of adopter Christie Nelson, and informed by botanist Kristi Merganthaler, we noticed an array of endemic plants such as the Indian Dream fern, and threatened Port Orford cedar saplings. Thankfully, we noticed little trash or signs of off-road vehicle use.

Our lunch break was followed by a swift tour through part of the French Flat botanical area, home of the endangered Cook’s Lomatium. Though this area is fenced, and clearly marked with a sign as a Conservation Protection Area, it was immediately obvious that French Flat sees frequent abuse. We skirted deep muddy ruts made by off-road vehicles, and followed an eroding slope caused by past mining that drained into the meadow habitat of the Cook’s Lomatium.

As we saw at French Flat, there is much to be done for the protection of our Botanical Areas, and with your help we are poised to take postive action. We are excited for more Botanical Area explorations, and invite you to our upcoming events this spring.

Adopt-A-Botanical Area Program Spring Events

Saturday and Sunday, April 18 & 19
ABA Volunteer Training and Stewardship Retreat at the Siskiyou Field Institute
Join us for the spring ABA retreat in the beautiful Illinois Valley. We will hear from local experts, network with other volunteers, hike through botanical areas, and participate in a stewardship action. $15 suggested donation for lodging and provided meals. RSVP required to jeanine@kswild.org or by calling (541) 488-5789.

Thursday, July 16 at 4:30pm: Wine & Cheese Stroll to McDonald Peak Botanical Area
Join ABA Program Coordinator, Jeannine Moy and local expert-botanist Kristi Merganthaler for an evening walk on the Siskiyou Crest to observe rare and endemic plants and discuss proposed local trail additions. Free, bring wine or cheese to share! Carpool leaves from the Northwest Nature Shop in Ashland at 4:30pm.

Featured Hike: Bigelow Lakes

In the Oregon Caves National Monument

Spring wildflowers, sweeping views and a well-developed trail network have attracted local hikers to this botanical hotspot for years. But until recently, inappropriate cattle grazing and off-road vehicle use regularly damaged the large wet meadows in this granitic cirque located above the Oregon Caves.

With the long-awaited expansion of the Oregon Caves National Monument (see page 3) the wildflowers, wildlife and wildlands in this gorgeous corner of the Siskiyou Crest are now protected for perpetuity.

Celebrate the season with a day hike, or spend a few days exploring the trail network, the Caves, the campgrounds and the historic 1934 Chateau that attract visitors from around the world to the “marble halls of Oregon.”

A vast array of habitat types are easily accessible in the Bigelow Lakes cirque. Expect to see dry and wet meadows, moist and dry shrub communities and forests providing an exceptional variety and abundance of botanical diversity. Keep a sharp eye out for the western-most quaking aspen stand (in shrub form) in the region.

While the cirque allows for extensive exploration and botanizing, the trail system tours the nearby ridges with access to both Lake Mountain and Mount Elijah. Loop hikes are possible, as is a downhill trek to the Oregon Caves.

Getting there: A good map can be obtained at the Forest Service office in Cave Junction and is essential for enjoying the trails, peaks and meadows in the Monument. The best access to the cirque and surrounding trails is from road 079. Expect to hike about a mile into the meadows and an additional 1.4 miles to catch the views from the top of Mt. Elijah.
Focus on our KS Wild Family

California Globe Mallow (Iliamna latibracteata)

California globe mallow, also known as California wild hollyhock, is a rare beauty only found in the Klamath Mountain region. Delicate rose-purple, cup-shaped flowers with 5 petals 2-3 centimeters long, adorn the top of this 1-2 meter perennial herb from late June through August.

Palmate leaves, similar to garden variety hollyhocks, are smooth on top, but hairy on the underside. Indicative of its scientific name, which evokes an image of shining like gold, the leaves are arranged alternately on a finely stellate hairy stem.

Officially listed as threatened and imperiled by both California and Oregon, we are excited that California globe mallow now has more protected habitat in the new expansion of the Oregon Caves National Monument. You can also find California globe mallow in some of the other botanical areas monitored by KS Wild, such as Bigelow Lakes.

Welcome Sarah Westover

KS Wild is thrilled to welcome Sarah Westover as our newest part-time staff member. As Campaign Coordinator, Sarah plays a key role by facilitating Rogue Riverkeeper’s No Liquidified Natural Gas (LNG) Pipeline and Terminal Campaign.

Sarah has spent most of her life in Southern Oregon, moving to the area from the Santa Cruz Mountains with her family when she was in elementary school. Sarah graduated from Southern Oregon University (SOU) with a degree in Political Science. Before joining the team as the No LNG Campaign Organizer, Sarah served as an AmeriCorps member and organizer with the Oregon Student Association. As the SOU Campus Organizer, Sarah worked with students in the Rogue Valley and statewide to run legislative and social justice campaigns including the largest voter registration drive in Oregon’s history. Sarah is passionate about social justice and community organizing and she spends her free time reading, hiking, gardening and chicken rearing while listening to heavy metal. Welcome Sarah!

Please Support Those Who Support Us!


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