



**AMERICAN
WHITewater**

www.americanwhitewater.org

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Jeff Rasmussen - Jefferson County Administrative Officer
66 SE D St.
Madras, OR 97741
Sent via e-mail to jeff.rasmussen@co.jefferson.or.us

Dear Mr. Rasmussen and Jefferson County Commissioners,

On behalf of American Whitewater and our members, I write to express our support for the Cathedral Rock and Horse Heaven Wilderness proposal. American Whitewater is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." With over 5,700 members and over 100 affiliate clubs, we represent the conservation interests of tens of thousands of whitewater enthusiasts across the country. A significant percentage of our members live in the Pacific Northwest and travel with their families to enjoy paddling or rowing the John Day River.

The John Day flows freely along its entire length, and its scenic river canyons provide one of the most spectacular multi-day boating trips in the region. Currently, federal lands in the area are scattered in a checkerboard pattern, dispersed with private land in between. This poses a challenge for both private landowners and people who recreate in the area alike, requiring river runners to carry a detailed land ownership map to identify where camping is allowed. The proposed legislation will consolidate the fragmented federally-owned land through land exchanges with private landowners and bring land along four miles of river and 12 additional campsites into public ownership. This will not only provide the recreating public with enhanced opportunities to enjoy the area, but will also serve to improve habitat connectivity and afford restoration opportunities in the ecologically important river corridor.

The Wilderness proposal protects the legacy of the river, both for the 10,000 river rafters and anglers that travel from around the country to enjoy the John Day, and also for future generations. American Whitewater supports the Cathedral Rock and Horse Heaven Wilderness proposal and we encourage you to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration,

Megan Hooker
Associate Stewardship Director