



PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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BOISE—Following an eight-year process that brought diverse and varied interests together from throughout Idaho, the Owyhee Initiative was approved by Congress today. It will now go to President Barack Obama for a signature.

Idaho Rivers United, one of the partners in this diverse collaborative grassroots effort, is proud to announce designation of 316 miles of Wild & Scenic Rivers as part of the bill's passage. Among the rivers protected for future generations are the Bruneau, Jarbidge, Big Jacks and Little Jacks creeks and the East Fork of the Owyhee, and parts of key tributaries like Deep Creek, Battle Creek and Dickshooter Creek. Portions of the North Fork and South Fork Owyhee will also be protected.

"As is the case with any compromise agreement, no party got everything it wanted in this bill," said IRU Executive Director Bill Sedivy. "But in the end, our agreement and this legislation will protect the best of the best landscapes and rivers of the Owyhee-Bruneau Canyonlands, and it will give ranchers and Owyhee County residents some of the economic certainty they've been seeking for years."

These rivers include the largest concentrations of sheer-walled rhyolite/basalt canyon systems in the U.S. They are also home to diverse fish and wildlife, including the world's largest population of California bighorn sheep, sage grouse and red band trout.

"The collaborative process was long, and at times very difficult," Sedivy said. "But in the end we did good work for the rivers, the landscapes and the people of Owyhee County. It's been one of the most rewarding things I've been a part of in my life. I appreciate all the hard work of the Owyhee participants over the last seven years, and Sen. Mike Crapo and his staff who got it done in Congress."

The Wild & Scenic Rivers Act was passed by Congress in 1968, with Sen. Frank Church as sponsor. In short, the act protects the status quo, and is designed to prevent degradation of deserving rivers and streams.

Sedivy said IRU is proud of the many groups and people who came together to make the Owyhee Initiative work.

"Their hard work in the Owyhees shows that solutions to difficult problems can be achieved, and it sets the stage for more successful collaborative efforts in other parts of Idaho, where there is more work to be done," he said.

For more information, including a video featuring Sedivy on the banks of the Bruneau River, please visit IRU's Web site at www.idahorivers.org.

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