

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 8

BY RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

1  
2 TO THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF IDAHO, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE  
3 SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF CONGRESS, THE CONGRESSIONAL  
4 DELEGATION REPRESENTING THE STATE OF IDAHO IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED  
5 STATES, THE UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, THE ADMINISTRATOR  
6 OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, THE UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF AGRI-  
7 CULTURE, AND THE CHIEF OF THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE.

8 We, your Memorialists, the House of Representatives and the Senate of  
9 the State of Idaho assembled in the First Regular Session of the Sixty-fifth  
10 Idaho Legislature, do hereby respectfully represent that:

11 WHEREAS, Idaho's legal description includes approximately 53.5 million  
12 acres, of which approximately 5,008,317 acres are designated as Wilderness  
13 Areas and approximately 1,797,456 acres have at some point been designated  
14 as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), which are maintained similarly to Wilder-  
15 ness Areas; and

16 WHEREAS, in 1976, Congress passed the Federal Land Policy and Manage-  
17 ment Act (FLPMA) with Section 603 directing the Bureau of Land Management  
18 (BLM) to identify and review all the public lands under its administration  
19 that possess the wilderness characteristics described in the Wilderness  
20 Act; and

21 WHEREAS, the BLM state director, after analysis, stated in his 1991  
22 Record of Decision and Idaho Wilderness Study Report, "The recommendation  
23 is for Congress to designate 972,239 acres as wilderness and release 825,217  
24 acres for other multiple uses"; and

25 WHEREAS, the President in 1992 wrote a letter to the Speaker of the House  
26 and the President of the Senate saying, "...I further concur with the Secre-  
27 tary of the Interior that all or part of 57 of the WSAs encompassing 825,217  
28 acres are not suitable for preservation as wilderness...I urge the Congress  
29 to act expeditiously and favorably on the proposed legislation so that the  
30 natural resources of these WSAs in Idaho may be protected and preserved"; and

31 WHEREAS, Congress, through Public Law 111-11 separately removed thou-  
32 sands of acres of nonsuitable WSAs in 2009, and through Public Law 114-46,  
33 separately removed tens of thousands of acres of nonsuitable WSAs in 2015,  
34 there are still over 500,000 acres of nonsuitable WSAs in Idaho; and

35 WHEREAS, these Idaho lands are in legal limbo, a situation that causes  
36 extensive federal litigation regarding what uses of the lands are appropri-  
37 ate and, in turn, places a burden on federal court resources; and

38 WHEREAS, uncertainty and wide swings in executive branch philosophy re-  
39 garding the administration of these lands are costing the public millions of  
40 dollars as forest assets burn and deteriorate and as investments in forest  
41 road construction and improvements are being minimized; and

1           WHEREAS, administrative decisions and preservationist lawsuits have  
2 progressively reduced access to public lands for forest managers and the  
3 public; and

4           WHEREAS, the long-term sustainability of public lands depends on good  
5 stewardship and professional scientific site-specific management of forest  
6 resources; and

7           WHEREAS, Idaho's historic heritage, customs, and culture are linked to  
8 the proper stewardship and use of the state's natural resources located on  
9 federally managed lands; and

10           WHEREAS, these lands are de facto wilderness in lieu of congressional  
11 action, a situation that has resulted in a waste of forest assets, improper  
12 management of public forests, and a harmful reduction in forest road con-  
13 struction and multiple-use access improvements; and

14           WHEREAS, the failure by Congress to release the lands locked up by the  
15 Wilderness Act severely harms agriculture, timber harvesting, and multiple-  
16 use interests, as well as Idaho communities and Idaho families economically  
17 supported by those activities; and

18           WHEREAS, national forest lands released from wilderness study would  
19 still be subject to the National Forest Management Act, which requires  
20 extensive early state political subdivision and public involvement as a fed-  
21 eral land management agency develops, monitors, assesses, and updates plans  
22 for the management and use of resources in each forest; and

23           WHEREAS, the Idaho Legislature, on behalf of the citizens of the state,  
24 asserts that the time is ripe for final disposition of these lands.

25           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the First Regular Ses-  
26 sion of the Sixty-fifth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and  
27 the Senate concurring therein, that the Legislature supports scientific  
28 adaptive management to implement the multiple-use concept of public land use  
29 as mandated by the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960, to ensure the  
30 protection and improvement of forest health, and to maintain and improve the  
31 sustainability of federal forests located in Idaho.

32           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Congress is strongly urged  
33 to enact legislation to release all remaining nonsuitable wilderness study  
34 areas and implement the concept of multiple use in order to fulfill the fed-  
35 eral mandates as required by the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and  
36 the Forest Management Act of 1976 to manage the national forests to "improve  
37 and protect the forest within the reservation, or for the purpose of secur-  
38 ing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply  
39 of timber for the use and necessities of citizens of the United States."

40           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Clerk of the House of Represen-  
41 tatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of  
42 this Memorial to the Governor of the State of Idaho, the President of the  
43 Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, the con-  
44 gressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the  
45 United States, the United States Secretary of the Interior, the Administra-  
46 tor of the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Secretary of Agricul-  
47 ture, and the Chief of the United States Forest Service.