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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

October 23, 2015

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
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Dear Secretary Jewell:

Recent efforts by outside interest groups (see enclosed news article) to push for a massive National Monument designation in Malheur County, Oregon, have evoked strong opposition from local communities throughout the county. Malheur County, along with the local state elected officials, are holding a public forum in Adrian, Oregon, on October 29 to discuss the proposal and potential negative impacts on the community. I invite you (or a senior representative of your choosing) to attend this important forum to provide information on the Administration's consideration of this proposal and hear directly from the communities that would be directly impacted by the Department of the Interior's (DOI) actions.

Oregonians have a strong and long tradition of successful, creative management of public and private lands to the benefit of the natural resources, while minimizing the negative impacts to local economies. You saw an example of this when you toured local efforts to proactively address sage grouse habitat in Lake County last year.

The results of these locally driven efforts contrast starkly with the challenges posed by the creation of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, which eventually required congressional action to mitigate numerous negative impacts on local landowners. With examples like this for a precedent, talk that the DOI is strongly considering locking up 2.5 million acres, a massive portion of Malheur County, is understandably concerning to local communities. These hard-working local residents deserve to know where the federal government stands on the proposal that would affect their daily lives far beyond anyone else's.

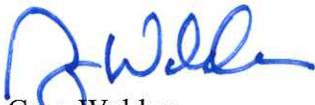
Agriculture provides the economic base for Malheur County. According to Oregon State University, agriculture generates over \$370 million annually in the county, of which \$134 million comes from cattle. The Bureau of Land Management and other federal agencies manage 4.5 million acres, or 73% of the land in the county, making public lands grazing an integral part of most local family ranch operations. Greatly restricting use of that land through a monument designation could have disastrous economic impacts to the county and the surrounding region.

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I am sharing here with you the concerns I've heard from large numbers of people across eastern Oregon about the impacts on their livelihoods by restricting use and access to portions of Malheur County larger than the states of Rhode Island and Connecticut combined through a National Monument designation. I strongly oppose the proposals I am aware of for a National Monument designation, and I think it's very important that you both outline formally to Malheur County and residents of eastern Oregon where the DOI stands on this proposal, as well as heed the strong local opposition to this effort and not make a national monument designation in Malheur County.

Once again, I strongly encourage you, or a senior designee for you, to attend this forum and hear directly from those most affected by the decisions made on the public land that surrounds them. I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter, and look forward to your swift response.

Best regards,



Greg Walden
Member of Congress

Enclosure

Keen Footwear launches tour to save 3 million acres, including Oregon's Owyhee



[<http://connect.oregonlive.com/staff/trichard/index.html>] By Terry Richard | The Oregonian/OregonLive [<http://connect.oregonlive.com/staff/trichard/posts.html>]
 Email the author | Follow on Twitter [<https://twitter.com/trichardpx>]
 on July 22, 2015 at 5:30 AM, updated July 23, 2015 at 9:37 PM

Keen Footwear [<http://www.keenfootwear.com/>] is going on the road and it won't be their hiking boots they wear out.

The miles will be put on a refurbished 1970s-era RV, painted bright yellow, to draw attention to five places the Portland footwear company thinks deserves protection. Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands is among them.

Keen will launch its Live Monumental campaign from 3:30-7 p.m. on Thursday, July 23, outside its Pearl District headquarters, at 515 N.W. 13th Ave. The two-month long cross-country journey is a campaign to collect 100,000 signatures in support of five areas for national monument designation — 3 million acres in all.

The signatures will be delivered to the executive branch the week of Sept. 20. National monuments can either be created by legislation through Congress, or by proclamation by the president. Keen hopes President Barack Obama considers doing so before he leaves office in January 2017.

The areas are Mojave Desert, California; Owyhee Canyonlands, Oregon; Birthplace of Rivers, West Virginia; Boulder-White Clouds, Idaho, and Gold Butte, Nev.

Obama recently proclaimed [<http://indefinitelywild.gizmodo.com/meet-your-three-new-national-monuments-1718624097>] three new national monuments: Basin and Range in Nevada, Berryessa Snow Mountain in California and Waco Mammoth in Texas. Back in 2013 he proclaimed five, with a small part of Washington's San Juan Islands [<http://wilderness.org/article/win-wildlands-president-obama-designates-five-new-national-monuments>] among them.

The Keen RV will be a traveling vehicle for three or four company employees and local preservation proponents. The participants will change throughout the tour. The vehicle will stop at Keen retailers, the proposed monuments, outdoor related events and at partner organizations in the Conservation Alliance [<http://conservationalliance.com>].

The Conservation Alliance is a coalition of businesses that works with non-profits in the Outdoor Alliance [<http://outdooralliance.org>] to preserve North America's best wild places for future generations to access and explore.

The Keen RV will be in Oregon's Owyhee area on Aug. 12, with stops at Rome, Jordan Valley, Leslie Gulch and a night's camp at Succor Creek State Park, though plans are evolving and the itinerary may change. The vehicle leaves Portland on July 29 and heads first to Gold Mountain, Nevada.

The RV will serve as a traveling information kiosk, with panels that fold out from the sides to allow people to sign petitions digitally on iPads. Signatures can also be submitted on [livemonumental.com](http://www.keenfootwear.com/livemonumental/) [<http://www.keenfootwear.com/livemonumental/>].

"There will be a unique opportunity in 17 or 18 months to make this happen," said Linda Tom Balfour, communications manager for Keen. "We encourage President Obama to enlarge his environmental legacy by seeing the value of these places and proclaiming them national monuments."



Five places to go when staying at McMenamins Anderson School in Bothell [<http://www.oregonlive.com/travel>]

McMenamins' new Seattle-area venue key cog in revitalization of Bothell [http://www.oregonlive.com/travel/area_ve.html#incart_story_packa]

McMenamins Anderson School in Bothell, venue by venue [<http://www.oregonlive.com/travel>]

'Transit Maps of the World' makes city navigation easy [<http://www.oregonlive.com/travel>]

Ski movies feature 'Chasing Shadows,' 'Fade to Winter' [<http://www.oregonlive.com/travel>]

All Stories [<http://topics.oregonlive.com/tag/travel-with-terry/posts.html>]

Each of the areas has a local environmental non-profit organization that is spearheading protection efforts. Some of the areas have had legislation put forward that has not been approved by Congress. The Owyhee proponent group is the **Oregon Natural Desert Association** [<http://onda.org>] of Bend.

Here are some links to my reports on the Owyhee:

Driving, hiking trip to Iron Point [http://blog.oregonlive.com/terryrichard/2007/08/owyhee_go_if_you_dare.html], 1,000 feet above the Owyhee River, from May 2006 trip.

Owyhee wilderness areas [http://blog.oregonlive.com/terryrichard/2009/04/owyhee_protected_as_wilderness.html] created in Idaho in 2009.

Iron Point (Owyhee River) is No. 5 on list of **Oregon's best landscapes** [http://blog.oregonlive.com/terryrichard/2011/12/iron_point_owyhee_river_is_no.html] 2011

Lake Owyhee: [http://blog.oregonlive.com/terryrichard/2008/06/lake_owyhee_land_of_the_whoppe.html] Home of the whoppers!

Visitors to vast, remote Owyhee country rewarded with quiet, solitude [http://blog.oregonlive.com/terryrichard/2011/04/visitors_to_vast_remote_owyhee.html] (photo gallery, video) in canyons just north of Leslie Gulch.

'The Owyhee River Journals' [http://www.oregonlive.com/travel/index.ssf/2014/04/owyhee_canyon_book_by_bonney_ol.html] sends readers on adventure down remote desert canyon where few go, a book by Bonnie Olin and Mike Quigley.

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